An Analysis of Utah's K-3 Reading Improvement Program (Year 2)

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Overview

- This presentation focuses on WestEd's Year 1 and Year 2 analyses and discusses research-based literacy practices

- The Year 2 analysis was carried out under the auspices of WestEd's Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) contract, funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in the U.S. Department of Education

- REL West serves Utah, Nevada, Arizona, and California; communicating research-based information to the region via print publications and online events

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Background

- K-3 Reading Improvement Program was enacted via SB 230 in 2004

- State provides matching funds to help districts and participating charter schools ensure that third graders "read at or above grade level"

- Districts and charters must use program monies to improve K-3 reading proficiency and must annually report their progress to the USOE

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Introduction

- Supt Harrington asked WestEd to review the first two years of the program -- specifically program activities, uses of funds, and outcomes -- to inform legislators and education officials

- The Year 1 and Year 2 analyses were carried out by WestEd's Regional Educational Laboratory (REL West), funded by the Institute of Education Sciences in the U.S. Dept of Education

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Year 1 Findings

- Large-scale program implementation was underway
- Self-reports indicated that research-based literacy strategies and best practices were being implemented
- Program leadership was provided by the USOE
- SB 230 legislation presents both opportunities (local control) and challenges for evaluation

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Year 1 Conclusions

- Results during start-up were encouraging, but reading improvement must continue

- Participants must use Year 1 data to reassess goals and progress in this context (continuous improvement cycle)

- The full Year 1 report is available online at www.schools.utah.gov/curr/lang_art/elem/k3Framework/2005WestEdReview.pdf

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Year 2 Research Questions

1. How have participating school districts and charter schools thus far carried out the provisions of the SB 230 legislation?

2. What outcomes are evident after two years of program implementation?

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Year 2 Methodology

- <u>Self-reported data</u> from districts and charters were collected, tabulated, and summarized to provide information about proficiency goals and uses of funds

- <u>English Language Arts CRT data</u> from the USOE were used to obtain aggregated proficiency rates for each SB 230 program participant in 2004, 2005, and 2006

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Year 2 Participation & Funding

- All 40 UT districts again took part; 17 of 20 eligible charter schools participated (Year 1: 10 of 12)

- State SB 230 Funding to Districts: $12,287,355
  SB 230 Funds Matched by Districts: $12,348,629
  State SB 230 Funding to Charters: $212,645__
  Total SB 230 Program Funding: $24,848,629

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Year 2 Findings: Implementation

Common self-reported strategies in the 5 required areas…

- <u>Assessment Tools</u>: DIBELS and CRT

- <u>Reading Interventions</u>: Tiered and small group instruction; literacy specialists, coaches, aides

- <u>Professional Development</u>: UT K-3 literacy framework

- <u>Performance Standards</u>: UT Elementary Language Arts Core Curriculum

- <u>Measurable Goals</u>: Targets varied (set locally); generally sought to raise % proficient on DIBELS or CRT

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Year 2 Findings: Uses of Funds

SB 230 funds most commonly supported:

- Tiered small-group literacy instruction

- Literacy coaches and/or reading aides

- Professional development

- DIBELS testing to monitor progress and guide instruction

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Year 2 Findings: Uses of Funds

| K-3 Literacy Improvement Activity Supported by State SB 230 Funds	YEAR 1 (N = 48)		YEAR 2 (N = 53)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Tiered Literacy Instruction (Utah Model)	29	60.4%	41	77.4%
Professional Development for K-3 Teachers on Utah Literacy Model	33	68.8%	40	75.5%
Small Group Classroom Literacy Instruction	31	64.6%	40	75.5%
Literacy Coaches	34	70.8%	38	71.7%
DIBELS Testing	32	66.7%	37	69.8%
Alignment of Literacy Instruction with Utah Core Curriculum	30	62.5%	35	66.0%
Leveled Classroom or Take-Home Reading Libraries	20	41.7%	26	49.1%
Student Tutoring Achievement for Reading (STAR) Program	15	31.3%	25	47.2%
Professional Learning Communities or Study Groups Focused on Literacy	22	45.8%	25	47.2%
Summer Literacy Program	16	33.3%	20	37.8%
Utah Principals Literacy Institute	19	39.6%	20	37.7%
New Basal Reading Program	9	18.8%	15	28.3%
Before- or After-School Literacy Program	6	12.5%	11	20.8%
Full-Day Kindergarten	7	14.6%	9	16.9%
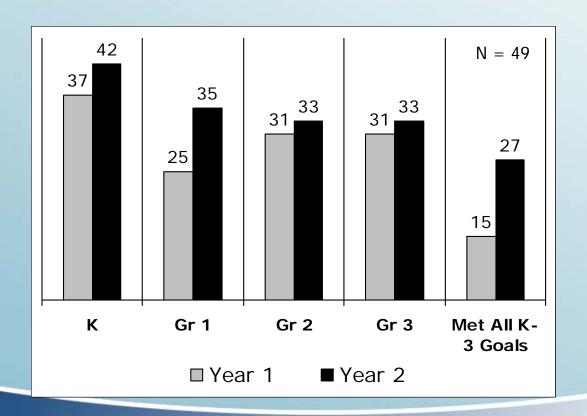
Year 2 Findings: Goals & Outcomes

