

# Effective Reading Intervention Academy

## Evaluation Findings Report

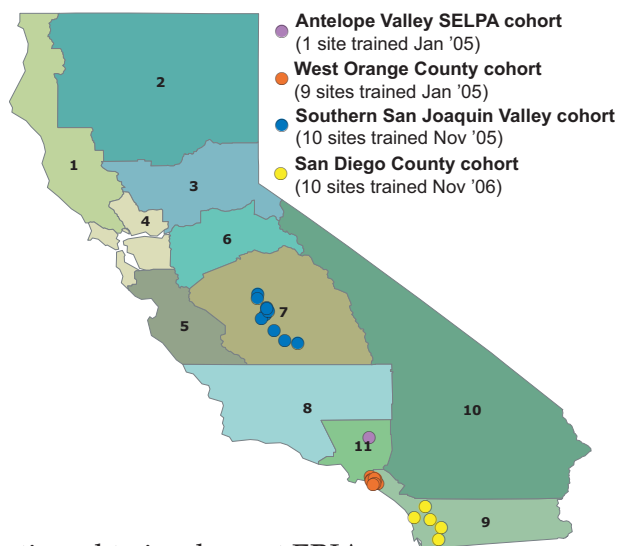
### July 2005–June 2006

The Effective Reading Intervention Academy (ERIA) supports schools in identifying struggling students and provides them with effective interventions to assist them in improving student reading skills. The purpose of this report is to examine the implementation of this program at 20 school sites in the state of California.

The initial phase of ERIA is based on the work of Dr. Anita Archer and takes a “best practices” approach to training school sites in how to develop an **intensive reading intervention program** for struggling elementary and middle school students. Each Academy training features **research-based curricula and techniques** that work school-wide in a variety of programs, including special education and for English learner students. Trainings also prepare participants to utilize a Response to Intervention (RtI) model, in which students are assessed, identified for placement in intervention programs, receive interventions, and are monitored through ongoing assessments.

CalSTAT began working with local education agencies in 2004–2005 to bring ERIA to classrooms. Antelope Valley SELPA and West Orange County Consortium were the first, with each hosting an ERIA training in which school site teams of teachers, administrators, and program specialists participated. Individual sites from the cohorts then received ongoing follow-up coaching. In 2005–2006, the Southern San Joaquin Valley hosted an ERIA training and also received follow-up implementation coaching for ten additional schools. The ERIA effort is clearly gathering momentum.

Effective Reading Intervention Academy  
2005–2006 School Sites



### Site Implementation of ERIA

Twenty sites from the three trained cohorts continued to implement ERIA and receive ongoing coaching support during 2005–2006. Sites implementing ERIA were able to design a program that best addressed the specific needs of their students for improving decoding and fluency skills—critical for increasing reading proficiency. This resulted in considerable variation among sites in the assessment of students and the interventions used.

#### Assessments Implemented

- ◆ San Diego Quick (15 sites)
- ◆ DIBELS (8 sites)
- ◆ Read Naturally (6 sites)
- ◆ Reading Fluency Monitor (6 sites)
- ◆ STAR Reading (3 sites)
- ◆ Scholastic Reading Inventory (3 sites)

#### Interventions Implemented

- ◆ REWARDS (11 sites)
- ◆ The Six-Minute Solution (7 sites)
- ◆ Read Naturally (6 sites)
- ◆ Phonics for Reading (3 sites)
- ◆ Language! (2 sites)

