



Sustaining Your Reading Program: Advanced Seminar for Local Leaders

*A Presentation of the National Reading
Technical Assistance Center*



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Sustainability Definition

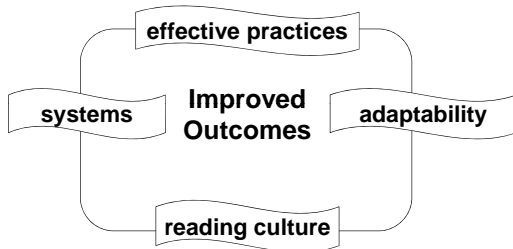
Sustainability is.....

- "...the ability of a staff to maintain the core beliefs and values (culture) of a program
 - ...and use them to guide program adaptations over time..."
 - ...while maintaining improved or enhanced outcomes.
- adapted from Century and Levy, 2002



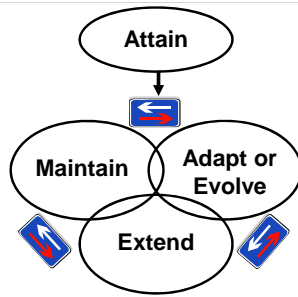
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What do we want to sustain?



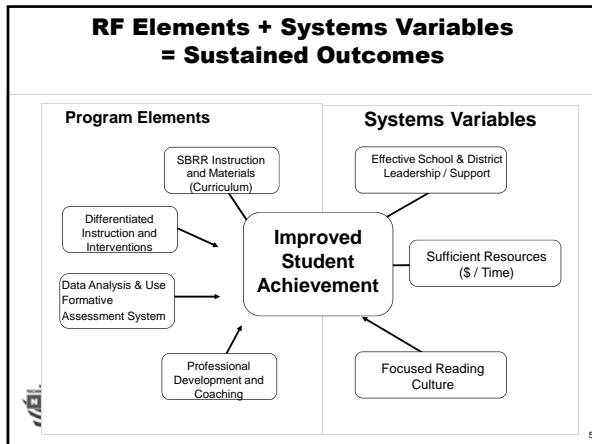
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Sustain ≠ Maintain

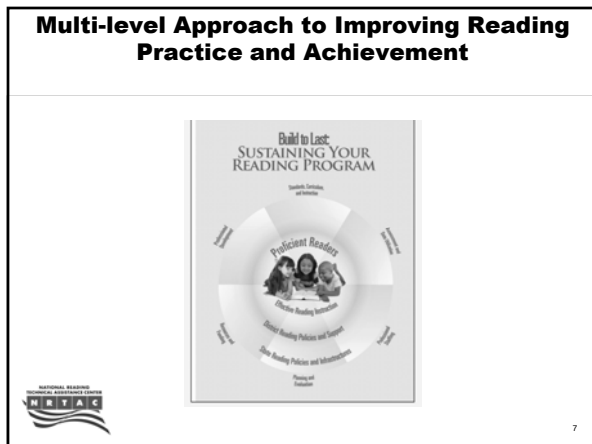


Adapted from: Jerold, C. (September, 2005). More than maintenance: Sustaining improvement efforts over the long run. Policy Brief, Washington DC: The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement.

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- Assumptions Underlying the Advanced Seminar for Local Leaders**
- Local leaders will review the guide to decide if the Advanced Seminar is a useful process for their district
 - Districts have already taken some actions to sustain evidence-based reading programs which will be a foundation for the dialog that is promoted in the Seminar



Purposes of the Advanced Seminar

- Broaden ownership of an evidence-based approach to teaching reading
- Raise critical conversations related to the district reading goal or initiative
- Transition from Reading First to the next reading initiative to build evidence-based reading programs that will last



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Overview of the Process

- Leaders make decision to use the advanced seminar
- Leaders review initiatives
- Participants are identified
- Facilitator is selected
- Facilitator reviews advanced seminar guide
- Sessions are scheduled
- Sessions are conducted
- Conclusions from seminar are recorded and communicated



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Participants in the Seminar

- District and school personnel whose responsibilities include increasing reading achievement, such as:
- District RF director
 - Title I director
 - Other federal program directors
 - Representative from each RF school – principal
 - Others: Superintendent or assistant, special education director, reading supervisors, etc.



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Role of the Advanced Seminar Facilitator

Before	During	After
• Select working group	• Structure conversation	• Present findings, reflections, and recommendations
• Ensure communication	• Take notes	
• Set Purpose	• Schedule next session	
• Complete preparatory activities	• Complete preparatory activities	



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Structure of the Advanced Seminar

- Introductory Session

- Part I: Determining What You Have Accomplished and Recommitting
 - Session 1: Status of Student Achievement
 - Session 2: Status of Recommended Reading Practices
 - Session 3: Implications of Reading First Accomplishments for the District’s Reading Mission and Vision



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Structure of the Advanced Seminar continued

- Part II: Strengthening Systems
 - Session 4: Aligning State Standards, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Systems to Support the Use of Evidence-Based Reading Programs and Practices
 - Session 5: Getting and Developing a Staff Needed to Implement Evidence-Based Reading Program and Practices
 - Session 6: Developing Program Coherence and Coordinating Funds to Implement and Sustain Evidence-Based Reading Programs and Practices



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**Structure of the Advanced Seminar
continued**

- Part III: Working Across the Levels
 - Session 7: The Role of the District in Collaboratively Supporting Schools in Ways That Ensure That All Students Experience Highly Effective Reading Instruction
- Concluding Session: Developing a Summary of Next Steps



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Session 3, 5, and 6 Discussion Questions

Read a district's response then...

Turn and Talk

How would responses differ in your context?



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Ideas?
Questions?



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Sustaining Your Reading Program: Advanced Seminar

Facilitation Guide for Local Leaders



Sustaining Your Reading Program:

Advanced Seminar

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Orientation To The Advanced Seminar For Local Leaders

Sustainability is ...

- “...the ability of a staff to maintain the core beliefs and values (culture) of a program
- ...and use them to guide program adaptations over time...
- ...while maintaining improved or enhanced outcomes.”

*-adapted from Century and
Levy, 2002*

Introduction to the Advanced Seminar Series

In the field of education, change is a given. New legislation, new leadership, and new thinking on education reform all produce a continuous succession of requirements or initiatives that states, districts, and schools must react to and incorporate into their practice. For reading leaders, transition is upon us now. Funding for the federal Reading First program is coming to an end and what will come next is not yet clear. However, Reading First as a program was never intended to last forever. It has provided seed money to states, districts, and schools to demonstrate the effectiveness of evidence-based reading programs. The end of the program may mean the end of the Reading First name and funding, but it does not have to mean the end of core beliefs and values surrounding this way of teaching reading. It does not have to mean an end to increases in student reading achievement that have been documented in many Reading First schools or to the instructional practices that made increased achievement possible. It does not mean that the broad goal of all students becoming proficient readers is no longer

relevant. We can say with certainty that the field will continue to strive for high reading outcomes.

The transition from Reading First to the next iteration of improving reading achievement represents an important opportunity to learn from the experience of implementing Reading First and to guide future support for reading achievement. In other words, sustainability does not mean freezing a program or practice in time or merely seeking to replace existing funding. Sustainability is about continuity in transition, keeping improved reading achievement going by continuously building on experience and creating systems that are ever more sophisticated in using the findings of research to meet the needs of all students in learning to read. Look at the definition of sustainability in the box above—when you think about it, sustainability has a lot to do with how transitions are handled.

The *Sustainability Advanced Seminar Series* is for state, district and school leaders who wish to continue the evidence-based approach to teaching reading¹ established by Reading First beyond the life span of that program by embedding it in future reading improvement initiatives. It is meant to be used as a transition activity, once the state or district understands when and how the federal funds for Reading First state and local activities will come to an end.

In the transition at the close of the Reading First program, timing is everything. Education leaders cannot wait too long in reflecting on lessons learned and acting to sustain what has been accomplished. During the transition, leaders must examine data and determine if there has been sufficient success to warrant continuation

¹ The phrase “evidence-based reading program” is used throughout this document. We use it as general reference to reading instructional programs that are built on the key elements of Reading First: core, supplemental, and intervention programs that address the five reading domains identified in the National Reading Panel report; formative assessment and use of data to inform instruction; intensive professional development; and 90 minutes of uninterrupted time for reading instruction each day.

of the reading instructional approach. If so, the current context within the state or district must be considered to identify initiatives related to reading improvement that can be used to sustain the approach to teaching reading established through Reading First. The advanced seminar is intended to provide a structure for working through this process and taking appropriate steps. It is structured so that there is the opportunity for leaders to come together and explicitly consider what is valuable in the evidence-based programs established through Reading First, what lessons have been learned, and whether these should be embedded in future reading initiatives. If consensus is reached that there is a foundation to build on, there is the opportunity for planful dialog on how systems can be strengthened to support evidenced-based reading programs through new initiatives related to reading improvement.

Assumptions Underlying the Advanced Seminar for Local Leaders

One assumption is that local leaders will review this orientation and use it as a means for making a decision on whether it represents a useful process in making the transition from Reading First to the next initiative for supporting reading achievement. Our intent was to be sufficiently clear about content, time/energy commitments, and purpose that leaders can make a judgment of potential utility and decide to move ahead with full support if merit in the process is seen.

