



Here's How

State Sustainability Strategies

FOR STATE LEADERS

What's Inside

- Professional Development
- Follow-up Training to Supplement Initial Training
- Professional Development Infrastructures that Work
- Professional Development Goals: Getting Started

Examples and Tools

- Use Federal Funds
- Use Local Funds
- Essential Coaching Functions
- State Standards for High Quality Professional Development
- State Reading "Institutes"
- Washington State's Teacher Needs Assessments
- Professional Development Resources Organized by Role
- Guidelines for Professional Development Training Activities

Professional Development

Structuring State Professional Development to Sustain Scientifically Based Reading Instruction

Effective implementation of evidence-based practices in reading requires detailed knowledge and skills that are often not fully developed even after several years of teaching experience (*e.g.*, advanced knowledge in data utilization, sophisticated ability to differentiate instruction and knowledge of highly specialized supplementary and intervention programs and the skills to use them effectively). These skills often must be developed deliberately and explicitly as part of a school improvement initiative (*e.g.*, Reading First, RTI) with ongoing professional development. To achieve a unified goal—that all students will read on grade level by the end of third grade—a unified system of training and support is needed. A statewide, internally consistent, long-term approach to professional development can be developed when the state education agency (SEA) takes a leadership role in defining and guiding professional development in the state. With a strong professional development infrastructure in place, effective reading instructional practices will be widely implemented and sustained over time.

Follow-up Training to Supplement Initial Training

How can states ensure that the follow up needed to successfully implement initial training is available?

Even the most engaging initial training cannot assure that the knowledge and skills covered will be implemented successfully in the “real world” of the classroom. Often, follow-up coaching in the classroom and/or struc-

tured collaboration between colleagues is needed to achieve and sustain the desired training outcomes. While many Reading First schools have had funding for a full-time reading coach throughout the implementation stage, this position is often threatened as Reading First funding is reduced or eliminated. Many state officials—and even the U.S. Department of Education leaders—have

suggested using other [federal funds](#) or using [local funds](#) to continue funding the coaching position. Other schools have looked at the [essential functions of coaching](#) to determine how these activities can be fulfilled in other ways, thereby continuing to meet the need for in-class follow-up and in-school collaboration following initial training.

Professional Development: Infrastructures That Work

What are some examples of professional development infrastructures states have established?

States can develop a professional development system to support and extend learn-

ing opportunities for teachers in perfecting their skills in scientifically based reading instruction. Some key indicators are described on page 2 with specific examples of how states and other organizations have developed these structures.

Please see the table on the next page to learn how some states have developed infrastructures to support professional development related to reading.

Professional Development: Infrastructures (cont.)

Sustainability is the ability of a program to operate on its core beliefs and values (its reading culture) and use them to guide essential and inevitable program adaptations over time while maintaining improved outcomes.

Adapted from Century and Levy, 2002

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[Three Ways to Fund Literacy Coaching](#)

Indicators	State Strategies and Examples
A policy or position statement on what constitutes high quality PD for evidence-based reading	Some states have embedded expectations for PD in legislation, state policy, or state standards for high quality professional development . Such statements provide clear guidance to the SEA and to LEAs about the kinds of training activities they should be planning and supporting related to reading. These can be written or revised to support use of scientifically-based reading practices.
A structure for ensuring that all state PD in reading develops and supports a common vision of reading	State reading "institutes" and similar clustering of workshops exemplify the practice of structuring multiple trainings for those in various roles around a common purpose and vision for reading instruction. A series of training topics are designed to be interrelated and to build upon each other to develop the knowledge and skills needed to implement and sustain a system of effective practices. This common vision can also be strengthened through collaboration across programs that share a reading focus (e.g., Reading First and Title I or special education—RTI).
Tools that enable educators to identify professional development needs in the areas of effective reading instruction	Some states, such as Washington State, have developed teacher needs assessments aligned with the state reading standards designed to help educators identify specific skills and knowledge that they should address in their professional development, based on student performance results.
A means for making PD activities available on an as-needed and on-going basis —to anyone, anywhere, anytime	Several states have developed the infrastructure to make professional development resources and activities available on-line. These range from simply posting resources such as workshop PowerPoint presentations on a web-site such as <i>Just Read, Florida!</i> , to highly developed sequences of activities combining self-study of on-line training materials with real-time, face-to-face collaboration to facilitate understanding and implementation of the new knowledge and skills such as Pennsylvania's use of <i>eMBEDDED LEARNING</i> tools. When materials are posted and learning is facilitated in this manner, the need to have everyone in the same place at the same time to learn the same content is eliminated, and expert trainers become available anytime, anywhere, to anyone. The net result can be decreased training costs and increased effectiveness.
A user-friendly source for accessing PD information and tools related to reading instruction	Several states are using the internet as an effective tool to disseminate resource materials to interested parties. When utilizing the internet in this way, states should be careful to ensure ease of accessibility and a clear organization structure for the information it is providing to users. Some states organize resources by topic name, others by <u>role</u> for which the resource will be most beneficial. Resources such as PowerPoints, reports, plans, and clickable calendars and agendas have been posted for easy retrieval on state websites.
State guidance on recommended PD practices and allowable expenditures	Some states have developed and shared with their schools: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> guidelines for the kinds of training activities they offer in reading to LEAs, training requirements for discretionary grants from the SEA to the LEA or interpretation of federal or state policy related to reading improvement initiatives.

Professional Development Goals: Getting Started

There are many possible starting points in building your state’s professional development infrastructures. See the table below for some ideas.

<i>It is possible to:</i>	<i>By:</i>
<i>Engage stakeholders and collaborate across work group lines—to focus on high quality PD in reading</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>identifying common ground, common vision and common goals; and</i> • <i>putting responsibility for state reading improvement as close to the office of the Chief State School Officer as possible.</i>
<i>Transform the quality and effectiveness of state PD in reading</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>agreeing what characterizes “high quality PD”;</i> • <i>defining “mission-oriented” PD;</i> • <i>driving PD efforts with the reading vision;</i> • <i>developing a culture around PD to improve reading outcomes; and</i> • <i>implementing goal-oriented PD, with goals as student outcomes.</i>
<i>Make “transformative training” in reading widely available</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>making training elements and resources available on-line;</i> • <i>incorporating high quality PD elements across programs within the SEA; and</i> • <i>building them into grant programs, state initiatives and standards (curriculum; program; pre-service licensing standards).</i>
<i>Work toward providing the follow-up support educators need to successfully implement the PD they receive related to reading improvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>advocating for support for reading coaches in schools;</i> • <i>providing reading coach training within existing programs that train reading specialists, master’s level teachers and principals;</i> • <i>adding certification training in effective reading coaching through on-campus and on-line training and mentoring for new coaches; and</i> • <i>highlighting examples of district support for reading coach positions.</i>



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