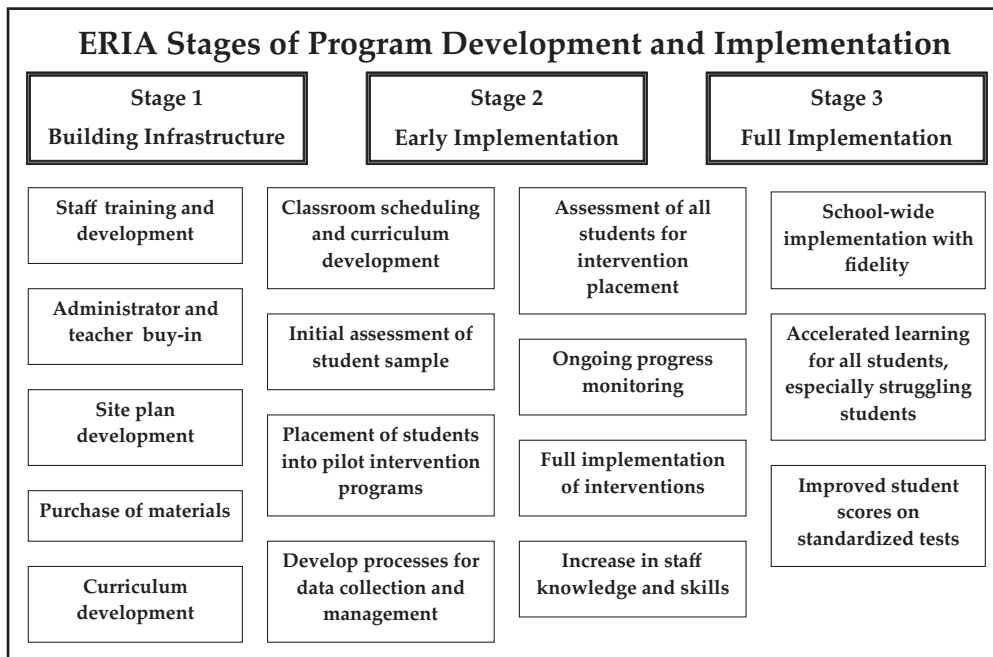
Of the 20 participating sites, 18 reported on student assessment and intervention scores in the areas of decoding and/or fluency. This report will examine only the pre- and post-assessment scores of “struggling students.”

# Program Development

After the initial training, all sites select an onsite coach to keep the momentum going and to ensure fidelity. While many sites chose a reading specialist as their onsite coach, some have selected an administrator or a classroom teacher to fill this role. The efforts of the onsite coach are supported by an outside coach who works with each of the sites within the cohort. The outside coach provides professional assistance as the sites develop and implement the ERIA program. The approach of selecting onsite coaches and supporting them with experts in the field is a sustaining activity and is essential to successful adoption and implementation of this program.

*One of the things that has made this different from other trainings or in-services that we have attended, is the follow-up. It has been very concrete, very teacher friendly, and something we can take back and get everyone excited about.* – Focus Group

Sites implementing ERIA within the two participating cohorts are all at different stages of the systems change process. The changes in curriculum, scheduling, and staff teaming required to implement a pervasive interventions program can be significant and may necessitate several years of incremental change before the program is at the stage of full implementation. At the end of the 2005–2006 school year, the West Orange County Consortium and Antelope Valley SELPA cohort had been developing their program for one-and-a-half years and the Southern San Joaquin Valley cohort had been doing so for six months.



## Degree of Implementation

While all of the sites in the two participating cohorts have been developing and implementing, several are deeply engaged in the implementation of ERIA reading interventions and have progressed further into Stage 2 of the implementation process. These sites have reported slightly higher levels of student performance on assessment measures. This finding is encouraging and suggests that as sites continue to advance toward implementation with fidelity, student assessment scores have the potential to increase.

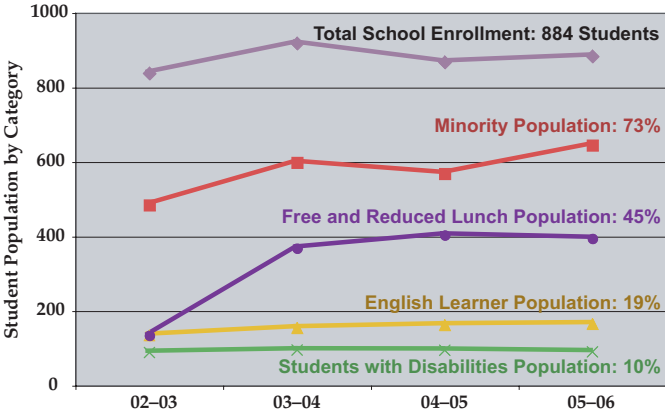
**Vista View Middle School** in Ocean View USD exemplifies a site that has progressed in development and implementation of ERIA and is achieving higher student outcomes. The student academic test scores and ERIA data for Vista View MS have been included in this report for analysis.