Another assumption is that districts have already taken some actions to sustain evidence-based reading programs and that this forms a useful foundation for the dialog that is promoted in the seminar. For example:

- The district Reading First program staff have made a concerted effort to bring the level of implementation in funded schools to as high a level as possible by differentiating the technical assistance they provide *during*

the final grant period. A primary tool for engaging schools in reflecting on their level of implementation, planning for addressing any gaps, and building foundational knowledge of sustainability is the *Sustainability Readiness Module* (developed by the National Reading Technical Assistance Center) available at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>.

- At the same time, district Reading First Program staff have engaged funded schools in sustainability planning by providing:
 - 1) Needs assessment tools see *The Sustainability Self Assessment Tool Set* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>
 - 2) Guidance for plan development see the Local Sustainability Planning Workshop at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>
 - 3) Other forms of state developed guidance for sustaining the evidence-based reading program.

In the best case, district program staff will have supported several schools that are exemplars of the transition from Reading First program to use of the instructional approach as simply “the way reading is taught around here.”

- Data analysis effort conducted by the Reading First program staff has shown increased student reading outcomes, and this information has been summarized, packaged, and broadly communicated. Demonstrated success is the best foundation for sustaining your evidence-based reading program. Some strategies for communicating success are found in *Here’s How for Local Leaders: Recognizing Success as a Catalyst for Continuous Improvement* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>.

Purpose of the Advanced Seminar

What the sustainability activities above have in common is that they are undertaken and led by the district Reading First director and his/her staff, and have a *program focus*. In contrast, the advanced seminar will broaden participation to include others in the district having a stake in reading achievement, thereby *broadening ownership* of the approach to teaching reading that was demonstrated by Reading First. Broader ownership of the evidence-based reading program should be developed with reference to a current district reading initiative or goal. Examples of such district reading initiatives include:

- Development of district literacy plans
- Creation of a literacy leadership committee
- An initiative to improve reading PreK-12
- Integrating Reading First and Response to Intervention (RtI)²
- Incorporating evidence-based reading programs into school improvement strategies

All of these represent potential opportunities to build on the accomplishments and lessons learned from the Reading First program. There may be other initiatives that can serve as a means for continuing the dialog on evidence-based reading programs, but the point is that there is likely at least one that each district can use as a path forward. Throughout the guide, we refer to “the next reading initiative” or “initiatives related to reading improvement.” This is intended to allow the user to flexibly customize the seminar to an initiative that is a focus in their organizational context. Overall structures of the advanced seminar provide a framework, but discussions and outcomes will be tailored and district-specific. The advanced seminar is

² If using RtI is of interest for sustaining evidence-based reading programs, see *Response to Intervention: Using a Three Tiered Model to Sustain Reading First Practices and Outcomes* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>

intended to raise critical conversations related to the district specific goal or initiative and be a way of convening leaders within a district to create synergy and build from where they are to meet state goals for reading proficiency. The paths that districts use may be different but ultimately their goal is the same—to use the transition from the Reading First experience to the next reading initiative to build evidence-based reading programs that will last.

Overview of the Process Involved in Using the Advanced Seminar

- 1) Leaders make decision to use the advanced seminar
- 2) Leaders review initiatives related to reading improvement and select one that can be used for sustaining evidence-based reading programs
- 3) Seminar participants are identified
- 4) A facilitator is selected
- 5) The facilitator reviews the advanced seminar in light of the selected goal or initiative and notes adjustments (if any) that may be needed to the guide
- 6) Sessions are scheduled
- 7) Sessions are conducted
- 8) Conclusions from the seminar related to the selected district goal or initiative are recorded and communicated

Participants in the Seminar

The intended participants for the advanced seminar are district and school personnel whose responsibilities include increasing reading achievement. The district Reading First director will approach the Title I director, other federal program directors or appropriate personnel in the district to initiate the formation of an informal working group to consider sustaining evidence-based reading programs. Participation in the seminar starts with the district Reading

First director and/or at least one representative from each of the schools who played a role in program implementation. The best candidates would be school principals. The experience, insights, and lessons learned from Reading First implementation needs to be brought to the table to inform the next iteration of support for reading achievement. Other participants in the seminar should include broad based representation of others who have a stake in reading in the district. These include: Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent, federal program directors (for example Title I Director), Special Education Director, reading/ELA supervisors, or others selected by the district.

Sustaining the approach to teaching reading is not possible without the involvement and ownership of these leaders. In addition, the district should consider the involvement of other school representative(s). Session 7 (district support for schools) requires additional guests from schools that have implemented Reading First to present the perspective of the recipients of district support for reading initiatives. Because aligned support for student reading achievement is a foundational concept in the advanced seminar, the district should consider inviting school representatives, such as reading coaches, to participate in all sessions to increase understanding of effective support and therefore increase the utility of support the district will provide for future reading initiatives.

Structure of the Advanced Seminar

The advanced seminar consists of three main parts plus introductory and concluding sessions. It is intended to be conducted in a series of nine meetings. Each meeting will be one to two hours in length, dependent upon the degree of preparation that participants do in advance of the meetings and the efficiency of the operational procedures that they employ.

An **Introductory Session** involves participants in a review of the plan for the seminar and in a discussion of a graphic organizer that serves as one way to visualize the structure of the evidence-based reading program and practices.

Part I: Determining What You Have Accomplished and Recommitting (Sessions 1 through 3) is intended to bring to light the accomplishments of Reading First in terms of student achievement and the reading instruction practices that made this success possible. It focuses on drawing out the lessons learned through implementation of Reading First and establishing the base on which future work in reading improvement will be built. Session 1 involves participants in reviewing what has been accomplished through Reading First with respect to student reading achievement. Session 2 focuses on what has been accomplished with respect to the implementation of evidence-based reading programs and practices. Session 3 provides the opportunity for the participants to determine whether the accomplishments have been significant enough to use them as a resource for the refinement of the district's reading mission and vision. If the answer to this question is positive, the participants engage the second part of the seminar.

Part II: Strengthening Systems (Sessions 4 through 6) involves participants in determining the ways in which they could improve the effectiveness of a current or future district reading initiative by strengthening three sets of systems. Session 4 addresses Standards, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Systems. Session 5 focuses on the Personnel System, with particular emphasis on strengthening on-going professional development of all new and experienced teachers. Session 6 focuses on program coherence and coordinating funding to help support the implementation and sustaining of evidence-based reading programs and practices.

Part III: Working Across the Levels

(Session 7) encourages participants to view the ways in which the systems play out across state, district, and school levels. Session 7 focuses on the roles that the district will play to support school implementation and sustaining of evidence-based reading programs and practices.

A **Concluding Session** gives participants the opportunity to summarize their recommendations with respect to strengthening the next reading improvement initiative that will build on what the district has learned as a result of its participation in the Reading First program.

Role of the Advanced Seminar Facilitator

Once a working group is established, the role of facilitator may be played either by the district Reading First director or other leader as decided by the group. The facilitator fulfills the following functions:

- After the decision to conduct the advanced seminar and before it begins, the facilitator will ensure that communication about the working group and its purpose has occurred with all relevant parties.
- During the advanced seminar, the facilitator will schedule meetings, ensure preparatory activities for each session are completed, use this guide to structure the conversation at sessions, and ensure that notes are taken so that each session produces an outcome.
- After the advanced seminar, the facilitator will present compiled findings, reflections, and recommendations to district leadership and/or the local school board for consideration of next steps.

Materials

The materials that will be needed to implement the advanced seminar include:

- **The *Advanced Seminar Facilitator Guide*.** To help the facilitator plan and conduct each session, the guide provides the following information:
 - 1) Purpose(s) for the session
 - 2) Estimated time for the session
 - 3) Tasks the facilitator may need to undertake to prepare for the session
 - 4) Tasks the participants should undertake to prepare for the session
 - 5) An overview of the principal activities in which the session participants will be engaged, including possible discussion questions
 - 6) A rationale for each question that may help the facilitator plan how s/he will guide the discussion
 - 7) Suggestions on how to “debrief” the session
 - 8) Suggestion of what information to provide with respect to the next session
- The “Sustainability Resources” created through U.S. Department of Education contracts between October 2006 and September 2009 for states, districts, and schools participating in the Reading First program. Specific sustainability resources relevant to each seminar session are referenced in each session description. The entire list of available resources is presented on the last page of this guide.
- Specific district-related information as identified in the preparation section of each session.

Conclusion to the Orientation

This orientation has provided an overview of the advanced seminar, and district leaders should make a decision on whether they want to move forward. If so, the chapters that follow contain step-by-step directions for implementing each session.

Introductory Session And Discussion Of The Plan For The Advanced Seminar

Session Purposes

- Seminar purposes. Develop shared understanding of the purposes for the seminar, the planned sessions, the schedule of sessions, the participants, and the expected outcomes.
- Ground rules. Develop group consensus on ground rules for the preparation for and the conduct of the sessions.
- Graphic organizer. Explore the usefulness of the cover's graphic organizer, which shows a multi-level approach to improving reading practice and reading achievement.