- SB 230 participants must target specific, measurable goals that are based on student gain scores

- No statewide standard for student progress exists; goal setting and assessment is left to participants

- In both Year 1 and Year 2, SB 230 performance targets varied by participant

- Some districts/charters reported more ambitious goals than others
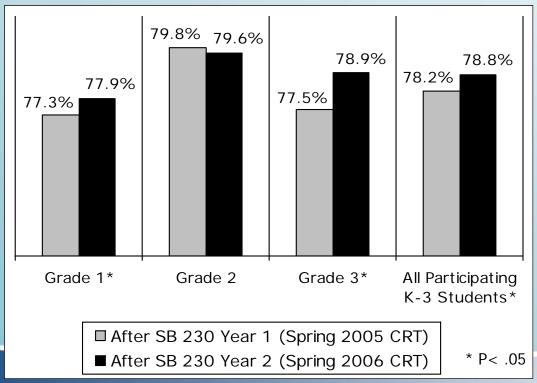
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Year 2 Findings: Goals & Outcomes

More met their grade-level goals in Year 2 than in Year 1

Year 2 Findings: Goals & Outcomes

Overall grade-level CRT proficiency rates increased slightly at Gr. 1 and 3 but remained about the same at Gr. 2

Legend:
- After SB 230 Year 1 (Spring 2005 CRT)
- After SB 230 Year 2 (Spring 2006 CRT)

* P< .05

	Grade 1*	Grade 2	Grade 3*	All Participating K-3 Students*
Year 1	77.3%	79.8%	77.5%	78.2%
Year 2	77.9%	79.6%	78.9%	78.8%

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Year 2 Findings Summary

- All 40 of Utah's districts continued with the program in Year 2 and 7 more charter schools participated

- In Year 2, SB 230 funds most commonly supported the implementation of key components of the USOE K-3 literacy framework, such as tiered literacy instruction, small-group literacy instruction, and focused professional development

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Year 2 Findings Summary (cont.)

- Tiered & small group instruction, STAR tutoring, new basal reading programs, leveled reading libraries, & before- or after-school literacy programs were more widely used

- More participants reported meeting their own literacy goals in Year 2 than in Year 1

- Statewide grade-level CRT proficiency rates increased slightly at grades 1 and 3 but remained about the same at grade 2

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Limitations

- No site visits conducted to observe local implementation; lacked school-level information on program activities

- Cannot contrast SB 230 participants from non-participants (no control group)

- Isolating SB 230's influence on student outcomes was beyond the scope of this analysis; CRT changes may have been due to any number of factors

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Implications: Evaluation Planning

- To allow for more insightful evaluation in the future, Utah policymakers may want to consider how to measure a program's effects as they draft the legislation

- Possible scenarios might include incorporating a detailed evaluation procedure into the statute or allocating (rolling out) program funds based on particular criteria

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Implications: Key USOE Role

- As SB 230 moves forward, USOE must continue to provide key program oversight (data collection, technical assistance, etc.)