# Vista View Middle School Student Assessments

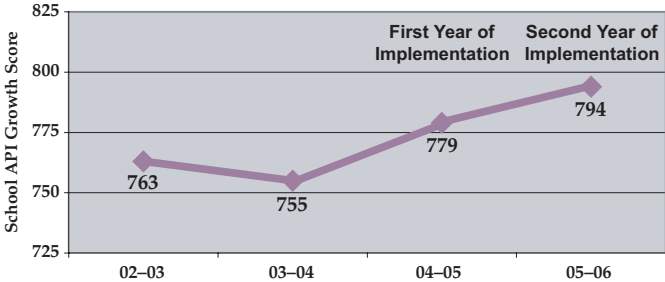
Vista View MS received their initial staff training in January 2005 and began piloting their program with a group of struggling students several months later. In the 2005–2006 school year, Vista View MS assessed their entire student population for placement into interventions.

- ◆ Vista View MS has a large minority population (73%) and a large number of students in the free and reduced lunch program (45%).
- ◆ Vista View MS’s API growth score increased by 24 points in the first year of implementation and another 15 points in the second year.
- ◆ Vista View MS’s schoolwide API growth score is now only 6 points away from the state goal for all schools, of 800.

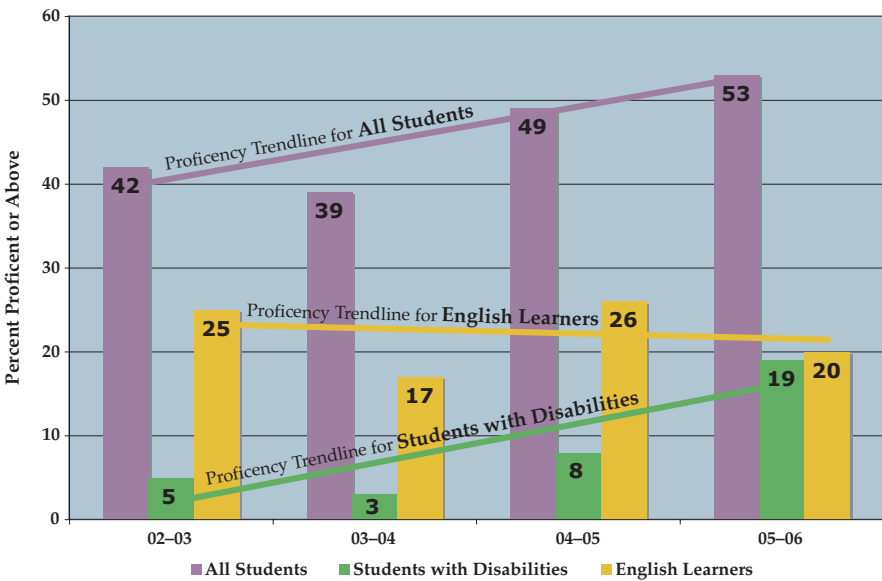
**Vista View Middle School Population**



**Vista View Middle School API Growth Scores**



**Vista View Middle School English Language Arts Proficiency**



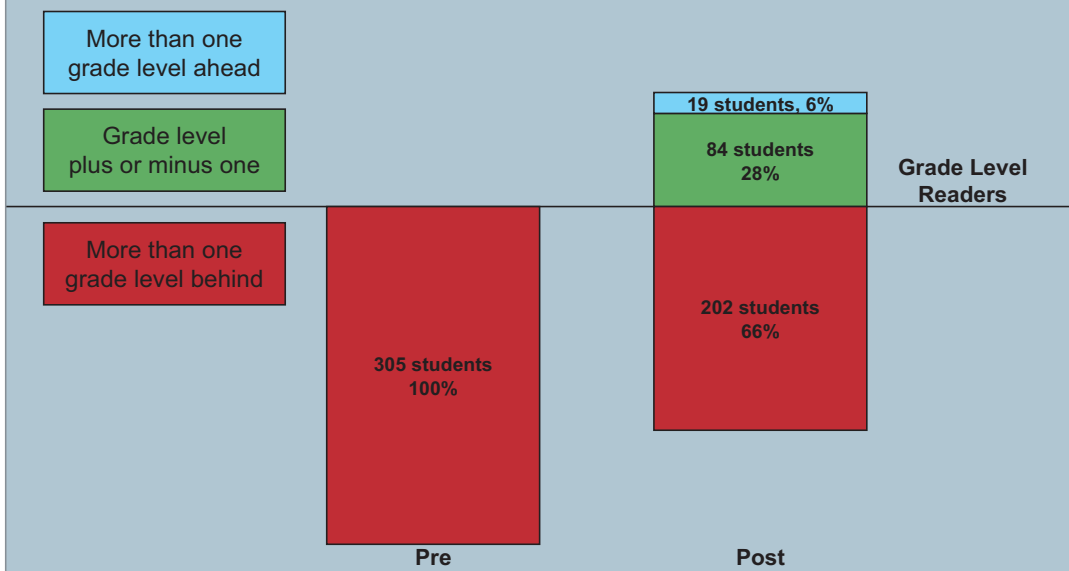
- ◆ In 2006, over 50% of the students at Vista View MS scored proficient or above on the CST English Language Arts (ELA) assessment test.
