

**September 7, 2006**

**Lowest Performing Readers in Irving, Texas and Tucson, Arizona Finally Succeed on State Reading Assessments**

Significant numbers of regular education, special education, and English language learners with severe reading problems in Irving, Texas and Tucson, Arizona experienced transformations last year that led to success on state reading tests. The transformations occurred after both systems adopted the Read Right<sup>®</sup> reading intervention program.

The successes were noted by school officials in the 33,000-student Irving Independent School District in Irving, Texas, and the 200-student Cesar Chavez Learning Community's middle and high schools in Tucson, Arizona. The Irving ISD is a large public school system near Dallas, Texas. The Cesar Chavez Learning Community is a small but growing charter school with a secondary program that serves a large group of former school drop-outs and many students for whom English is their second language.

**Success in Irving, Texas**

The Irving ISD adopted Read Right as its third-tier reading intervention program two years ago to help more than one thousand of its lowest readers in the third through fifth grades. A much smaller group of Irving middle school students (grades 6-8) were introduced to the program last fall.

In Texas, regular education students take the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and special education students take a modified form of the same test (SDAA) that features fewer sample questions. Data from the TAKS and SDAA assessments administered in February and April of this year yielded the following results with both regular education and special education students. "We're very impressed with the percentage of students passing the tests, given that this group is comprised of our lowest readers," said Paula Dugger, Irving's district-wide reading coordinator. "At this point, we're more than satisfied with what Read Right has done for our students."

Total Number of Irving Read Right Students Tested: 1,147

*Irving Read Right Third Graders*

Number Tested/Lowest Performing Regular Education Students: 312

Number Tested/Special Education Students: 28

Percent Passing the TAKS with SDAA/Special Education students included: 78.5%

*Irving Read Right Fourth Graders*

Number Tested/Lowest Performing Regular Education Students: 309

Number Tested/Special Education Students: 69

Percent Passing the TAKS with SDAA/Special Education students included: 58.9%

*Irving Read Right Fifth Graders*

Number Tested/Lowest Performing Regular Education Students: 380

Number Tested/Special Education Students: 49

Percent Passing the TAKS with SDAA/Special Education students included: 72%

Dugger noted that the high passing rates among the district's lowest readers occurred by April. The district is waiting to see whether numbers increased further with the June administration of the test.

### **Success in Tucson, Arizona**

The Cesar Chavez Learning Community introduced Read Right for the first time last January in an urgent effort to help former drop-outs willing to give school another shot. After several years of operation, only one of the school's students had ever previously met the standard on the state reading/language arts test (Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards or AIMS). That outcome changed significantly this year when, **after just three months** of Read Right tutoring, 17 out of 21 Read Right students taking the AIMS either "met" the state standard (6 students) or "approached" (11 students). "Approached" is a state designation for students close to meeting the standard. Other designations are "exceeds" the state standard and "falls far below."

Sister Judy Bisignano is thrilled with the results. "These kids have gone up three, four, and even five grade levels," she said, referring to functional reading ability. "It's transformed the lives of our kids. Their attitudes have changed. They are better in all of their classes. Now they are saying, 'Maybe I can go to college'."

Sister Judy is the founder and principal of Cesar Chavez's charter high school program. Several years ago she hit the streets of Tucson and gathered up as many high school drop-outs as she could find to start the learning community's charter high school program. Many of the students "could not read a lick," said Sister Judy, and they came from homes where Spanish is the primary language. For the first few years, she and her staff tried conventional methods to raise reading scores without success. They brought in various programs to improve phonemic awareness, phonics knowledge, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. They adopted programs and encouraged students to read more. "Sound it out" began to seem like a classroom mantra, she said. She reduced class sizes at the school to improve the teacher-to-student ratio, but it didn't help.

Last year, the Catholic nun and author of numerous books written for teachers made the decision to seek something grounded in new ideas about reading and reading development. She chose Read Right and introduced the program to Cesar Chavez high school's poorest readers in January. Given the severity of students' reading problems, the positive results on state reading tests in such a short period of time surprised her.

"Our students can see that they are progressing," Sister Judy added about Read Right. "They love it and they know they are doing well."

### **If you or others on your staff would like more information:**

A School Information Packet can be obtained directly from the Read Right corporate office by calling Kim Kranz at 360-427-9440 or emailing her at [kimk@readright.com](mailto:kimk@readright.com).

School administrators and reading teachers across the country with first-hand experience with this new methodology are available and pleased to speak to school representatives directly. A referral list is included in the School Information Packet.

Additional articles about Read Right methodology are available online at [www.readright.com](http://www.readright.com). Dr. Tadlock's interactive constructivist view of reading and reading development are explained in detail in the new book written for parents, *Read Right! Coaching Your Child to Excellence in Reading*, published in 2005 by McGraw-Hill and available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

*Thank you.*