Time: One to two hours

Prepare for the Session

The facilitator will:

- 1) Prepare an overview of:
 - a. the purposes of the seminar
 - b. the seminar participants and rationale for their selection
 - c. the proposed schedule for the sessions
 - d. the seminar structure and sessions
 - e. the expected outcome(s)
- 2) Collect examples of "ground rules for behavior" to inform group's discussion of that topic.

- 3) Review (a) the graphic organizer from the cover of the facilitator's guide and (b) the chart at the end of this section showing connections between content of the advanced seminar and the graphic organizer.
- 4) Review the definition of sustainability provided at the beginning of this guide.
- 5) Plan how s/he will facilitate the discussion questions below.
- 6) Plan how s/he will conduct the debrief, in order to get input from the group on how well the session set the stage for the seminar.

All participants will:

- 1) Read: *Building a Strong Reading Culture: What You Can Do* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>

Conduct the Session

- Develop shared understanding of the seminar. The facilitator provides an overview of the purposes for the seminar, the planned sessions, the schedule of sessions, the participants, and the expected outcomes. The facilitator invites clarifying questions on the plan for the seminar. The facilitator then asks for suggestions on how the plan for the seminar might be strengthened.
- Create ground rules for the seminar. The facilitator shares a summary of the examples of ground rules that s/he identified. The facilitator solicits from each participant the ground rules that they would recommend for the conduct of the seminar and arranges for a summary of those recommendations. The facilitator gathers and summarizes participant ratings of each of the recommendations. The facilitator helps the participants to use the summary of the ratings to reach consensus on the ground rules that will govern the conduct of the seminar.

- Explore the ideas being presented by the graphic organizer. The facilitator helps the participants explore the following questions and record their ideas on chart paper.

1) *What ideas does the graphic organizer on the cover of the facilitator’s guide convey?*

Question Rationale for Facilitator: The graphic organizer conveys several key ideas that underlie the advanced seminar. First, it is a picture of an aligned system, working from the level of student achievement out in a series of nested levels of support: teachers support students, schools support teachers, districts support schools, and the state supports districts. Second, notice that there are no clear dividing lines between instruction, district support and state support, indicating that the work across the various levels is interdependent. Third, look at the labels of the pie shaped wedges around the outside of the wheel. These are the standards-based infrastructures that cut across the school, district and state levels. Together, these components of the graphic organizer represent the main idea underlying the advanced seminar: student reading achievement can be increased by building support for evidence-based reading programs and practices within a standards-based system.

Question Rationale for Facilitator: An aligned system such as depicted in the graphic is just as applicable to a new reading initiative as it was to Reading First. Considering the systems view from the beginning for a new initiative may suggest actions and strategies that otherwise would not have come up and help to build a shared reading culture, with broad understandings of “the way reading is taught here.”

2) *How do the systems and practices named in the graphic organizer relate to: (a) the current or future initiative related to reading improvement? (b) the establishment of a reading culture like the one that is described in the brief?*

- **Debrief.** The facilitator reviews the recorded notes with the group and asks participants to identify key ideas that they will come back to in subsequent sessions. If appropriate, the facilitator may ask the participants to identify possible changes they would like to make in the graphic organizer that would make it a more useful description of the support systems that the group wants to strengthen as part of its effort to sustain what has been accomplished through their Reading First program and to continue to improve the numbers of students who are becoming proficient readers.

Look Ahead

The facilitator will announce the date, time, and preparation activities for the next session. S/he will ensure that the conclusions from the session debrief are typed and emailed to seminar participants before the next session.

Note to the facilitator: Table 1 below may be useful to the facilitator in understanding the relationship of the graphic organizer and the content of the advanced seminar as enacted across the state and local levels.

Table 1: Relationship of the Facilitator Guide Cover, the Introduction, and the Other Sessions in the Seminar.

Cover Content	Topics in Introduction's Discussion and Debrief	Related Sessions of the Advanced Seminar
Proficient Readers	1. Students becoming proficient readers is at center	<u>Session 1:</u> Status of Student Achievement in Reading First Schools
Effective Reading Instruction	2. Effective reading instruction, delivered through an evidence-based reading program, is what most directly affects the development of students into proficient readers.	<u>Session 2:</u> Status of Recommended Reading Practice in Reading First Schools
Three aligned levels of support 1. (School Level) Effective Reading instruction 2. District Reading Policies and Supports 3. State Reading Policies and Supports	3. School, District, and State levels provide nested layers of support that result in an increasingly more effective reading support system and an increasingly more supportive reading culture across the levels.	<u>Session 7:</u> District Role in Supporting Schools
Systems • Standards, Curriculum, Instruction • Assessment & Data Utilization • Professional Staffing • Professional Development • Planning and Evaluation • Resources & Funding	4. Systems needed to support a consistent, coherent approach to teaching reading.	<u>Session 3:</u> Implications of Reading First Accomplishments for the District's Reading Mission, Vision, and Goals <u>Session 4:</u> Aligning State Standards, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Systems to Support the Use of Evidence-Based Reading Programs and Practices <u>Session 5:</u> Getting and Developing the Staff Needed to Implement and Sustain Evidence-Based Reading Programs and Practices <u>Session 6:</u> Developing Program Coherence and Coordinating Funds to Implement and Sustain Evidence-Based Reading Programs and Practices

Part I: Determining What You Have Accomplished And Recommitting

Part I is intended to bring to light the accomplishments of Reading First in terms of student achievement and the reading instruction practices that made this success possible. It focuses on drawing out the lessons learned through implementation of Reading First and establishing the base on which future work in reading improvement will be built.

Part I consists of three sessions that together will create a shared understanding of:

- The successes of the Reading First program (*what* was accomplished);
- The reading programs and practices implemented under Reading First (*how* the accomplishments were achieved); and
- The district mission and vision behind Reading First (*why* Reading First was undertaken and *why* its accomplishments are important).

These three sessions will give the group a chance to explicitly discuss the foundation for evidence-based reading programs and practices that Reading First helped the district and its schools to implement. Then, the group will make a determination as to whether there is a sufficient basis to warrant use of current or future district reading improvement initiatives to sustain and expand the use of those evidence-based reading programs and practices. In other words, as the next initiative related to reading improvement emerges, will the district opt to view the initiative as new in the sense of moving away from a past failure or new in the sense of building on past success?

Session 1: Status of Student Achievement in Reading First Schools

Session Purposes

- Student achievement. Develop shared understanding of what Reading First has accomplished in terms of student achievement.
- Understanding of accomplishment in the schools. Determine how well these accomplishments are understood within the district.
- Need to improve communications of accomplishments. Explore the need to communicate those accomplishments more effectively to key audiences.

Time: One to two hours

Prepare for the Session

The facilitator will:

- 1) Prepare opening remarks that provide an overview of the three sessions in this Part and their purposes.
- 2) Recruit a knowledgeable leader (e.g. Reading First Director) to prepare and present information on what Reading First schools have accomplished with respect to student reading achievement.
- 3) Plan a group discussion of the information organized around the questions below.
- 4) Plan how s/he will conduct the debrief.

All participants will:

- 1) Read *Here's How for Local Leaders: Recognizing Success as an Catalyst for Continuous Improvement* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>
- 2) Read *Engaging Stakeholders: Including*

Parents and the Community to Sustain Improved Reading Outcomes at (<http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>)

- 3) If schools have informative reports on what has been accomplished with respect to students' reading achievement, the facilitator could include them in the preparation for this session.

Conduct the Session

- Overview Part I. The facilitator will provide a brief overview of the intent of Part I and the sessions it contains.
- Overview the session agenda. The facilitator will describe in more detail the purposes and activities of this session and introduce any participants who will be presenting/sharing information.
- Develop shared understanding of what Reading First schools have accomplished with respect to students' reading achievement. The facilitator has a knowledgeable leader either present a summary of what schools have accomplished with respect to student reading achievement or lead a discussion of a report that provides such a summary and that the participants have read prior to the session.
- Explore the significance of the accomplishments with respect to students' reading accomplishments and how well they are understood. With the help of the knowledgeable leader, the facilitator guides the participants through a discussion of the following questions.
 - 1) ***How significant are the accomplishments of the Reading First schools with respect to their students' reading achievement? Should the evidence of these accomplishments be used by the district to promote use of evidence-based reading programs and practices? Are there other data, beyond what has been reported, that***

would help the district to strengthen the case that evidence-based reading programs should be continued in the next iteration of literacy reform?

Question Rationale for Facilitator:

The starting point in a sustainability discussion is establishing or reiterating the accomplishments of Reading First that make evidence-based reading programs worth continuing. If there was no improvement, there is no reason to continue the approach to teaching reading or to link it to current or future goals or initiatives.

- 2) ***Who should know about these accomplishments, how well have the district and schools communicated these accomplishments to them, and how might the district and schools improve the communication of these accomplishments to them?***

Question Rationale for Facilitator: Once success has been established, it should be shared to create a support base for the approach to teaching reading demonstrated by Reading First Schools.

