Ongoing professional development is at the core of Project Reading Excellence at "Boggsville" Elementary School (a pseudonym) and is intricately woven throughout all related activities. This professional development program is built on the pillars of sound scientific-based reading research, best teaching practices, and appropriate intervention strategies that foster student achievement. The model recognizes that a total school effort will be needed to attack the problems of poor reading performance. This paper delineates the program model and furnishes a proposal for the development of Boggsville Elementary School as a demonstration school in reading excellence. It outlines the following: purpose; goals and objectives; and preparation activities (preparation of administrators and of staff). The paper states that workshops will be conducted by faculty of Clark Atlanta University and by qualified staff from the "Bailey" School District. It explains the doctoral program (Ed.D.) supported by the school district and a master's degree program leading to a degree in teaching reading. The paper also discusses training of non-instructional staff; training of tutors; preparing parents for reading program support; evaluating the professional development plan; and management of the professional development plan. It states that the model represents a fast track for credentialing and better equipping instructional staff and administrators to improve student performance and facilitates co-reform in the school system as well as in the university. A timeline for completion of professional development plan activities is attached. (NKA)
A Model for K-12 Reading Achievement Through University/School District Collaboration

By Trevor A. Turner & Claudette H. Williams
A Model for K-12 Reading Achievement Through University/School District Collaboration

Written By
Trevor A. Turner; & Claudette H. Williams

Introduction
Ongoing professional development is at the core of the Reading Excellence project at Boggsville Elementary School and is intricately woven throughout all related activities. This professional development program is built on the pillars of sound scientific-based reading research, best teaching practices and appropriate intervention strategies that foster student achievement. Analysis and synthesis of major research (Burns, et al., 1999; Learning First Alliance, 2000; National Reading Panel Report, 2000; Snow, et al., 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 1999) reveals that continuous professional development is critical to student achievement. In addition, reading research synthesis by the National Reading Panel (2000) indicates that the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in their analysis found that teachers who had more professional training were more likely to use teaching practices that are associated with higher reading achievement on NAEP tests, (National Reading Panel, 2000, p. 5-3, citing Darling-Hammond, 2000). Consequently, the ongoing development of quality teachers must be a critical component of this professional development program.

The effectiveness of Project Reading Excellence will be determined to a great extent by the preparation of all school employees supported by the parents in a holistic effort to improve reading performance. This model recognizes that teachers acting in isolation may achieve only minimal if any success in strengthening the literacy skills of students. A total school effort will be needed to attack the problems of poor reading performance.

As indicated by research cited by The National Reading Panel (2000), improvements can be gained in students' reading performance not only through enhancement of the instructional capabilities in reading of teachers, but also by improving the motivation of teachers. Examining the major components of reading programs, the NRP report noted that "with training, teachers can teach phonemic awareness effectively" (p. 2-44), that while phonics should not be the dominant component in a reading program, training of teachers to apply this aspect of reading instruction should be given high priority (p. 2-96) and to improve reading comprehension, teachers need to be trained in comprehension strategies and procedures (p.4.94). Overall, the report found that both pre-service and in-service teachers could benefit from direct training in reading instruction methodologies and, of greater significance, the report cited research findings that showed clear relationship between the training of in-service teachers and improved student outcomes in reading (p.5-13/14). These recommendations have implications not only for the training of teachers but also for the preparation of school administrators who have to supervise and evaluate teachers. While more research is needed on the role of parents in the acquisition of

*Pseudonyms are used to represent the school and school district for which this model was developed. The school is transitioning from a suburban to an urban environment and has had more than five years of chronic failure on standardized tests.
literacy skills, the NRP report also noted that parents are anxious to help their children acquire the knowledge and skills they need to become successful when they enter school and begin reading instruction.

**Purpose**

This proposal provides for the development of Boggsville Elementary School as a demonstration school in reading excellence. As such, it not only offers the opportunity to train instructional and administrative staff at Boggsville Elementary School as instructional leaders in reading, but it will also serve as the guide for the training of personnel in other low performing schools in Bailey County School District to deliver reading programs of excellence. To facilitate the process of transfer of knowledge and capabilities for effective reading instruction through the demonstration school, the professional development programs provided here for the Boggsville Elementary administrators and teachers will be open to administrators and instructional staff from other schools with similar characteristics in the school district.