- ◆ Both All Students and Students with Disabilities have trendlines that suggest the percent of students testing at proficient or above on the ELA assessment, may continue to increase.

# Decoding ~ Vista View MS

Decoding assessments measure a student's ability to translate letters-to-sounds-to-words effortlessly. The automaticity of word recognition is a skill necessary in the development of fluency and comprehension. The San Diego Quick Assessment was used by nine schools to monitor decoding skills. This instrument uses lists of words that are keyed to grade level; students are presented with these lists in a given order and are asked to read the words. Each list successfully completed indicates that the student can effectively decode at that grade level.

Students who are decoding more than one grade level behind their current grade are considered to be **"struggling students."** The goal of ERIA intervention is to help these students bring their decoding skills up to or above their grade level. For the purposes of this report, only students who were first assessed as struggling students were included for analysis.

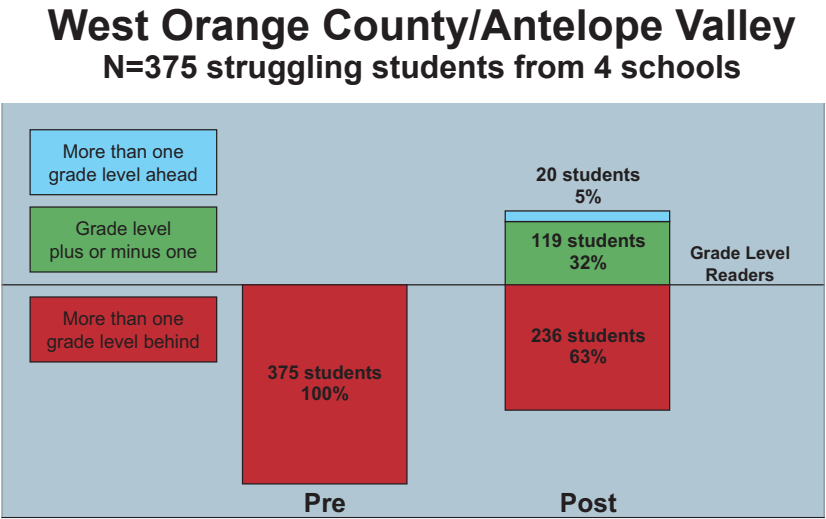
## Vista View Middle School Decoding N=305 struggling students