- Debrief. The facilitator helps the group synthesize and record its ideas with respect to such topics as the following:
 - a. Who (i.e., target audiences) needs to know and understand what Reading First schools have accomplished with respect to students' reading achievement?
 - b. Critical data to highlight in the stories of these accomplishments.
 - c. Effective ways to present these accomplishments to the target audiences.

- d. Effective ways to show the relevance and relationship of these accomplishments to current or upcoming reading initiatives.

Look Ahead

The facilitator will announce the date, time, and preparation activities for the next session. The facilitator will ensure that the conclusions from this session's debrief are typed and emailed to seminar participants before the next session.

Session 2: Status of Recommended Reading Practices in Reading First Schools

Session Purposes

- Understanding of evidence-based reading programs and practices. Develop shared understanding of the evidence-based reading programs and practices that helped school staff improve their students' reading achievement.
- Understanding of variability in implementation of programs and practices. Develop shared understanding of the variability in the implementation of the evidence-based reading programs and practices, and the extent to which there was a relationship between that variability and the extent to which students improved their reading achievement.
- Possible explanations of the variability. Explore possible explanations for the variability in the implementation of the evidence-based reading programs and practices and the implications of those explanations for current and future district reading initiatives.

Time: One to two hours

Prepare for the Session

The facilitator will:

- 1) Recruit a knowledgeable leader (e.g. Reading First Director) to prepare and present information on:
 - The accomplishments of Reading First schools with respect to *implementing the components* of the program (Note: possible sources include local implementation evaluations and site-based implementation walkthroughs).
 - The relationship between levels of implementation of the components

of the Reading First program and the levels of accomplishment with respect to students' reading achievement.

- The most plausible explanations for high level implementation of the components of the Reading First program.

- 2) Plan with the knowledgeable leader a group discussion based on the questions below.
- 3) Plan the debrief for the session to summarize the ideas discussed and set up the next session.

All participants will:

- 1) Read *Implementation: Promising Practices to Sustained Results* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>.
- 2) Read *Here's How for Local Leaders: Maintaining Fidelity of Implementation with Walkthroughs* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>.

Conduct the Session

- Overview the session agenda. The facilitator will describe the purposes and activities of the session and introduce any participants who will be presenting/sharing information.
- Develop shared understanding of the evidence-based Reading First program and practices that helped school staffs improve their students' reading achievement. Through presentation and discussion, the knowledgeable leader and the facilitator help participants understand the major components of the Reading First program and practices.
- Develop shared understanding of the variability in the implementation of the evidence-based reading programs and practices (e.g., levels of implementation/levels of use), and the extent to which there was

a relationship between that variability and the extent to which students improved their reading achievement. Through presentation and discussion, the knowledgeable leader and the facilitator help participants understand how the implementation of the major components of the Reading First evidence-based program and practices was studied and what the results of those studies were.

- Explore possible explanations for the variability in the implementation of the evidence-based reading programs and practices. Through presentation and discussion, the knowledgeable leader and the facilitator help participants understand how the researchers and evaluators tried to explore possible explanations for differences in the level of implementation of the major components of Reading First.
- Explore the implications of those explanations for variability in implementation for current and future district reading initiatives. The knowledgeable leader and the facilitator help participants explore the following questions:

- 1) *What has been learned from the Reading First improvement effort that could help district staff initiate the district's next efforts to increase reading achievement?*
- 2) *To what extent are these lessons supported by the Implementation Brief?*

Question Rationale for Facilitator: While the Reading First Program was being implemented, the status of reading practice was documented and supported. The district will have learned a great deal about defining what implementation of evidence-based reading programs involves and how it can be assessed. The importance of tracking implementation progress and providing assistance based on needs is supported by research. Any future reading initiatives may want to take into account both the research findings and the lessons learned through Reading First about keeping the recommended reading practices visible, so that they can be documented and systematically improved.

- Debrief. The facilitator asks the group to summarize their ideas on the implications of status of practice for future initiatives related to reading improvement: What practices or processes for tracking implementation in Reading First are worth using or modifying as we move forward?

Look Ahead

The facilitator will announce the date, time and preparation activities for the next session. S/he will ensure that the conclusions from this session's debrief are typed and emailed to seminar participants before the next session.

Session 3: Implications of Reading First Accomplishments for the District's Reading Mission and Vision

Session Purpose

- Implications of accomplishments for district's reading mission and vision. Based on the accomplishments of the Reading First approach, identify possible implications for the district's current reading mission and vision.

Time: One to two hours

Prepare for the Session

The facilitator will:

- 1) Summarize the conclusions reached in the debriefs of Sessions 1 and 2 to present at the opening of this session.
- 2) Collect copies of district reading mission and vision and note where each was found (e.g., the Reading First application, a district literacy plan, a strategic plan, etc.). (Note: The content of these statements may vary somewhat, given where they were found. The facilitator should identify major variations in the statements in advance of the session.)
- 3) Plan how s/he will introduce and organize the discussion of the questions below.
- 4) Plan how s/he will conduct the debrief, so that the group generates ideas for possible next steps with respect to the current reading mission and vision.

All participants will:

- 1) Read *Reading Comprehension: Essential for Sustainability* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>.

Conduct the Session

- Overview the session agenda. The facilitator will describe the purposes and activities of the session and introduce any participants who will be presenting/sharing information.
- Review the group's conclusions regarding the accomplishments of Reading First schools. The facilitator involves the group in a brief review of what was learned through Sessions 1 and 2 with respect to Reading First schools' implementation of an evidence-based reading program and related practices, and with respect to improving student achievement in reading.
- Review the content of current district mission and vision statements related to reading. The facilitator shares a summary of district reading-related mission and vision statements and their sources and invites participants to explore similarities and differences in those statements.
- Explore implications of Reading First accomplishments for district reading-related mission and vision statements. The facilitator will organize discussion around the following questions and record ideas on chart paper:
 - 1) *What are the implications of the Reading First accomplishments with respect to how the district's reading mission and vision should be stated for future initiatives related to reading improvement?*

Question Rationale for Facilitator: Reading First student achievement and implementation data suggest both an end (all students proficient in reading by the end of third grade) and a means (use of evidence-based reading programs). As the district moves forward with its efforts to continue to improve students' reading achievement, it will need a clear mission and vision for these efforts for staff at all levels (district and school). Participants should brainstorm how the district's reading mission and vision are related to the current or upcoming reading improvement initiatives that have been under discussion as a way to sustain or scale up the evidence-based reading programs established through Reading First. They should suggest wording and locations where the mission and vision should appear.

2) *To what extent could you argue that school data on Reading First implementation and accomplishments imply that broader use of evidence-based reading program and practices is a good (or even the best) way of achieving the district's reading mission and vision?*

Question Rationale for Facilitator: This question leads the seminar participants to make a decision as to whether they will recommit to evidence-based reading programs in the form that they may appear in future initiatives related to reading improvement. The Reading First program is over, but its accomplishments and its lessons learned may provide fertile ground for establishing broader and more effective use of evidence-based reading programs.

- Debrief. The facilitator will ask participants to revisit the definition of sustainability, which was shared in the introductory session. S/he will ask how the participants now view the definition given the discussions

that they have had over the past several weeks. Hopefully, participants will now see sustaining the evidence-based programs that were established through Reading First and transitioning to the next iteration of reading improvement as one process that is focused on building on success while adapting to new circumstances.

This session concludes *Part I: Determining What You Have Accomplished and Recommitting*. It is a turning point in the work of the group. If the group decides to recommit to evidence-based reading programs by working toward them through new initiatives, it will turn to the district system infrastructures that need to be revised and/or strengthened to support the achievement of the district's refined reading mission and vision. If it decides not to recommit to the evidence-based reading program exemplified by Reading First, the group's work will conclude here. The facilitator should give each member of the group the opportunity to express his/her thoughts and conclusions and seek consensus before moving forward.

Look Ahead

The facilitator will announce the date, time and preparation activities for the next session if work is to continue; or thank participants for their participation if this is the final session. Whichever the outcome, s/he will ensure that the conclusions from this session's debrief are typed and emailed to seminar participants.

PART II: Strengthening Systems

Part II assumes that district and school personnel participating in the advanced seminar have made a decision that an evidence-based approach to teaching reading is an effective strategy to ensure reading success for all students. The group has also identified a current or future initiative related to reading improvement to build on the experience and lessons learned from Reading First. With these decisions made, the group is now ready to turn to strengthening systems that will support the evidence-based approach to teaching reading.

As an introduction to this part, the facilitator will explain how Part II is a logical progression from Part I. S/he will refer once again to the graphic organizer on the cover of the facilitator's guide and point out the systems elements that are represented by the labels of the pie-shaped wedges:

- Standards, Curriculum, Instruction
- Assessment & Data Utilization
- Professional Staffing
- Professional Development
- Planning and Evaluation
- Resources & Funding

Each of these systems is relevant at the state, district, and school levels. For the purposes of the seminar, two closely related systems will be considered in each session. To be specific:

- Session 4 will focus on the system of state standards, curriculum, and instruction and the state and district assessment system.
- Session 5 will focus on personnel systems of professional staffing and professional development, with emphasis on enduring professional development infrastructures.
- Session 6 will focus on how districts can develop coherence among programs and

coordinate a variety of funding sources to implement and sustain evidence-based reading programs and practices.

