

The Alamogordo Literacy Initiative

Presentation to the Alliance for the
Advancement of Teaching and Learning

Alamogordo, New Mexico

May 4, 2007

A Celebration of Learning

A culture of celebration can enable the participant to recognize the joy of living as a fundamental virtue for educational practice.

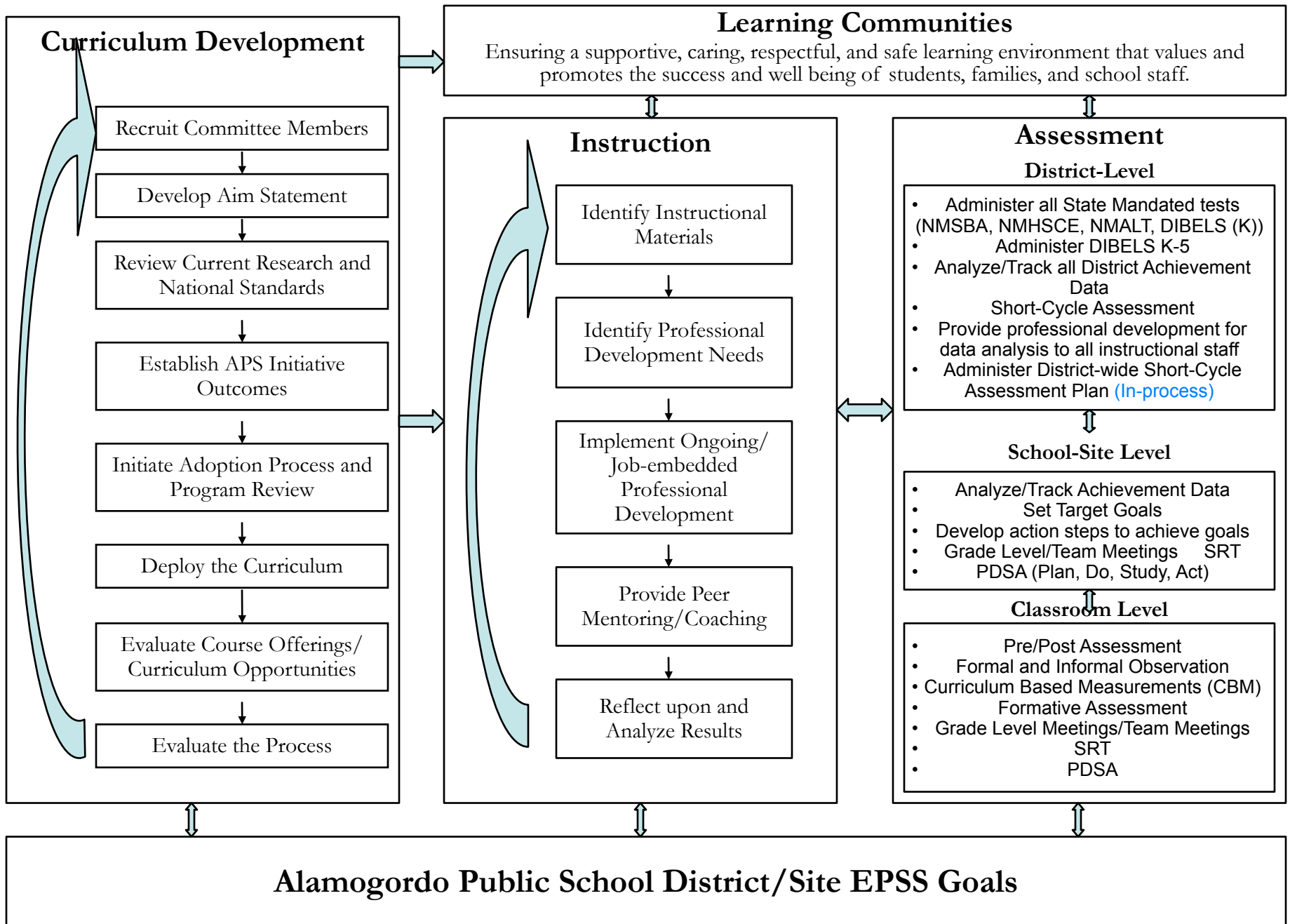
Whether or not we are willing to overcome slips or inconsistencies, by living humility, lovingness, courage, tolerance, competence, decisiveness, patience-impatience, and verbal parsimony, we contribute to creating a happy, joyful school. We forge a school-adventure, a school that marches on, that is not afraid of the risks, and that rejects immobility. It is a school that thinks, that participates, that creates, that speaks, that loves, that guesses, that passionately embraces and says yes to life. It is not a school that quiets down and quits.