This plan proposes a total organizational effort at improving reading performance that includes addressing the roles and capabilities in reading instruction of the teachers, school administrators, non-instructional staff and parents. While each group will be treated separately, the integrative and collaborative features of the roles of each will be stressed. Initial and closing orientation meetings will bring all groups together to make them aware of their supportive and complementary functions in the effort to strengthen reading performance throughout the school. The diagram below indicates the conceptualization of the professional development plan as it relates to improved student performance in reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identified School Performance Needs</th>
<th>Targeted Intervention Strategies</th>
<th>Professional Development Outcomes</th>
<th>Student Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low student performance in language arts and reading</td>
<td>Comprehensive Professional Development For: Administrative Staff Instructional Staff Non-instructional Staff Tutors Parents</td>
<td>Increased competence and motivation of administrative, instructional and non-instructional staff to deliver reading programs for excellence More community and parental participation in school programs and greater understanding by parents of their role in improving student reading performance Increased after school activities to support student academic performance and strengthened capabilities of tutors in reading programs</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited professional development opportunities for administrative, instructional, non-instructional staff, tutors and parents</td>
<td>Comprehensive Professional Development For: Administrative Staff Instructional Staff Non-instructional Staff Tutors Parents</td>
<td>Increased competence and motivation of administrative, instructional and non-instructional staff to deliver reading programs for excellence More community and parental participation in school programs and greater understanding by parents of their role in improving student reading performance Increased after school activities to support student academic performance and strengthened capabilities of tutors in reading programs</td>
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<td>Limited parent involvement in and community support for student academic success</td>
<td>Comprehensive Professional Development For: Administrative Staff Instructional Staff Non-instructional Staff Tutors Parents</td>
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Goals and Objectives
The following goals (numbered) and corresponding objectives (alphabetized) are designed to achieve the purpose of the professional development plan to be implemented over a two-year period:

1. To strengthen the capabilities of Boggsville Elementary School administrative and instructional personnel to implement, supervise and evaluate the school's reading program for improved student success in reading and language arts

   a. Over the two year period teachers will show increasingly effective classroom practices in reading instruction as determined by the evaluation of their supervisors

   b. Teachers will be able to develop suitable tests to measure reading performance as an outcome of the professional development program

   c. By the end of the two year period of this project, three cohorts (15, 20, 20) of administrators and teachers selected from the demonstration school and other district elementary schools will complete graduate and certificate programs in reading instruction and supervision of reading with emphasis on the needs of the district's reading programs

   d. By the end of two year, an additional 20 administrators and 20 teachers will have shown improved understanding of appropriate application of reading strategies and supervision of reading as determined by their earning of appropriate staff development units through a program of project-sponsored workshops

   e. By the end of the two year period of the project, students in the demonstration school will have shown a ten percentage point improvement in reading achievement as measured by standardized tests

2. To enhance the knowledge of the administrative and instructional staff in applying appropriate technology for increased effectiveness of the reading program

   a. Administrators and teachers will from their training in the project demonstrate the ability to evaluate equipment such as the Kurzweil 3000 Reader and selected software to enhance effectiveness of the reading program

   b. Teachers in the demonstration school will, by the end of the two year period, be able to provide guidance to teachers in other district schools on appropriate computer and communications technology for assisting students with reading difficulties

3. To strengthen delivery of the school's reading program by providing tutors trained to make effective use of individual and small group sessions

   a. The project will provide to the demonstration school each semester during the duration of the project at least 10 tutors trained in micro-teaching for individual and small group sessions
instruction, each trained in two of the following areas: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics Instruction, Vocabulary Instruction, Word Recognition, Text Comprehension

b. Tutors will demonstrate effectiveness in micro-teaching and small group instruction as determined by the evaluation of their supervisors

4. To help non-instructional staff and parents have a clearer understanding of their role in the school's reading program

a. Non-instructional staff and parents will, at the end of their designed workshops, be able to articulate an understanding of the goals and main features of the school's reading programs and be able to state how their roles support the program

b. By the end of the two year project period, the demonstration school will show a fifty percent increase in parental involvement in the school's academic program