Session 4: Aligning State Standards, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Systems to Support the Use of Evidence-Based Reading Programs and Practices

Session Purposes

Given that the district has identified an initiative related to reading improvement that has potential to continue or expand school use of evidence-based reading programs and practices that increase the numbers of students who are becoming proficient readers:

- Standards. Determine the extent of teachers' knowledge and use of state standards and grade level expectations within the district and schools. If training is needed, determine how this might be accomplished.
- Curriculum. Determine the extent to which the district reading curriculum is aligned to the state reading standards and related grade level expectations. If revisions/refinements are needed, determine how this might be accomplished through the identified initiative related to reading.
- Instruction. Determine the extent to which district guidance with respect to reading instruction needs to be revised/refined as a result of the accomplishments of Reading First schools. If revision/refinement is needed, determine how this might be accomplished through the identified initiative related to reading improvement.
- Assessment. Determine the extent to which the district reading assessment system needs to be revised/refined as a result of the accomplishments of Reading First schools, and if so, determine how this might be

accomplished through the identified initiative related to reading improvement.

Time: One to two hours

Prepare for the Session

The facilitator will:

- 1) Seek the help of district reading leaders to assemble and provide seminar participants with information on what Reading First expected the district and its schools to do with respect to reading standards, reading curriculum, reading instruction, and reading assessments, as well as information from scientifically based reading research that either supported or contributed to updates of those expectations.
- 2) Seek the help of district reading leaders to assemble and provide seminar participants with information on how current district reading initiatives provide guidance with respect to reading standards, reading curricular choices, reading-related instructional practices, and local reading assessment programs.
- 3) Plan with those leaders how to conduct the group discussion that will address the questions below.
- 4) Plan how to conduct the debrief, so that next steps regarding reading standards, reading curriculum, reading instructional practices, and reading assessments are summarized in a way that they will be relevant and useful for the next iteration of district work in improving reading achievement.

All participants will:

- 1) Read *Here's How for Local Leaders: From Standards to Practice: Working from Standards to Practice in Sustaining Scientifically Based Reading* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>

- 2) Read *Here's How for Local Leaders: Institutionalizing Continuous Improvement with Comprehensive Data Management Systems* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>

Conduct the Session

- Overview Part II. The facilitator will provide a brief overview of the intent of Part II and the sessions it contains.
- Overview the session agenda. The facilitator will describe the purposes and activities of this session in more detail and introduce any participants who will be presenting/sharing information.
- Explore standards and assessments systems. The facilitator, with the help of the district reading leaders, will involve the seminar participants in a discussion of the following questions. The discussion should yield recommendations of how future initiatives related to reading improvement could build on what has been learned from Reading First schools.
 - 1) ***Standards and Curriculum.*** ***To what extent is the district reading curriculum PreK-12 aligned with state reading content standards and grade level expectations (GLEs)? To what extent is the district reading curriculum aligned with an evidence-based approach to teaching reading PreK-12? If action is needed to improve the alignment, what are possible next steps?***

How do schools ensure that the comprehensive reading system is paced consistently in each classroom for appropriate content coverage? How will determinations for supplemental and intervention materials for struggling readers be made? If action is needed to improve pacing and material decision-making, what are possible next steps?

Question Rationale for Facilitator: State content standards/ GLEs are the primary engine that drives what is taught in schools, and therefore any reading initiative that is put forth needs to be aligned with them. If this alignment was accomplished during the Reading First funding period, there is a base for use of evidence-based reading programs. If not, the group should consider and plan any actions needed to support future reading initiatives that are built on evidence-based reading programs. Also, the comprehensive reading system is the instructional tool used to drive an evidence-based reading program. Therefore, consistent pacing of the comprehensive reading system's content from classroom to classroom is critical to success.

- 2) ***Instruction. To what extent are evidence-based reading instructional practices aligned to the reading curriculum PreK-12? If appropriate, how might the district strengthen its influence on the use of evidence-based reading instructional practices?***

How do schools ensure that evidence-based reading instructional practices are delivered properly and with sufficient intensity? If appropriate, how might the schools strengthen their influence on the delivery and intensity of evidence-based reading instructional practices?

Question Rationale for Facilitator: Considering the level of influence or control the district has to extend evidence-based practices in the district, the group will need to discuss any actions that need to be taken. In addition, how evidence-based practices are delivered and monitored are important considerations for school-based leadership.

- 3) ***Assessment. Do the district and schools use the state reading assessment system information to inform instructional decisions and planning? How has the district enhanced the state assessment system by employing additional or alternative formative and diagnostic assessments? How has the district assisted schools in gathering and using data in a timely manner? If appropriate, how might the district strengthen its influence on the use of a local assessment system?***

How do schools currently use data to determine student needs and develop differentiated instruction to address the student needs?

Question Rationale for Facilitator: For any future reading initiatives, the district should be ready to articulate for schools what kinds of assessments are needed, and provide guidance on how they might be obtained (if not provided directly by the state). The district may also want to consider how it will guide schools in using different types of assessments at different times, without losing focus on the ultimate reading outcomes having to do with comprehension that are represented on the state test or other high visibility measures. Furthermore, schools should communicate to the district how data is being used at the classroom level to determine student needs and develop targeted instructional plans.

- Debrief. From the discussion, summarize main conclusions on what needs to be done with state standards and assessments in order to maximize their effectiveness in supporting current or future reading initiatives.

Look Ahead

The facilitator will announce the date, time and preparation activities for the next session. S/he will ensure that the conclusions from this session's debrief are typed and emailed to seminar participants before the next session.

Session 5: Getting and Developing a Staff Needed to Implement Evidence-Based Reading Programs and Practices

Session Purposes

Given that the district has identified an initiative related to reading improvement that has potential to continue or expand school use of evidence-based reading programs and practices that increase the numbers of students who are becoming proficient readers:

- Personnel system. Determine how the district and/or schools can develop personnel systems that increase the probability that they will recruit, hire, and keep administrators who are strong instructional leaders for reading and teachers who are skilled at helping all of their students to make progress in becoming proficient readers of grade level texts.
- In-service professional development. Determine how the district and/or schools can ensure that professional development is available to *new administrators*, so they can lead the learning, and *teachers*, so they can acquire the needed knowledge and skills to effectively teach the reading skills described by the five domains of reading.

Time: One to two hours

Prepare for the Session

The facilitator will:

- 1) Seek district leaders who can help assemble and present information on how the district and/or schools are strengthening personnel systems and related practices that increase the probability that they will recruit, hire, and keep teachers and administrators who are skilled at helping all of their students make progress toward achieving state standards.

- 2) Seek district leaders who can help assemble and present information on school leadership and in-service professional development practices, including coaching, in order to ensure that *new and experienced* teachers acquire the needed knowledge and skills to effectively teach the reading skills described by the five domains of reading.
- 3) Plan how s/he, with the help of other district leaders, will conduct the discussion of the questions below.
- 4) Plan how s/he will conduct the debrief to summarize conclusions from the discussion for current or future reading initiatives.

All participants will:

- 1) Read *Here's How for Local Leaders: Staffing Practices: Managing Staffing Practices to Sustain Reading Achievement* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>
- 2) Read *Here's How for Local Leaders: District Policy: Upholding Your Evidence-based Reading Program in District Policy* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>

Conduct the Session

- Overview the session agenda. The facilitator will describe the purposes and activities of the session and introduce any participants who will be presenting/sharing information.
- Explore personnel and professional development systems. The facilitator, with the help of the district leaders, will involve the seminar participants in a discussion of the following questions. The discussion should yield recommendations of how future initiatives related to reading improvement could build on what has been learned from Reading First schools.

- 1) ***Personnel systems. In what ways should our district personnel system be***

strengthened to ensure there is a stable, qualified, and skilled staff in place to support effective implementation and use evidence-based reading programs and practices (for example: hiring processes, supervision and evaluation, etc.)?

- 2) ***On-going professional development. How will on-going professional development, including coaching, be sustained so as to ensure that all new and experienced teachers (including Special Education teachers, Title I teachers, and paraprofessionals) are equipped with the needed knowledge and skills to effectively teach the reading skills described by the five domains of reading? How will on-going professional development for new and experienced administrators be sustained to ensure they are equipped with the needed knowledge and skills to be effective instructional leaders?***

Question Rationale for Facilitator: Much of the success of Reading First is attributable to the intensive professional development that was provided. Coaching and other professional development was instrumental in helping teachers understand the five components of effective reading instruction and address them in the context of day-to-day instruction. Looking ahead to future reading goals and initiatives, it will be necessary to create infrastructures that will make professional learning that is tailored to the kind of instruction that will be expected available to new and experienced administrators and teachers.

- Debrief. Reviewing the notes that were taken, the facilitator will ask the group to summarize actions needed to strengthen personnel and professional development systems that will be needed by current or future district reading initiatives.