Paulo Freire

Alamogordo Public Schools Curriculum and Instruction Mission

The mission of the Curriculum and Instruction Department of Alamogordo Schools is to provide support to all students and staff in a learning-centered continuous improvement model. The key components are:

- Aligned Curriculum
- Aligned Instructional Practices
- Assessment as a part of a plan for continuous improvement
- Professional Learning Community
- Aligned Professional Development for Learning Support



Alamogordo Comprehensive Literacy Initiative

Philosophy Statement

The Alamogordo Comprehensive Literacy Initiative is built upon a literacy approach that is research-based and supported by best practice in professional literature. A comprehensive literacy approach consists of strong literature, language, and comprehension elements that incorporate a balance of oral and written language skills.

Components of a comprehensive literacy approach

- Modeled reading and writing
- Shared reading and writing
- Guided reading and writing
- Independent reading and writing
- Word Study
- Explicit and systematic skills instruction in oral language development, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension

Professional Learning Communities

In this flexible, research-based framework, teachers, who are well-trained and informed decision makers, use assessments to guide their instruction in order to meet individual student needs.

Goal

The goal of Alamogordo Public Schools is to develop independent and analytical readers, writers, and thinkers who reach their full potential in literacy acquisition with 100% of our students performing as proficient or advanced in challenging academic achievement standards.

Our Story

We celebrate the efforts of our school district in moving toward our goal by reflecting on our journey . . .

Beginnings

In the 2002 school year, teachers and administrators began studying current literature and exploring possibilities to build a best practice literacy program that would engender literacy acquisition and build the stepping stones for academic achievement for all the children in the Alamogordo school system.

Framework

A Framework was developed for a comprehensive literacy approach that would include the practices of:

- Reading Recovery
- Literacy Best Practice
- 3-Tiered Intervention Model

Off to the Races!

- A Reading Recovery Teacher Leader was sent to TWU to train as our Teacher Leader
- A “Behind the Glass” facility was built
- An MOU was developed with ENMU for course credit for Reading Recovery teachers
- Reading Recovery teachers were chosen

To prevent reading failure the teacher must take time to observe what children are able to do. This requires time out from teaching, time set aside for observing. The younger the child and the poorer the reader, the more time the teacher requires for recording what she observes and for thinking about what she observes. One must organize for such observation time.

Marie Clay

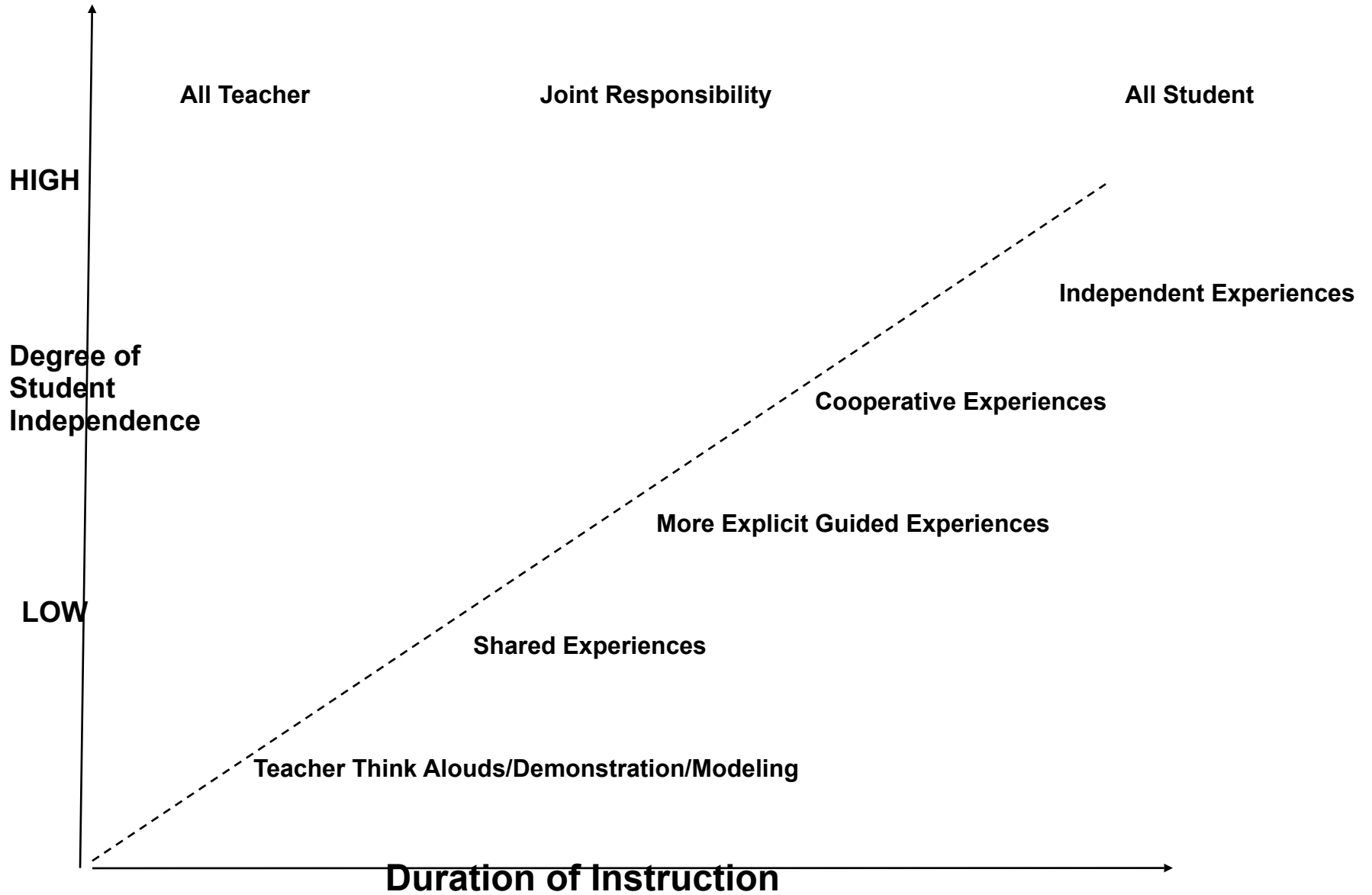
Literacy Lessons Designed for Individuals