Preparation Activities
Development and implementation of the activities to achieve the goals of this professional development plan will be made possible through a collaboration of Bailey County School District, Boggsville Elementary School as the demonstration school, the Georgia Department of Education through its Reading Excellence Act Demonstration Sites Program, Clark Atlanta University, and community organizations. The value of collaboration between schools and external organizations has been well established by research findings. Young people coming out of schools that had strong collaboration with community organizations were found more likely to have received recognition for good grades, more likely to believe that they could go to college, had more positive outlook on the future, and expressed a greater sense of personal value and empowerment than their peers (M. McLaughlin, 2001). Teachers in schools that collaborate with institutions of higher education such as professional development schools report more willingness to take instructional risks and experiment with new pedagogical approaches, growth from engaging in non-traditional roles, a greater feeling of professionalism and improvements in their classroom practices (I. Abdal-Haqq, 1998).

The professional development plan presented here is based on science-based reading research (SBRR) principles and has five major strands addressing the preparation of administrators, instructional staff, non-instructional staff, tutors for students in the selected elementary schools, and parents.

1. Preparation of Administrators

While the preparation of teachers is critical to the success of any reform effort that focuses on student achievement, it is increasingly recognized that the preparation of school administrators cannot be ignored if reform is to be effective. The Institute for Educational Leadership noted in its Report, Leadership for Student Learning: Reinventing the Principalship (Oct. 2000), that "without strong leaders, schools have little chance of meeting any other challenge." The Report goes on to state that in addition to the usual building responsibilities, today's principals must also serve as "leaders for student learning. They must know academic content and pedagogical techniques. They must work with teachers to
strengthen skills. They must collect, analyze and use data in ways that fuel excellence." This model of professional development will provide opportunities for administrators in the demonstration school and other selected schools to extend their knowledge and skills in instructional management and supervision with special emphasis on reading achievement. Three sub-strands of instructional activities will engage administrators in the effort to help them develop the "intellectual acumen, curriculum support, professional development opportunities, data driven decision-making, and visionary perspective" that Gerald Tirozzi (Education Week, March 29, 2000) holds are necessary for the administrator to be able to "mold a faculty of teachers into a unified force to advance academic achievement for all students." Each sub-strand will accommodate a separate cohort of administrators, but all three will have as focus an emphasis on instructional supervision for reading achievement. The following will be highlighted in each sub-strand:

- Basic components of reading instruction
- Research based methodologies for success in K-3 reading instruction
- Diagnosing reading difficulties and identifying students at-risk for failure in reading
- Assisting teachers with test development for a reading program
- Appropriate use of technology in reading instruction
- Instruments for evaluating reading instruction
- Using data from evaluation of a reading program to improve instruction
- Encouraging parental and community support for the reading program
- Understanding cultural and economic factors that might inhibit reading achievement and developing appropriate intervention activities
- Assisting non-English speaking parents to deal with the demands of an instructional program for reading in English

In addition to the sub-strands, all principals and school administrators in the project schools will attend the training sessions organized by the Georgia Department of Education Reading Excellence Act project on the principles of SBRR and effective leadership for school reform.

The three sub-strands of instructional preparation activities for administrators will incorporate as incentives, degree or certificate earning opportunities or staff development units that can be applied to the renewal of certificates. The degree-earning sub-strand will allow a selected cohort of school leaders admission to the doctoral program in educational leadership (Ed.D.) at Clark Atlanta University. This degree program will accommodate a cohort of 15 students to be prepared in supervision of reading as a major cognate with a minor concentration in special education. For those who hold a master's degree but do not wish to enter a doctoral program there will be a shorter program leading to an endorsement of their certificate in instructional supervision with a focus on reading. For other school leaders, 10 staff development units may be earned from a 100 contact hour program of workshops and seminars over the two years of the program.

a. Staff Development Program

The Professional Development Plan will offer a series of seminars and workshops leading to staff development units for administrators from the demonstration or other district schools.
The school district will select participants from other schools for this program. The emphasis will be on instructional supervision in reading in which all the topics listed above for the training of administrators will be addressed. The program will consist of 50 contact hours each project year allowing administrator to earn five staff development units each year and ten units over the two-year period. Workshops will be scheduled on weekends, ten each semester of three hours each, to facilitate attendance of administrators. See Appendix A for scheduling of workshops. This program not only will enhance their instructional supervision capabilities but will also allow administrators to apply the units towards certificate renewal.