Look Ahead

The facilitator will announce the date, time and preparation activities for the next session. S/he will ensure that the conclusions from this session's debrief are typed and emailed to seminar participants before the next session.

Session 6: Developing Program Coherence and Coordinating Funds to Implement and Sustain Evidence-Based Reading Programs and Practices

Session Purposes

Given that the district has identified an initiative related to reading improvement that has potential to continue or expand school use of evidence-based reading programs and practices that increase the numbers of students who are becoming proficient readers:

- Program Coherence. Explore how a district's federal and state programs for school improvement are coordinated and focused on clear evidence-based reading goals for students.
- Coordination of funds. Identify school improvement grants and other federal and state funds that could provide resources to support the implementation and sustaining of evidence-based reading programs and practices.

Time: One to two hours

Prepare for the Session

The facilitator will:

- 1) Seek a knowledgeable leader who will assemble and provide seminar participants information that explains:
 - (a) what programs currently exist in the district that relate to improving reading achievement and what is expected of schools with respect to each program;
 - (b) which programs support the district's vision for reading;
 - (c) how well aligned are schools' yearly literacy goals for improvement with the district's reading vision, and what kinds of feedback does the district provide on those goals;
 - (d) what funds are available and how are they currently being used;
 - (e) what feedback

do the schools provide to the district regarding best use of federal and state funds to support student needs; and (f) how can funds be better coordinated to support student reading achievement.

- 2) Plan how s/he with the help of other district leaders will conduct discussion of the questions below.
- 3) Plan how s/he will conduct the debrief to summarize conclusions from the discussion for current or future reading initiatives.

All participants will:

- 1) Read *Planning for Success: Integrating Planning Processes to Sustain Outcomes* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>
- 2) Read *Linking Response to Intervention and School Improvement to Sustain Reading Outcomes* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>

Conduct the Session

- Overview the session agenda. The facilitator will describe the purposes and activities of the session and introduce any participants who will be presenting/sharing information.
- Explore program coherence and coordination of funds. The facilitator, with the help of other district leaders, will involve the seminar participants in a discussion of the following questions. The discussion should yield recommendations of how future initiatives related to reading improvement could build on what has been learned from Reading First schools.
 - 1) ***Program Coherence.*** *To what extent have evidence-based reading initiatives like Reading First and Response to Intervention reflect the district reading vision and mission? How can the school improvement process and future reading initiatives that use evidence-*

based reading programs be optimized to support student reading achievement goals?

Question Rationale for Facilitator: These questions reflect the content of the sustainability brief on Response to Intervention that encourages district and school leadership to see targeted initiatives (like those seeking to increase the numbers of students becoming proficient readers) from the perspective of program coherence that is aimed at not just improving the achievement of struggling students, but of all students.

- 2) ***Coordination of funds.*** *To what extent does the district coordinate federal and state funds to help schools use those funds to support the implementation and sustaining of evidence-based reading programs? How could that coordination be refined/revised to better help schools?*

Question Rationale for Facilitator: Districts need to be explicit about what funds are available, how the funds are currently being used, and how the funds can be coordinated and used in new and bold ways to support the identified reading vision and mission. When done well, coordination of funds provides opportunities for districts to link goals to needs, to eliminate expenditures that are not producing results in raising student achievement, and to rethink resources to support strategies that directly address needs. The group may want to think about what would need to change at the district level so that schools would be more likely to use these resources in support of future evidence-based reading programs.

- 3) ***Potential value of feedback.*** *To what extent does the district currently provide feedback to schools on how programs can be better coordinated to meet student reading needs and*

on how to best utilize resources to support school literacy goals? What district policies and/or processes can be developed/revised to allow/improve the structure in which feedback is provided to schools? How will on-going feedback be provided between the levels in support of student reading achievement?

Question Rationale for Facilitator: Feedback is a powerful tool if used both to send a consistent message on the value of evidence-based reading programs and to provide guidance on specific aspects of the implementation of such programs. The group may want to ask itself if feedback has been provided that helps schools to focus their improvement efforts. They can identify ways that feedback could be used to provide such a focus for current or future reading initiatives.

- Debrief. Reviewing the notes that were taken, the facilitator will ask the group to summarize actions needed to (a) address program coherence in current or future reading initiatives for school improvement and (b) help schools understand the flexibility they have in using resources provided under a variety of programs to support activities directed at implementing and sustaining evidence-based reading programs and practices.

Look Ahead

The facilitator will announce the date, time and preparation activities for the next session. S/he will ensure that the conclusions from this session's debrief are typed and emailed to seminar participants before the next session.

PART III: Working Across Levels

Part III focuses the seminar participants on the supportive relationships that need to develop between the state and districts and between a district and its schools, if a reading improvement initiative is to be successful. This focus reflects the graphic organizer on the cover of this guide, which shows the goal of “Proficient Readers” surrounded by concentric circles of: (1) Effective Reading Instruction at the School Level, (2) District Reading Policies and Support, and (3) State Reading Policies and Support. The graphic further shows the circles not separated by sharp lines, but by changing shades of color, in order to suggest the “give-and-take” that occurs across the levels³. Lastly, the graphic shows different components/systems cutting across the levels, thus making content of relationships across levels more explicit.

The intent of Part III is to involve the seminar participants in an exploration of how the relationships across the levels are treated in reading improvement initiatives. The sessions will work from the experience of Reading First, but the group should think broadly about future reading initiatives which might cover a wider grade span and consider how support for the next reading initiative fits in the larger supports for standards-based instruction. Such an exploration could be summarized in a table like the one below.

³ For the authors of this guide, this “give-and-take” was dramatically illustrated at the end of a Sustainability Planning Workshop. Then, the participating state and district staffs reflected on how the relationships that developed between them had contributed to the success of the Reading First effort and how those relationships between those levels needed to continue if the efforts to sustain and to extend what had been accomplished through Reading First were to succeed.

Table 2: Vision of How the Levels of Education Can Work Together to Improve the Effectiveness of Reading Instruction and Increase the Numbers of Students Who Are Becoming Proficient Readers

Policies and Systems of Support	State Level Supports	District Level Supports	Effective Reading Instruction in Schools

Session 7: The Role of the District in Collaboratively Supporting Schools in Ways That Ensure That All Students Experience Highly Effective Reading Instruction

Session Purpose

Given how roles evolved over the course of implementing Reading First, determine how the state, district and schools could best work together in the next reading improvement initiative to continue the effort to implement in all schools and classrooms evidence-based reading programs and practices that increase the numbers of students achieving state reading standards at proficient or higher levels.

Time: One to two hours

Prepare for the Session

The facilitator will:

- 1) Invite several representatives from Reading First schools to participate in this session (if there have not been school participants throughout the seminar). They will be asked to think through the following kinds of questions in advance and to be prepared to share their resulting thoughts with the district participants during the session:

- a. How has the district supported schools in implementing improvement initiatives like Reading First?
 - b. What supports have been particularly effective, and why?
 - c. What other types of district support would be helpful to schools as they work to sustain, strengthen, and expand their implementation of evidence-based reading programs and practices?
- 2) Review the graphic organizer on the cover of the facilitation guide and the conclusions that the group drew in the Introductory Session and the Part II sessions about the aligned systems of support. Customize the rows in the table suggested in the Part III Introduction to reflect the group's conclusions on which were the most important systems of support.
 - 3) Customize the columns of Table 2 suggested in the Part III introduction, so that they reflect the structures typically used in the district. The table will be most useful for discussion when both the rows and the columns represent the district context.
 - 4) Plan how s/he will begin the session with (1) a review of the graphic organizer and

(2) the initial revision of the table. The facilitator will provide an explanation of the rationale behind the table and ask for input. In planning this beginning, bear in mind that it may be the first time school guests have seen the graphic organizer and/or considered the concept of an aligned system of support with student achievement as its central focus.

- 5) Plan how s/he will guide the discussion of the questions below, eliciting the participants' perspectives on the systems of support provided by the district as part of the Reading First program and other improvement initiatives, and their perspectives on the systems of support that need to be refined for use in the next district reading improvement initiative.
- 6) Plan how s/he will conduct the debrief, so that it captures the principal ideas that the participants have about the systems of support that were most helpful, the systems of support that most needed to be strengthened, and the systems of support that were not particularly relevant to the needs of the district.

All participants will:

- 1) Read *The Role of the District: Supporting Student Success* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>
- 2) Read *Developing Effective Reading Leadership* at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>

Conduct the Session

- Overview Part III. The facilitator will provide a brief overview of the intent of Part III.
- Overview the session agenda. The facilitator will describe the purposes and activities of the session and introduce any participants who will be presenting/sharing information.
- Review background information. The

facilitator briefly reviews the graphic organizer and the conclusions that the group reached about the systems of support that were critical for the successful implementation of a complex reading improvement initiative like Reading First.

