

Oklahoma Department of Education

Closing the Achievement Gap with Wireless Generation Professional Services

The Oklahoma State Department of Education is committed to improving teaching and learning in its schools and closing the reading achievement gap across the state. This commitment is reflected in numerous programs, notably Reading First, in which most schools achieved significant student growth. The Department of Education was pleased with these results, but not yet satisfied, believing that all Reading First schools could close the gap with other high-performing Oklahoma elementary schools. The Department identified a subset of fifteen schools needing additional support and turned to longtime partner Wireless Generation to collaborate on delivering targeted, ongoing professional development at these sites during the 2007-2008 school year.

In shaping the professional development program for the fifteen schools most in need, Wireless Generation and the Department of Education took a series of steps:

- ▶ Conducted a statistical analysis of Wireless Generation's vast database on student learning and performance in early reading, and identified "outperformer" classrooms in Oklahoma—those that produce significantly greater gains in formative assessment scores than comparable classrooms nationwide.
- ▶ Observed outperformer classrooms to pinpoint the successful teaching practices and characteristics of effective classrooms.
- ▶ Had direct conversations with principals and literacy coaches at outperformer schools to explore the crucial elements of their success.
- ▶ Identified areas for growth in the fifteen targeted Reading First schools through classroom observations and discussions with principals and literacy coaches.
- ▶ Developed a customized program of ongoing professional development based upon learnings from the outperformer schools and the needs of each of the fifteen Reading First schools.



At each of the fifteen schools during the 2007-2008 school year, the coaches, principals, and teachers received up to six monthly visits from a Wireless Generation professional services consultant,

who provided customized professional development on various topics according to each school's needs. Session themes included:

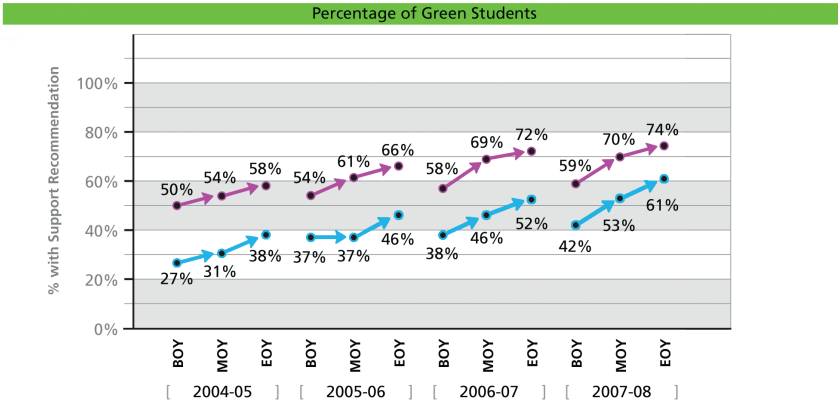
- ▶ Leadership walkthrough: Working with a principal and literacy coach to determine how to support teachers by observing their data and classroom practices
- ▶ Differentiated Instruction: Working with teachers and coaches to understand how to use data to differentiate whole- and small-group instruction for students
- ▶ Differentiated centers: Working with teachers and coaches to extend data-informed differentiated instruction to classroom literacy centers
- ▶ Data analysis and small-group planning: Working with teachers to understand how to analyze formative and summative assessment data to plan and adjust instruction
- ▶ Lesson planning: Working with coaches and teachers to implement a modified lesson study practice, to promote peer observation and reflective practice based on data and observation
- ▶ Vocabulary/Comprehension: Working with teachers and coaches to understand best practices in vocabulary and comprehension instruction and to create plans for teaching these higher-level skills

PERFORMANCE REPORTING: IDENTIFY DISTRICT GROWTH

mCLASS[®] DIBELS INSTRUCTIONAL RECOMMENDATION GROWTH COMPARISON CHART

Current As Of: 9/18/2008
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STATE: OK CUSTOMER: SPECIAL PROGRAMS DISTRICT: OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
 GRADE: K-3 YEAR: MULTIPLE YEARS



Students in the institution at time of assessment

LEGEND

- Outperformer Schools
- Fifteen Professional Development Schools*

Instructional Recommendation

Grade: K 1 2 3 4 5 6

VIEW RELATED REPORTS

- Progress Monitoring Status Report →

* Indicates a sub-set of fifteen Oklahoma Reading First schools that received a year-long customized professional development engagement during the 2007-2008 school year.

Based on an analysis of student data collected over the course of the school year, the fifteen schools receiving Wireless Generation professional development made substantial achievement gains and produced more student movement toward Benchmark than in previous school years, bringing reading scores closer to those of their high-performing peers in other schools.

The report above, a Growth Comparison Chart generated by Wireless Generation's mCLASS[®]:Direct™ reporting platform, documents the number of Oklahoma Reading First K-3 students reading at Benchmark ("GREEN Students") at the Beginning-, Middle-, and End-of-Year assessment periods from the 2004-2005 through 2007-2008 school years. As illustrated by the chart, during the 2007-2008 school year the fifteen schools receiving ongoing, customized professional development sessions (blue lines) made significant progress toward closing the achievement gap with their outperformer peers (purple lines). By the end of the year, 61% of K-3 students in the fifteen professional development schools were reading at proficiency, compared to the first year, when only 38% reached Benchmark.

Another sign of significant improvement in the fifteen schools can be seen when comparing End-of-Year Benchmark scores year over year. Prior to receiving customized professional development,

these schools ended each year with 20% fewer students on Benchmark than the outperformer schools. However, at the end of the 2007-2008 school year, the fifteen schools finished only 13% below their peers, representing a 35% reduction in the gap between the two groups.

A final observation that can be made based on the data above is the substantial gain made within the fifteen schools during the 2007-2008 school year. By comparing Beginning-of-Year scores to End-of-Year scores, the data reveal that the customized professional development engagement contributed to the biggest increase in Benchmark students over the past four school years:



With an investment in ongoing professional development sessions, all fifteen schools are making substantial progress toward becoming outperformers. Through their work with Wireless Generation, the Oklahoma Department of Education has significantly improved teaching and learning practices across all Reading First schools, and has decided to provide similar customized engagements to other schools across the state.

