

**An Evaluation of  
*Reading First*  
Materials and**

**Final Report to the  
Education Agency**



***Texas*  
Activities,  
Providers**

**Texas**

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**Report**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Reading First* is the cornerstone of the *No Child Left Behind* legislation. The goal of this program is that every child in America will read at grade level by the end of grade 3. The state of Texas submitted an ambitious application to *Reading First* in 2003 and was awarded approximately \$532.5 million for a six-year period. Integral to the receipt of this money was a promise of accountability. *Texas Reading First* has instituted multiple accountability measures and has gone beyond federal accountability guidelines to require an evaluation of the *Texas Reading First* leadership. This report, prepared by Hezel Associates, LLC, provides the results of such an evaluation and focuses upon *Reading First* activities, materials and providers in the state of Texas predominantly in school year 2005-2006.

Major findings of this report include:

- In May, 2005, a Manager of *Reading First* Grants and Partnerships was appointed. This Manager has provided exceptional leadership to *Reading First* and has been a strong source of support to the leadership partnership (which consists of the *Center for Academic Reading and Skills*, the *Vaughn Gross Center*, the *University of Texas System*, and the *Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation and Statistics*).
- The qualifications of all *Reading First* personnel currently at the Texas Education Agency and the partner organizations are strong and a good fit for their respective positions.
- Organizations in the *Texas Reading First* leadership partnership fulfilled most of their obligations for 2005-2006, but some reported being hindered in specific instances by receipt of partner funding from TEA later in the year than expected, and by difficulties in obtaining student data. Partner funding issues have largely been resolved in 2006-2007, and *Texas Reading First* is working to resolve the problems with obtaining student data.
- During 2005-2006, the Texas Education Agency and partner organizations communicated well with one another.
- High quality and timely training was given by the Partners to the *Reading First* Reading Technical Assistants. Reading Technical Assistants are those charged with training local campus coaches in the 714 *Texas Reading First* campuses in scientifically-based reading methods.
- The partner organizations were responsive to the evolving needs of the Reading Technical Assistant Specialists.
- All professional development products developed for *Reading First* by two of the leadership organizations (the *Center for Academic Reading and Skills*, and the *Vaughn Gross Center*) and evaluated for this study are of the highest quality.
- *Reading First* requires a state-wide evaluation of student achievement data by an external evaluator. The quality of this evaluation has been compromised by many factors, some not in the control of the evaluator.