Workshops will be conducted by faculty of Clark Atlanta University and by qualified staff from the Bailey County School District.

b. Doctoral Program (Ed. D.)

This will be a cohort of 15 students, three from Boggsville Elementary School, the demonstration school, and 12 from other schools exhibiting similar characteristics in the County.

Admission Criteria and Procedures
The School District will initially identify the candidates for the doctoral program. Those identified will have to hold a Master's degree and additionally meet the admissions criteria of Clark Atlanta University and the School of Education to be admitted to the doctoral program.

Program Content
The doctoral program will consist of 60 semester hours beyond the Master's degree and will include the following components:

Administer and supervision 18 hours
   ♦ Management of instructional programs:
     Coordinating and directing personnel
     Scheduling activities
     Securing resources, developing budgets, controlling expenditures
     Evaluating and reporting on programs
   ♦ Leadership for curricular innovation:
     Developing innovative programs appropriate to the student population to resolve problems of student achievement
     Motivating the school community to accept and try innovative programs
     Applying technology effectively to support instruction and facilitate academic achievement
   ♦ Supervision of instruction:
     Instructional Strategies appropriate to age group
     Scheduling of supervisory activities
Motivating teachers
Evaluation of instruction
Use of test results to improve instruction

Reading Specialization 15 hours
- Reading content
- Instructional methods for K-3 reading instruction
- Cultural obstacles to reading performance

Special Education 6 hours
- Appropriate reading instructional strategies for children with special needs
- Helping parents of children with special needs

Research 9 hours
- Developing teacher made tests for assessment of reading performance
- Using data to improve instruction
- Identifying factors within the components of reading that can affect reading performance
- Understanding appropriate research methods and identifying suitable research instruments to examine reading performance

School-community Relations 6 hours
- Strategies for securing parental involvement in the school's academic life
- Helping migrant and/or non-English speaking parents to understand and be accepted into the life of the school
- Developing partnerships with community organizations

Dissertation research 6 hours

This will be an accelerated program using web-enhanced courses. Students will begin the research courses in their first semester as preparation for an early start on their dissertation. The program will also be field-based meaning that not only will the courses be held conveniently for students at centers in the school district, but more importantly, the issues for class discussions and research activities including dissertation topics will be drawn from concerns and problems specific to reading instruction and student reading achievement in the school district.

Training in the application of technology will be carried out in two ways. Students will take a course on educational technology as part of their concentration in administration and supervision. In addition, the appropriate application of technology to reading instruction will
be a major thread through all the courses. This will include selection and evaluation of software for support of reading instruction, and using online resources, particularly through Georgia Learning Connections, to support the varying needs, abilities and interests of students in the reading program.

b. Endorsement in Instructional Supervision

Holders of master's degrees who do not wish to be considered for the doctoral degree program will be able to enter the program offered by Clark Atlanta University for the endorsement in instructional supervision. Such persons must also be certified in teaching P-5 to be admitted to this program. This cohort will accommodate 15 students each year of the program drawn from the demonstration school and other similar schools in the district. Selection of candidates for this program will be done by the school district from employees who meet the criteria for admission.

Program Content
The Instructional Supervision Program will consist of 9 semester hours (3 courses) in general principles of administration and supervision, curriculum planning for educational leaders, and supervision of instruction. Like the doctoral program, the focus will be on supervision of reading instruction and like the doctoral program, the application of technology to instruction will be integrated into the work of all three courses. Students will be able to complete the three courses within an academic year.