Literacy Best Practice

A consultant team, Educational Empowerment, was selected to provide professional development to our principals, newly selected literacy coaches, and teachers based upon Brian Cambourne's Gradual Release Model.

Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

PROPORTION of RESPONSIBILITY for TASK COMPLETION



The Coaching Model

A Literacy Coach is provided to each elementary school to provide job-embedded, context-specific, ongoing support to teachers and students.

Research indicates that the effects of well-prepared teachers on student achievement can be stronger than the influences of student background factors, such as poverty, language background, and minority status.

Linda Darling-Hammond

Cognitive Coaching

Cognitive Coaching assists the teacher in reflecting on and improving instructional practice. Cognitive Coaching is the problem-resolving conversation between the coach and teacher. It is the skill to supporting others' thinking through a difficult problem.

Bookrooms

Bookrooms have been developed at each elementary site to provide quality resources for students, teachers, and coaches. Leveled materials, intervention materials, assessment materials, and professional literature are easily accessible for students and staff.

3-Tier Model of Intervention (RtI)

- A Core Basal was chosen to provide support for systematic-explicit reading instruction (McGraw Hill).
- Professional Development was provided for implementation of the core program.
- Ongoing professional development and implementation of a 3-Tiered Model for instruction and intervention was established through the framework of the Reading First grant.

Reading First

New Mexico Reading First has provided ongoing professional development and support for systematic and explicit reading instruction in our district. 5 schools receive funding from Reading First, and we have leveraged Title I funds to provide a mirroring construct across the district. The framework requires 90 minute blocks of time that are committed to pedagogical best practice in reading instruction. Through ongoing PLC in grade level meetings, teachers regularly meet to review student work and progress, and to design individual or small group intervention programs .

Reading First, the federal program aimed at boosting reading skills in high-poverty, low-performing schools and districts, is having a significant and positive impact on student achievement, according to state and local education officials surveyed for a report on the program's impact from the Center on Education Policy. The report finds that Reading First has led to many changes in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and that significant majorities of participating states and district credit Reading First for student achievement gains, according to surveys conducted for the report.

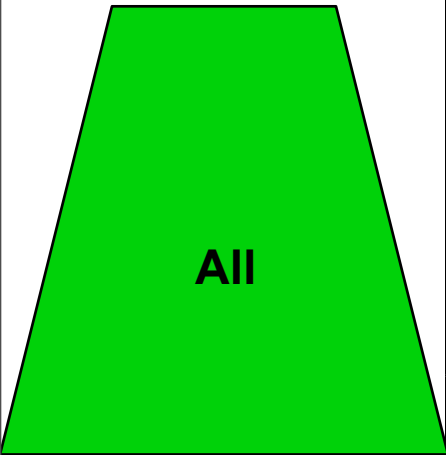
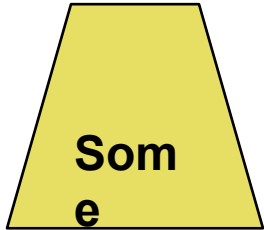
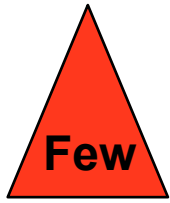
September 20, 2006

www.cep-dc.org

District-Wide Scientifically-Based Intervention Strategies

- Reading Recovery (1st Grade)
- Orton-Gillingham
- Read Naturally
- SmE (Success Maker)
- Read Well
- Text Talks
- Quick Reads
- SIOP (Sacramento Elementary School)