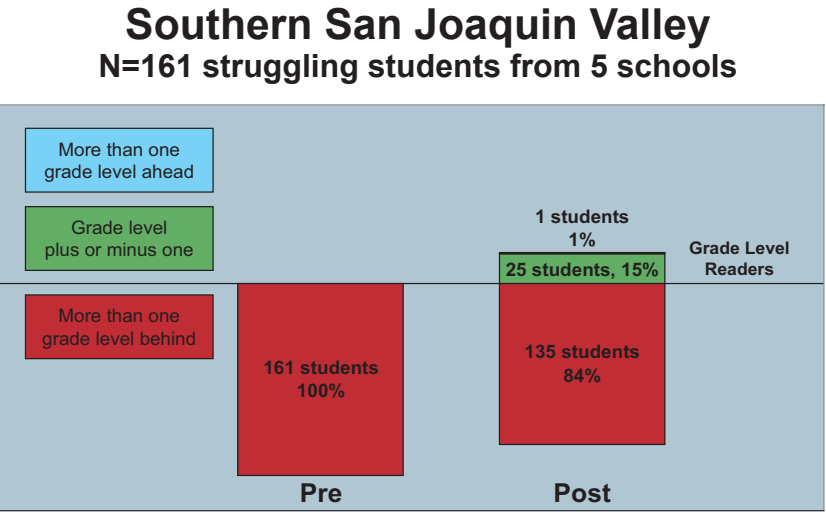
- ◆ All 884 students at Vista View MS were given a decoding assessment, and 34% (305 students) were found to be struggling with their decoding skills.
- ◆ Of the 305 struggling students, 28% reached their grade level, plus or minus one, over the course of the year.
- ◆ Of the 305 struggling students, 6% were decoding at more than one grade level ahead, by the end of the year.
- ◆ The student improvement at Vista View MS is very similar to the student improvement reported for the entire West Orange County / Antelope Valley cohort. This is primarily because Vista View MS students make up 81% of the students receiving decoding interventions within this larger cohort.

# Decoding ~ All Cohorts

- ◆ Sites in the West Orange County / Antelope Valley cohort have been developing their program for a year-and-a-half.
- ◆ In this cohort, 37% of the struggling students receiving interventions moved above the at-risk category, with 5% ending the year more than one grade level ahead.



- ◆ Sites in the Southern San Joaquin Valley cohort have been developing their program for six months.
- ◆ In this cohort, 16% of the struggling students receiving interventions moved above the at-risk category, with 1% ending the year more than one grade level ahead.



### Comments from School Site Plans and Focus Groups

*It has raised teacher awareness of the needs of specific reading skills that their curriculum does not include...We are working as a team to meet the needs of our students. – Alvina Charter Elementary School, Alvina ESD*

*Our students are struggling readers...We saw overall improvement in all areas. – McLane High School, Fresno USD*

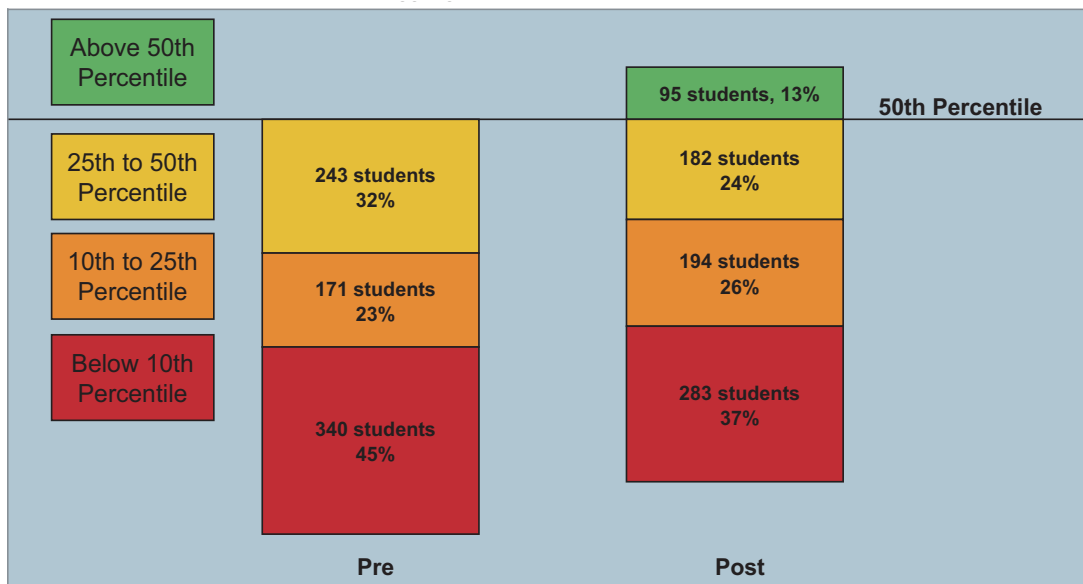
*This project was a reaffirmation of what our staff had been discussing. Participating teachers were given the flexibility in scheduling to implement the various components needed. This work resulted in intensified motivation to continue implementation of these programs, but with a desire to include other teachers throughout our school site. – Alta Vista Elementary School, Alta Vista ESD*