2. Preparation of Instructional Staff

Professional development for teachers intended to translate policies for reform into effective practice must be aligned with content standards and assessment, focused on student achievement, flexible and responsive to school needs, accessible and convenient to targeted participants, and be a part of the day-to-day work in schools (Southern Regional Education Board, 1998). The professional development plan for instructional staff proposed here will focus on the following:

- Strengthening the knowledge of teachers in the content of reading
- Providing strategies to make reading instruction more appropriate to the population of K-3 students served by the demonstration school.
- Incorporating appropriate technologies to support reading instruction and improve student performance in reading
- Helping teachers to secure parental support for the reading activities of the class
- Guiding teachers in the development of tests for valid assessment of student performance in reading and analyzing test results to improve instruction
- Helping teachers to be aware of social factors that might be obstacles to improved reading performance and developing culturally responsive intervention strategies

The program will continue over the two year period and beyond to ensure that success is built on the principle of providing staff development not only at the beginning of the
reform initiative but also during the implementation phase (C. Moffett, 2000). This ongoing staff development program will consist of at least 100 contact hours of instruction.

Like the program for administrators, the development program for teachers will also include three sub-strands offering incentives through a staff development program granting SDUs, a Master's degree program at Clark Atlanta University, and a program for the endorsement in instructional supervision. This program will accommodate a cohort of 20 participants in each sub-strand.

a. **Staff Development Program**

A staff development program will be developed for the instructional staff providing them with 50 contact hours per year of preparation in reading instruction incorporating the issues listed above. The application of technology will also be an integral part of this program. Teachers in this program will earn over the two years, 10 staff development units which can be used towards renewal of their teaching certificates. The staff development workshops for teachers will be scheduled conveniently on evenings and weekends throughout the school year and during the summer session.

All instructional staff of the demonstration school will be eligible to attend these workshops. The school district may also select teachers from other schools in the district to participate in this program.

Workshops in this program will be developed and conducted by faculty from Clark Atlanta University and by qualified staff from the school district.

b. **Master's Degree Program**

This program consists of 39 semester hours of courses leading to the Master's degree in Reading. The program encourages students to engage in research in reading problems through the provision for a thesis that can be substituted for 6 hours of coursework. The program also provides for 6 hours of electives which can be applied to the study of cultural factors affecting reading performance.

**Admissions Criteria and Procedures**

The school district will initially select the candidates for admission to the degree program. Those identified will have to meet the requirements of Clark Atlanta University and the School of Education for admission to graduate study at the master's degree level.

**Program Content**

The program of 39 hours will include the following components:

- Reading specialization (Reading content and instructional strategies) 18 hours
- Behavioral studies 9 hours
- Research (Problems related to reading instruction and/or student reading performance) 6 hours
Electives (Study of cultural factors affecting reading achievement) 6 hours

This is also an accelerated, web-enhanced, field-based program designed to be completed within the two years of the project. These students will also have to do a course in educational technology as part of their specialization in reading and will also have the appropriate application of technology to reading instruction integrated in the other courses in the specialization.

c. **Endorsement in Instructional Supervision**

Those teachers who do not wish to enter the degree program but who meet the criteria for admission to the endorsement program (Master's degree, certificate in P-5 teaching) may be allowed to join the administrators in the 9 semester hours endorsement program. These teachers may have special leadership or supervisory responsibilities in their school and the program would be seen as suitable for enhancing their capabilities in such roles.

3. **Training of Non-Instructional Staff**

The holistic nature of this project requires that all members of the school as an organization recognize their responsibility to improve reading performance of students and understand their role in the overall operation of the project. Non-instructional staff including paraprofessionals and after-school staff will be included in the professional development program to help them understand and accept their role in the program. The following development activities will be provided for non-instructional staff:

- Orientation sessions to expose them to the goals, and main features of the reading program and their role in supporting the program and helping students to remain on task.
- Workshops on:
  - Working with students on a one-to-one basis or in small groups
  - Working with non-English speaking parents or parents of limited English speaking capabilities

The sessions will be conducted by administrators and instructional staff of the school and will be scheduled by the principal for the convenience of the school.

4. **Training of Tutors**

Strengthening the reading program of the demonstration school will require a cadre of trained tutors to assist teachers in classes and to serve students in the after-school program. Tutors will be selected from students at Clark Atlanta University by collaborating faculty in the School of education and by the school district from community volunteers. Those selected will be required to participate in a training program of workshops designed to improve their capabilities to work with individuals and small groups of children of elementary school age in reading.