- Introduce Table 2 as a tool for discussion. The facilitator guides the group through the proposed table that would be used to both structure and summarize the results of the discussion. Invite any questions or concerns the participants had about the table as such a structuring tool.
- Explore district experience of support. For each system of support listed in the first column of the Table, ask the participants to consider the following questions:
 - 1) *What system of specific supports were provided by the state and other groups to help district staffs implement specific evidence-based reading programs and practices recommended/required by Reading First law and guidance?*
 - 2) *How helpful and effective were these specific supports, given the implementation tasks of Reading First? What reasons can you give for the extent to which they were helpful and effective? What suggestions can be given to the state for strengthening its support?*
 - 3) *What system of specific supports were provided by the district to help school staffs implement specific evidence-based reading programs and practices recommended/required by Reading First law and guidance?*
 - 4) *How helpful and effective were these specific supports, given the implementation tasks of Reading First? What reasons can you give for the extent to which they were helpful and effective? What suggestions can be given to the district for strengthening its support?*

- 5) *What are the implications supporting the next district reading initiative? Be specific about how the state, district, and schools can help each other.*

Question Rationale for Facilitator: Because schools are the clients of both state and district support efforts, the school guests may be able to provide valuable insights into school needs and the kinds of supports that are most helpful. Again the Reading First experience will offer the opportunity for reflection and for the identification of lessons learned in supporting schools, which can then be used to inform district support for future reading improvement initiatives within the state's standards-based context. Additionally, district feedback can be provided to the state to convey what the district needs from the state to increase student reading achievement. The sustainability briefs on the role of the district office and on school leadership may be a useful way for the district to back map its support: What supports would schools in turn need from the district? What are the district expectations for schools?

- Debrief. Based on the discussion, the participants will summarize in the table what are the systems of support that were required for implementation of the evidence-based reading programs and practices recommended and required by Reading First. They will also summarize in the table the systems of support that they would recommend for use in future district reading improvement initiatives.

Look Ahead

The facilitator will announce the date, time, and preparation activities for the concluding session. S/he will ensure that the summaries from this session's debrief are typed and emailed to group members before the next session.

Concluding Session: Developing A Summary Of Next Steps

Session Purposes

Given the results of the group's work during the previous sessions of the advanced seminar:

- Summary: Summarize the group's recommendations for how to sustain or expand evidence-based reading programs in the district through a current or upcoming initiative related to reading improvement.
- Action steps: Develop a plan with action steps addressing these recommendations.
- Communicate the plan: Determine how and to whom the plan should be communicated

Time: One to two hours

Prepare for the Session:

The facilitator will:

- 1) Review the orientation to this guide for an overview of the relationship between sustaining evidence-based reading programs and the transition away from Reading First as a program and funding stream to the next iteration of reading improvement.
- 2) Review notes from the debriefs of the previous sessions and compile conclusions and recommendations in one document; perform light editing if needed to clarify (a) lessons learned from Reading First and implication for future work, (b) recommendations on systems supports that need strengthening to support evidence-based reading programs, and (c) an emerging vision for creating an aligned support system across the state, district, and school levels.

- 3) Consider ways that the graphic organizer could be customized for district use and prepare to present initial thoughts to participants, if there is potential usefulness for the graphic beyond the seminar. The graphic can be customized with text you insert at the top and bottom and printed in 11x17 format or used as is. You may find the graphic organizer useful to (a) post on your website along with other sustainability materials such as those listed on the next page; (b) as a springboard for discussion with schools or others on sustainability issues; (c) as an advertisement for district literacy professional development event, a district literacy plan, or a calendar of meeting of a district literacy leadership team.
- 4) Send the compiled notes to members in advance of the meeting and an expectation that they should bring their input to the meeting.

Conduct the Session

- Overview the session agenda. The facilitator will describe the purposes and activities of the session and introduce any participants who will be presenting/sharing information.
- Develop a shared understanding of how the relationship between sustainability and transition from the orientation to this guide has taken a particular direction through the course of the sessions. Use the definition of sustainability to reinforce the connections.
- Explore main conclusions and priority actions emerging from the sessions by discussing the questions below:
 - 1) *What are the most important conclusions we have reached?*
 - 2) *What actions steps would help us move forward in addressing those conclusions?*

3) *What are the most effective ways to communicate the priorities we have identified and suggested action steps?*

Question Rationale for Facilitator: The working group that has participated in these sessions will need the support of others within their district to move forward into action. Consideration should be given to leadership structures within the district and established ways through which ideas are raised and action initiated to determine strategies for moving the working group's recommendations into the work of the district. This will help ensure that conclusions are owned by relevant stakeholders and there is a platform for taking action and tracking results.

- Debrief. The facilitator will summarize and record conclusions and ideas for moving forward. S/he should push to include sufficient detail to make a compelling case to leaders in the district and/or local school board for the actions that are recommended. As a closing, the facilitator will conduct a plus/delta debrief on the Advanced Seminar as a whole. Plus: What has worked well or been beneficial in this process. Delta: What could be improved in similar activities in the future?

Look Ahead: The facilitator will communicate the output of the sessions using the strategies decided upon in this session.

Sustainability Resources

All resources are found at the U.S. Department of Education Reading First Support website:
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/support/sustaining.html>

Resource	Description	Intended Audience
Topical briefs		
<i>Building a Strong Reading Culture</i>	This brief document discusses <i>reading culture</i> , a key sustainability element, in depth.	State, district, and school leaders beginning to learn about sustainability
<i>Developing Effective Reading Leadership</i>	This brief document discusses <i>leadership</i> , another key sustainability element, in depth.	State, district, and school leaders beginning to learn about sustainability
<i>Defining the District Role in Supporting Student Success</i>	This brief document discusses <i>the role of the district</i> , a third key sustainability element, in depth.	State, district, and school leaders beginning to learn about sustainability
<i>Planning for Success: Integrating Planning Processes to Sustain Outcomes</i>	This brief document discusses how cohesive planning across the school, district, and state levels can provide layers of support for implementing and sustaining evidence-based reading programs.	State, district, and school leaders beginning to learn about sustainability
<i>Implementation: Promising Practices to Sustained Results</i>	This brief document discusses the research on implementation and offers guidance on why strong implementation is needed not only for achieving initial success, but also for sustaining improved outcomes over time.	State, district, and school leaders beginning to learn about sustainability
<i>Engaging Stakeholders: Including Parents and the Community to Sustain Improved Reading Outcomes</i>	This brief document discusses how a school's internal and external stakeholders can be a positive force for helping school staff achieve improved reading outcomes for all students and sustain them over time.	State, district, and school leaders beginning to learn about sustainability
<i>Linking Response to Intervention and School Improvement to Sustain Reading Outcomes</i>	This brief document illustrates the parallel structures of RTI and Reading First and outlines how a school or district reading program can be blended into a local RTI initiative, thereby sustaining evidence-based practices in reading and the improved outcomes that result from them.	State, district, and school leaders beginning to learn about sustainability
<i>Reading Comprehension: Essential for Sustainability</i>	This brief document discusses the link between strong reading comprehension and the successful implementation and sustainability of a reading model that spans not just grades K-3, but grades K-12.	State, district, and school leaders beginning to learn about sustainability

Resource	Description	Intended Audience
Planning tools		
<i>The Self Assessment Tool Set</i>	<i>The Self Assessment Tool Set</i> is available in four levels: state, district, school, and classroom. It prompts users to collect evidence related to sustainability efforts and helps them make an initial determination of areas to develop in sustaining their evidence-based reading model. Participants use this key document for the planning process and defining their plan.	Classroom teachers, school leaders, and/or district leaders.
Examples of successful state and local practices		
<i>Here's How: Local Sustainability Strategies</i>	<p>This series of web-based documents with specific examples of strategies that have helped local schools and districts sustain their evidence-based reading model includes the following titles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Recognizing Success as an Engine for School Improvement</i> • <i>Coordinating Funds at the District Level to Sustain Your Evidence-Based Reading Model</i> • <i>Institutionalizing Continuous Improvement with Comprehensive Data Management Systems</i> • <i>Maintaining Fidelity of Implementation with Walkthroughs</i> • <i>Managing Staffing Practices to Sustain Student Achievement</i> • <i>Upholding Your Evidence-Based Reading Program in District Policy</i> • <i>Working from Standards to Practice in Sustaining Scientifically Based Reading Instruction</i> 	District and school leaders who are implementing sustainability plans.
<i>Here's How: State Sustainability Strategies</i>	<p>This series of web-based documents with specific examples of strategies that have helped state education leaders sustain their evidence-based reading model includes the following titles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Highlighting Success to Build Support for Evidence-Based Reading Programs</i> • <i>Using Your State Longitudinal Data System to Sustain Your Evidence-Based Reading Program</i> • <i>Reaching Out to Higher Education to Align Pre-Service Preparation with Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR)</i> • <i>Writing State Literacy Plans that Sustain Your Evidence-Based Reading Model</i> • <i>Structuring State Professional Development to Sustain Scientifically Based Reading Instruction</i> • <i>Integrating the Components of Effective Reading Instruction into State Content Standards</i> • <i>Providing Effective State Leadership for Sustaining Evidence-Based Reading Programs</i> • <i>Institutionalizing Your Evidence-Based Reading Model in State Legislation and Policy</i> 	State education leaders who are implementing sustainability plans.
Professional development resources		
<i>Sustaining Reading First Outcomes</i> (Professional Development Module)	This PowerPoint presentation with speaker's notes and handouts addresses the questions: <i>What is sustainability? Are we ready to sustain? How do we get started?</i>	Classroom, school, and district teams