# Fluency ~ Vista View MS

Fluency assessments measure how many correct words a student can read from a passage in one minute. This “correct words per minute” (CWPM) value corresponds to a scale that assesses how students perform relative to their grade level. The CWPM percentile value range for each percentile bracket increases with each semester to reflect the expected student progress during the school year; therefore, movement into a higher percentile bracket represents not just an increase in CWPM, but an actual acceleration in learning. Fluency skills are an essential building block in the development of reading comprehension.

Students below the 50th percentile are considered to be “**struggling students.**” The goal of ERIA is to support schools in identifying struggling students and providing them with effective interventions that assist them in moving them to a higher fluency percentile bracket over the course of the school year.

## Vista View Middle School Fluency N=754 struggling students

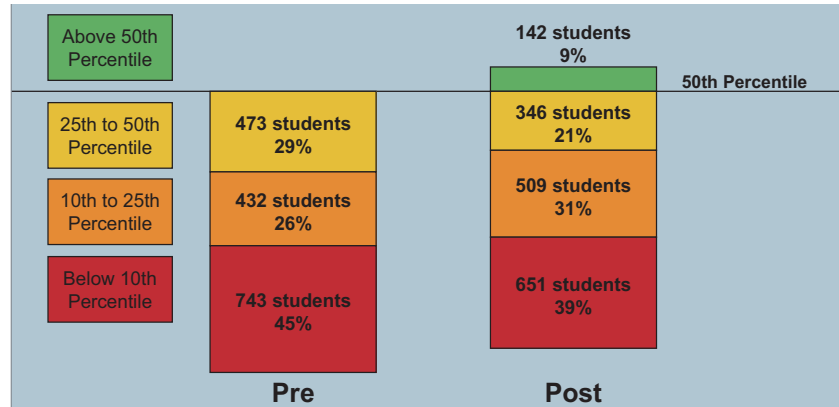


- ◆ All 884 students at Vista View MS were given a fluency assessment, and 85% (754 students) were found to be struggling with their fluency skills.
- ◆ Of the 754 struggling students, 13% rose above the 50th percentile in fluency.
- ◆ Of the 340 struggling students in the “below the 10th percentile” most-at-risk category, 57 students (17%) moved into a more proficient category.
- ◆ The student improvement at Vista View MS was slightly higher than that reported by the entire West Orange County / Antelope Valley cohort. Of the struggling students, 13% at Vista View MS rose above the 50th percentile, while 9% within the cohort rose above the 50th percentile.

# Fluency ~ All Cohorts

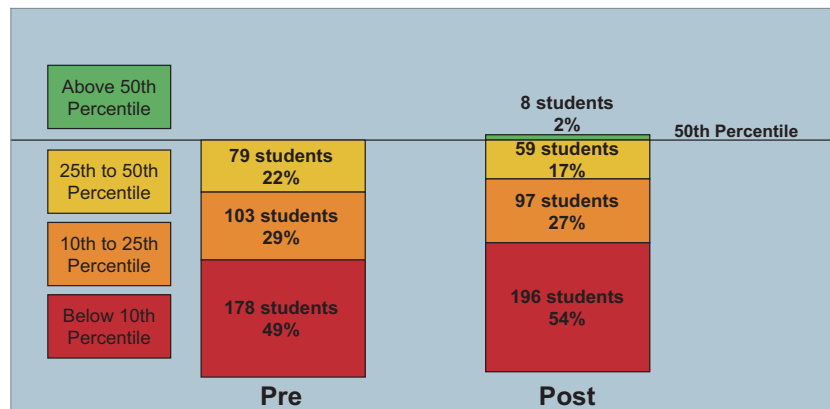
## West Orange County/Antelope Valley N=1,648 struggling students from 7 schools