The training for tutors will take the form of instruction in micro-teaching focusing on the main components of reading instruction. Tutors will select for the focus of their training two components from phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, word recognition, vocabulary
building, and text comprehension. Tutors will be trained using the materials selected from the school’s instructional program in reading.

Faculty from Clark Atlanta University will develop and conduct these workshops which will be scheduled early in the project year before tutors are sent to schools.

5. Preparing Parents for Reading Program Support

While administrators and instructional staff will receive training in encouraging parents to support the academic programs of the school, parents will also be encouraged to give their support through direct intervention. Engaging parents in the academic life of the school is critical to ensuring that reform initiatives are effective. But educators have to help parents to see their role and understand the variety of ways that they can be a part of the school and of their children's intellectual growth (E. Galinsky, 2001). If teachers are to practice implementing culturally responsive pedagogy and if schools are to be the learning communities for mutual growth of students and teachers, it is crucial that parents and the community be involved in the life of the school (C. Ovando, 2001). An initial orientation session of parents, administrators and teachers will provide parents with the goals and main features of the reading program and also give them some understanding of their role in encouraging, supervising and assisting the reading activities of their children. Follow-up grade level meetings with teachers will give parents some understanding of the technical aspects of reading instruction to help them to follow and support homework requirements of the program.

5. Evaluating the Professional Development Plan

Each component of the Professional Development Plan will be individually evaluated both formatively and summatively. While a full experimental design is not possible for this plan given that a control school in the district may not be available, a quasi-experimental design will be used in the evaluation of each program within the plan beginning with establishment of baseline data for each program as a form of pre-test. Baseline data will incorporate the knowledge and skills to be addressed in the intervention training program for each group in the project.

The degree and endorsement granting programs will be evaluated through the assessment of students in coursework and through their research activities. These programs are largely field-based. Accordingly, students will be evaluated also on the quality of their performance in the field activities developed to meet program requirements.

More direct impact on the overall reading project is likely to come from the training of administrators in instructional supervision and of teachers in reading instruction. Accordingly, the quality of the instructional supervision provided by the administrators who participate in the programs will be evaluated by the teachers who will be asked to assess the usefulness of the advice and support given them by their supervisors. The teachers in turn will be evaluated by their supervisors on instruments developed to measure the quality of instruction in reading provided by teachers.
The ultimate measure of the effectiveness of the program will be the results attained by students on standardized tests of reading achievement.

An external evaluator will also be employed to assist in the evaluation of the programs within the professional development plan.

All programs will be evaluated formatively within the first month of their operation and at regular intervals as they progress. Summative evaluation will be done on all programs as they are completed.

6. Management of Professional Development Plan

The director of the Reading Excellence Project will have general oversight of this component of the project. The director will be assisted by a PDP coordinator who will have day-to-day responsibility for the operation of the plan. The coordinator will be selected from among the faculty of the School of Education, Clark Atlanta University and will have direct management of the cohort degree and endorsement programs, the program for training of tutors, and the staff development programs. A member of the instructional staff of the demonstration school will serve as a co-coordinator with special responsibility for providing liaison with the University and managing the programs for training of non-instructional staff and preparation of parents.

The coordinator will convene meetings of all stakeholders to initiate the plan and direct the development of content for the staff development program and the program for training of tutors. This individual will also convene monthly meetings to monitor the operation of the plan and guide the scheduling of workshops and classes as needed. He/she will also be responsible for budget management including requisitioning of supplies, authorizing payment of personnel, tracking expenditures, and developing budget estimates for the second year of the project.

The project evaluator will consult with the coordinator in developing instruments and administering evaluation of the programs in the plan and will report to the project director through the coordinator on evaluation of programs within the Professional Development Plan.

Conclusion

This model represents a fast track for credentialing and better equipping instructional staff and administrators to improve student performance. It also helps to better equip parents to become their child’s first teacher while improving their academic, job and parenting skills. It facilitates co-reform in the school system as well as in the university, the benefits of which can be seen almost immediately. These benefits accrue to all stakeholders and society in general.
TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTIVITIES

Year 1
7/1/02 - 6/30/03

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