- USOE must see that districts and charters have the capacity to ensure that school staff implement research-based literacy strategies correctly and with technical fidelity

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Research-Based Strategies:
Often Lost in Translation

Research   **Implementation**   Practice

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Meet the Needs of All Students

- Increase the quality, consistency, and reach of instruction in every K-3 classroom

- Conduct timely and valid assessments of reading growth to identify struggling readers

- Provide more intensive interventions to "catch up" the struggling readers

The prevention of reading difficulties is a school-level challenge -- school leadership is critical

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A School-wide System of Reading Instruction

- Clearly defined learning goals for students;

- Articulated curriculum aligned with state standards and reflected in explicit and systematic instruction in the five essential components of reading;

- An uninterrupted block of time committed to reading instruction;

- An assessment system that provides "real time" data to monitor student progress;

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A School-wide System of Reading Instruction

- Flexible grouping strategies and alternate grouping formats in response to data;

- An intervention plan that provides appropriate levels of intensity;

- Ongoing professional development supported by instructional coaches.

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Comprehensive Reading Program Using a Three-Tiered Model

Three-Tiered Intervention Model

Tier I: Core Instruction
general education classroom w/ flexible grouping
core reading program

Tier II: Supplemental Instruction
homogeneous grouping (1:3, 1:4, 1:5)
specialized supplemental materials

Tier III: Intensive Intervention
homogeneous grouping (1:2, 1:3)
sustained intensive focus using specialized intervention materials

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Continuum of Instructional Power

- If lots of students in the school are at risk, the first level of intervention is spending more time and improving quality of initial instruction -- everyone gets this
  - 90 minute block is an intervention
  - 120 minute block is a stronger intervention
- Intervention continuum begins with differentiated instruction offered by the classroom teacher during the 90 minute block

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Common Structure for Uninterrupted Instructional Block

- Initial, systematic, explicit instruction in essential skills and knowledge (30-60 minutes)

  - To the extent time for this is increased, and instruction is more powerful, it is an "intervention for the whole group"

- Differentiated instruction in small groups targeted to the needs of individual students (60-90 minutes)

  - This is the beginning of intervention continuum (time and focus and power) based on individual student need

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Definition of Terms

- What do we mean by *explicit* instruction?

  - Intentional instruction, including: modeling by the teacher, practice, corrective feedback, and frequent checks for understanding before expecting the student to perform independently

- What do we mean by *systematic* instruction?

  - Skills are prioritized, logically sequenced, and carefully paced; re-teaching and review are spiraling and recursive, building from fundamental to higher order skills

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Features of Well-Designed Core Programs

- <u>Explicitness of instruction</u> for teacher and student
  - Making it clear and direct for the student
- <u>Systematic & supportive instruction</u>
  - Building and developing skills from easy to difficult
- <u>Opportunities for practice</u>
  - Modeling and practicing the skill multiple times
- <u>Cumulative review</u>
  - Revisiting and practicing skills to increase strength
- <u>Integration of Big Ideas</u>
  - Linking essential skills

Key Classroom Strategy

- One important way to enhance the power of instruction during the 90 minute block is to have some of the small group instruction provided by another teacher or paraprofessional

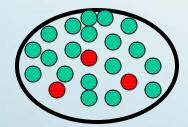Classroom teacher and group of 7
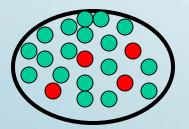
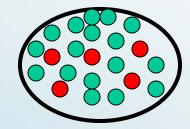Independent learning activity (5)

Independent learning activity (5)
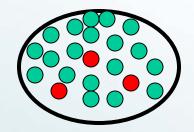
Resource teacher and group of 4
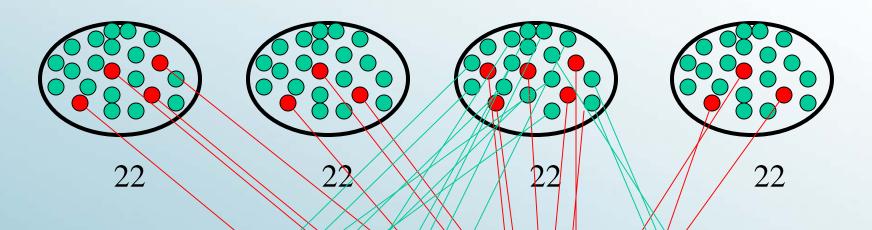
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Four Second Grade Classes