Resource	Description	Intended Audience
<i>Local Sustainability Planning Workshop</i>	This set of professional development materials includes complete facilitators guide and notes for conducting a 3-12 hour workshop with district teams to develop a local sustainability plan. The materials also include a printable participant’s guide, a PowerPoint to drive the entire workshop, handouts, and related reading material for participants.	Local education leaders who are developing and implementing sustainability plans.
<i>Sustainability Advanced Seminar: Facilitation Guide for State Leaders</i>	This Sustainability Advanced Seminar is for state leaders who wish to continue the evidence-based approach to teaching reading established by Reading First beyond the life span of the program. The facilitator’s guide provides instructions for a facilitator selected from state staff to run a series of brief discussion-oriented meetings addressing critical issues in sustainability.	State education leaders who are implementing sustainability plans.
<i>Sustainability Advanced Seminar: Facilitation Guide for District and School Leaders</i>	The Sustainability Advanced Seminar is for district and school leaders who wish to continue the evidence-based approach to teaching reading established by Reading First beyond the life span of the program. The facilitator’s guide provides instructions for a facilitator selected from state staff to run a series of brief discussion-oriented meetings addressing critical issues in sustainability.	Local education leaders who are implementing sustainability plans.
<i>Study Group Guide</i>	This document includes a set of discussion questions specific to each of the sustainability briefs and is designed to guide participants in a study group as they explore critical issues related to sustaining an evidence-based reading model.	State, district, and school leaders who want to engage a broader group of colleagues in sustaining evidence-based reading programs
General resources		
<i>Literature Review</i>	This review examines the literature on sustaining school reforms and identifies seven key concepts of sustainability as they relate to <i>Reading First</i> .	Those beginning to learn about sustainability
<i>Annotated Bibliography</i>	This briefly annotated compilation of the literature on sustainability was used to develop the literature review and is a source of suggested reading.	Program leaders who seek a deeper understanding of sustainability
<i>Sustainability Poster and Cover Template</i>	This colorful and attractive graphic captures the essence of what it takes to sustain reading success. It is a template that can be personalized with the user’s text and used as a document cover or printed in 11x17” format as a poster announcing an important event.	State and local leaders who wish to promote the concepts of sustainability.



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A District's Response

<p>Session 3 Discussion Question 1: <i>What are the implications of the Reading First accomplishments with respect to how the district's reading mission and vision should be stated for future initiatives related to reading improvement?</i></p>	<p>Our mission states that we should accelerate as we go (i.e. student achievement should increase annually) and the data has proven that we have shown tremendous growth throughout our years in RF. We have managed to sustain a culture of excellence through effective and efficient staff development and grade level team meetings that address the needs of teacher, as well as the needs of students. The RF conferences have allowed our administrators and coaches opportunities to enhance their knowledge of reading in order to disseminate that knowledge to their staff in their school buildings.</p>
<p>Session 3 Discussion Question 2: <i>To what extent could you argue that school data on Reading First implementation and accomplishments imply that broader use of evidence-based reading program and practices is a good (or even the best) way of achieving the district's reading mission and vision?</i></p>	<p>The data shows that teachers' knowledge of the program and best practices have increased and they are more effectively meeting the needs of students. Teachers are able to look at data and differentiate to meet the needs of each individual student. The results have been so positive that schools are now moving those practices into the upper grades as teachers' transition to teaching in those grades in order to maintain and exceed progress made in the lower grades. The consistent use of routines and procedures has proven to be a key in ensuring progress. Screening new students at enrollment time has also had positive effects, since needed interventions can commence more quickly.</p>
<p>Session 5 Discussion Question 1: <i>Personnel Systems: In what ways should our district personnel system be strengthened to ensure there is a stable, qualified, and skilled staff in place to support effective implementation and use evidence-based reading programs and practices (for example: hiring processes, supervision and evaluation, etc.)?</i></p>	<p>Each school needs a staff member who is extremely versed in instruction (curriculum); such as a coach, IST, reading specialist, liaison, etc. Keeping this position should be a priority for leadership as the annual budget is developed. The position should be filled by an educator well versed in instruction and how to use data to show successes and in determining professional development. There is a strong demand for PD in order to continue to build a community of leaders and build on knowledge. Empowering and involving parents by sharing with them our vision, accomplishments and the role parent involvement plays in student learning so that they become our voice of reason to the powers to be.</p>
<p>Actions needed to strengthen personnel:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower our parents and use as advocates • Build/Maintain/Sustain a networking system for leaders and coaches to continue to share and learn best practices in order to share with our community of learners • Use reading-based hiring practices when hiring, assigning and evaluating personnel

<p>Session 5 Discussion Question 2, Part 1: <u>On-going Professional Development (PD):</u> How will on-going PD, including coaching, be sustained so as to ensure that all new and experienced teachers (including Special Education teachers, Title I teachers, and paraprofessionals) are equipped with the needed knowledge and skills to effectively teach the reading skills described by the five domains of reading?</p>	<p>Ongoing, consistent professional development should be a priority.</p>
<p>Session 5 Discussion Question 2, Part 2: <u>On-going Professional Development (PD) Part 2:</u> How will on-going PD for new and experienced administrators be sustained to ensure they are equipped with the needed knowledge and skills to be effective instructional leaders?</p>	<p>There is a strong need to recognize differentiate professional development. An instructional leader should be aware and well-versed in meeting the needs and interests of each individual. Quantitative (student achievement results) and qualitative data (teacher surveys, classroom observation data, etc.) should be used to determine professional development needs.</p>
<p>Actions needed to strengthen PD systems:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate among the schools and combine resources to promote best practices • Create a schedule of monthly/bi-monthly PD • Use human resources in buildings (Teacher Leaders) • Create a fund for substitutes so teachers can attend professional development as necessary • Occasionally have surveys for instructional interests • Provide professional development that focuses on basics (planning, scheduling, strategies, skills, curriculum, reading data and using it for planning instruction) • Differentiate professional development

<p>Session 6 Discussion Question 1: <i>Program Coherence: To what extent have evidence-based reading initiatives like Reading First and Response to Intervention reflect the district reading vision and mission? How can the school improvement process and future reading initiatives that use evidence-based reading programs be optimized to support student reading achievement goals?</i></p>	<p>The use of scheduled intervention time and research based programs has guided us in accelerating student progress. Assessment data is constantly used in driving instruction as we differentiate on an individual need basis.</p>
<p>Actions needed to address program coherence:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal and coaching cohorts would be beneficial in sustaining best practices. • Grade specific meetings for teachers to come together to talk about data would be beneficial. The use of data is available to employees. • The discussions between principals and coaches at RF meetings have been crucial in sharing strategies and having conversations about what’s working in schools. These should be continued. • The School Improvement Plan should be program specific and use student achievement data in determining success.
<p>Session 6 Discussion Question 2: <i>Coordination of funds: To what extent does the district coordinate federal and state funds to help schools use those funds to support the implementation and sustaining of evidence-based reading programs? How could that coordination be refined/revised to better help schools?</i></p>	<p>Title 1 funds are usually set aside for professional development and additional activities. There is an interconnection between funds and what is expected academically. Our state offered training of trainers has been effective in delivering PD at no cost for presenters. Conversations from professional libraries readings have also been instrumental in providing knowledge and allowing us to network amongst one another in sharing information and strategies. In addition, funds are being used for Summer School. The School Improvement Plan ensures that funding is allocated to support activities that promote and enhance student learning. Some funds were budgeted for parent involvement so parents could assist their child at home. Community partners have been donated money and items to help with decreasing budgets, and are vital to our continued success</p>

<p>Actions needed to help schools understand coordination of funds:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing professional development to assure staff members is effective in using and managing materials. • Analysis of data that reflects that the programs are making a difference in the success of students. • Training on evaluating programs and practices that best meet the needs in specific areas of reading.
<p>Session 6 Discussion Question 3: <i>Potential value of feedback: To what extent does the district currently provide feedback to schools on how programs can be better coordinated to meet student reading needs and on how to best utilize resources to support school literacy goals? What district policies and /or processes can be developed/revised to allow/improve the structure in which feedback is provided to schools? How will on-going feedback be provided between the levels in support of student reading achievement?</i></p>	<p>Data is presented during the school board meeting. The local education foundation previews the data before it is released to the public. There is a focus group composed of staff from various schools that meet to talk about student growth and strategies to improve student success.</p>

Disclaimer:

The information that is included in the conference materials or provided by conference presenters is intended to serve as a resource for participants. It should not be construed in any way as an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education (Department) of particular materials, products, services, or approaches or as an attempt by the Department to mandate, direct, or control the curriculum, program of instruction, or assessments of a State, local educational agency, or school. Consistent with the appropriate Federal requirements, States and localities have the flexibility to determine how best to use Federal funds to help ensure that every student can read at grade level or above by the end of the third grade.