- ◆ Sites in the West Orange County / Antelope Valley cohort have been developing their program for a year-and-a-half.
- ◆ In this cohort, 9% of struggling students who received interventions reached the 50th percentile, and 6% fewer students were in the most at-risk category.



## Southern San Joaquin Valley N=360 struggling students from 8 schools

- ◆ Sites in the Southern San Joaquin Valley cohort have been developing their program for six months.
- ◆ In this cohort, 2% of struggling students who received interventions reached the 50th percentile, and 5% more fell into the most at-risk category.



### Comments from School Site Plans and Focus Groups

*Students were able to verbalize their sense of improvement in reading. Students really liked The Six-Minute Solution – they liked the information in the passages, too. As reading got easier, students were more eager to participate in Accelerated Reader.* – Peterson Elementary School, Huntington Beach City SD

*We found that all students (intervention classes, regular education, honors, and even a few GATE students) were not meeting the expectations for fluency. Therefore, we implemented the Six-Minute Solution in all intervention classes and regular education classes.* – Mesa View Middle School, Ocean View SD

*I like the model, it gives every site the freedom to individualize the program.*  
– Focus Group

# Evaluation of the ERIA Program and Coaching Model

In January 2006, an independent project evaluator began working with CalSTAT to evaluate both the ERIA program and the coaching model that had been implemented by the West Orange County Consortium and the Southern San Joaquin Valley cohort. Evaluation methods included the following: conducting focus groups and electronic surveys of participating administrators, teachers, and coaches; interviewing the outside coaches about the scope of their work; observing several coaching sessions; attending a site's debrief session with the teachers, their administrator, and the coach; and meeting with a site's school principal and a district representative.

## Highlights from the Findings

### Strengths of the ERIA Model

- Attending the academy
- Collaboration
- Alignment with previous beliefs/practices
- Outside coaching
- Flexibility of program design
- Student outcomes
- Changing school practices
- Increased knowledge and skill

### Challenges of the ERIA Model

- Scheduling in the classroom
- Capacity and time constraints
- Teacher buy-in
- Need for more training
- Need for strong leadership

## Outside Coaching

An outside expert coach worked with each cohort to help develop and implement the ERIA program at individual sites. This support was provided throughout the school year during each stage of the process: the initial student assessment process, interpretation of assessment findings, intervention program selection, and progress monitoring. Those who were interviewed and participated in the focus groups indicated that **the outside coach provided accountability, expertise, a non-biased viewpoint, and problem-solving assistance**. All participants of the focus groups and other evaluation efforts agreed that this was one component of the ERIA model that should not be eliminated as the program is scaled up.

## Onsite Coaching

All sites participating in the program selected onsite coaches to support and train teachers at their site in the implementation of the ERIA program. However, it was found that this component was not as consistently developed as other ERIA components and that there was a great deal of variation in who the onsite coach was and how that individual worked with the teachers. The most successful model selected a school literacy coach who worked closely with the outside coach and the administration to implement ERIA. **In the most successful cases, the onsite coach also worked closely with the teachers by assisting with student assessment, procuring materials, training teachers on ERIA curricula, and observing and coaching teachers in the classroom.**

Findings from this independent evaluation will be available soon on the CalSTAT website at [www.calstat.org/SpecialReports.htm](http://www.calstat.org/SpecialReports.htm).

This ERIA report was developed by CalSTAT on behalf of the California Department of Education. CalSTAT is part of the California Institute on Human Services (CIHS), which is located at Sonoma State University. For more information about CalSTAT, visit our website at [www.calstat.org](http://www.calstat.org).

Report contributors: Cheryl "Li" Walter, Ph.D.; Kelly Bucy, MPA; Alan Wood