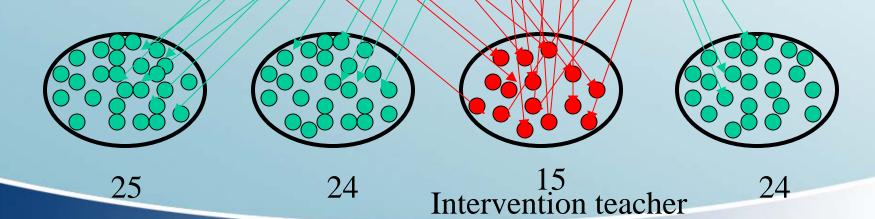Orderly movement between classes

22 22 22 22

25 24 15 24
Intervention teacher

A Closer Look at Interventions

- <u>Purpose</u>: Maximize engagement and time on task, provide more opportunities for students to respond and participate

- <u>Materials</u>: Research-based, emphasize the essential components of reading, aligned with core program

- <u>Grouping</u>: Students are taught in teacher-directed, small, same-ability groups of 3 to 5 students

- <u>Focus</u>: Instruction targets essential reading components based on each student's needs

- <u>Time</u>: Instructional time is increased (e.g., 30 minutes) beyond the core reading block

Targeted Interventions

- What are the primary areas most likely to need intervention to prevent reading difficulties?

  - Phonemic awareness, letter knowledge, phonemic decoding, and reading fluency -- emphasis on application to text

  - Vocabulary, background knowledge, thinking/reasoning, and active comprehension strategies -- applications to text

  - Help students become more engaged in learning and do more reading with materials at the right level and within an accountability framework

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Critical Elements of Effective Interventions

- More instructional time
- Smaller instructional groups

} *Resources*

- More precisely targeted at right level
- Clearer and more detailed explanations

Skill

- More systematic instructional sequences
- More extensive opportunities for guided practice
- More opportunities for error correction and feedback
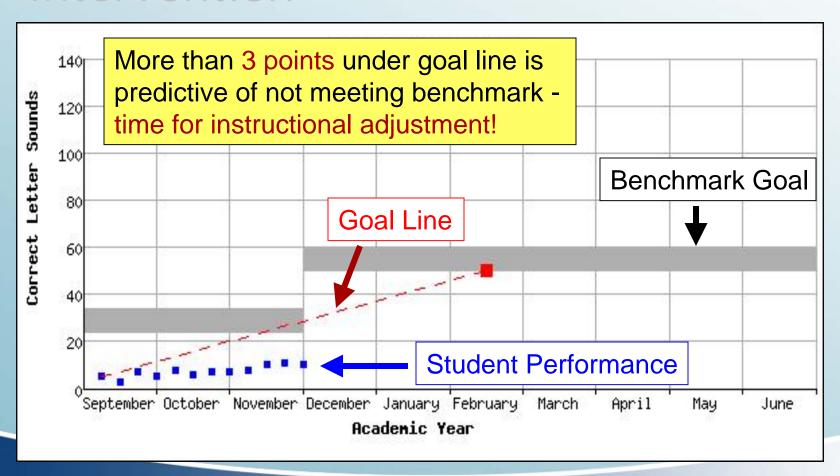
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Systematic Assessments of Reading Growth

- <u>Screening assessments</u> that identify children who are lagging behind in growth of critical skills

- <u>Progress monitoring</u> in growth of critical reading skills for all children during the year to help plan instruction

- <u>Diagnostic assessments</u> to help provide additional information useful for focusing and planning instruction

- <u>End of year outcome assessments</u> in the critical elements of reading growth -- Is the child on track to read at grade level by third grade? How effective is our program?

- <u>Data management system</u> that supports the use of assessment information in planning instruction

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Evaluating Student Response to Intervention

Keys to an Effective K-3 System

Once strong classroom instruction is in place...

1. Strong motivation and belief on the part of teachers and school leaders to teach all children to read

2. A reliable system for identifying students who need intensive interventions in order to make normal progress in learning to read

3. A reliable system for monitoring the effectiveness of interventions

4. Regular team meetings and leadership to enforce and enable the use of data to adjust interventions as needed

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Eight Keys (cont.)

5. Regular adjustments to interventions based on student progress; the most frequent adjustments should involve group size and time (intensity), but may also involve a change of teacher or program

6. Enough personnel to provide the interventions with sufficient intensity (small group size and daily, uninterrupted intervention sessions)

7. Programs and materials to guide the interventions that are consistent with scientifically based research in reading

8. Training, support, and monitoring to insure that intervention programs are implemented with high fidelity and quality

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Additional Resources

Center on Instruction

http://www.centeroninstruction.org

Florida Center for Reading Research

http://www.fcrr.org

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