Three Tiered Model of Instructional Support



Program	Curriculum	Strategies	Assessment Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪Specialized Staff ▪Classroom Teacher ▪Individual or Small Group ▪+30 	McGraw Hill Intervention kit Comprehension strategies TPRI interventions Orton Gillingham Literacy Best Practices	Five Big Ideas, explicit and systematic instruction Literacy Best Practice	DIBELS K-3 Progress Monitoring TPRI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Classroom Teacher, specialized staff •Small group •Individual •+30 	McGraw Hill Intervention TPRI SME Reading Recovery Project Read Read Naturally Orton Gillingham Literacy Best Practices	Five Big Ideas; explicit and systematic instruction Literacy Best Practices	DIBELS McGraw Hill DRA TPRI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Classroom teacher •Large group •Small group •90 minutes 	McGraw Hill Core program full implementation Literacy Best Practices	Five Big Ideas; explicit and systematic instruction Literacy Best Practices	DIBELS DRA McGraw Hill

Student Resource Team

- The Responsive to Intervention (RtI) Model is practiced in all of the schools. Teachers, through grade level meetings with coaches and principals, document the intervention strategies in a struggling student's Academic Improvement Plan. Careful consideration of the student's need and progress are reviewed through a system of progress monitoring. This 3-Tiered Model of Intervention is implemented for all at-risk students.

Assessments

DIBELS – Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

DIBELS is a short, quick assessment designed to identify students' in need of intervention, in order to provide support in a timely manner.

DRA – Development Reading Assessment

➤ The DRA has a Running Record to assist the teacher in identifying the text level that is appropriate for the student. Running Records are used daily in Guided Reading.

TPRI – Texas Primary Reading Inventory

➤ The TPRI is a diagnostic tool used with Intensive Needs students to provide detailed information regarding students strengths and weaknesses in students' specific reading skills.

McGraw Hill Unit Tests

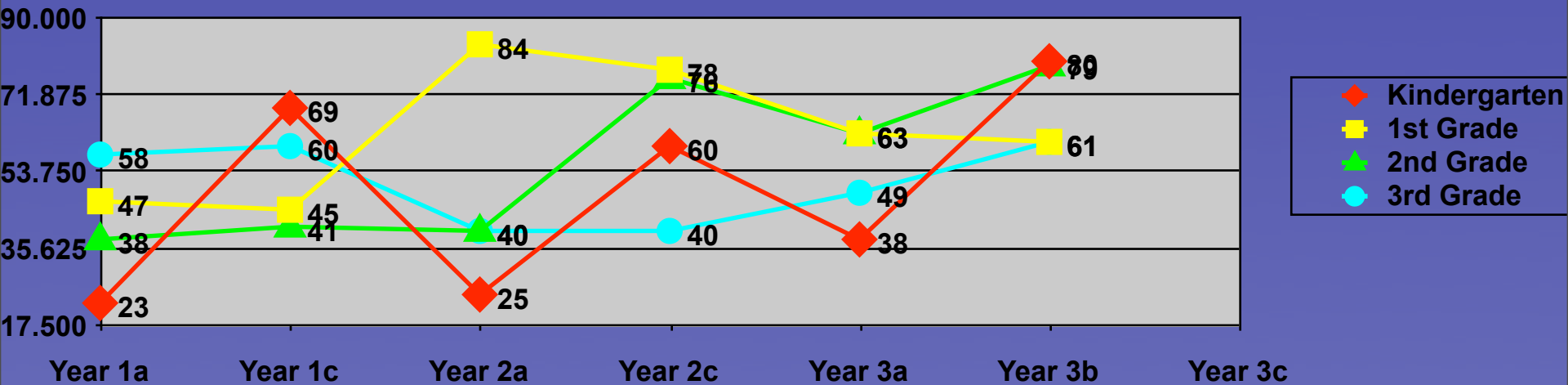
➤ The Unit Tests provide regular and consistent feedback to the teacher and students as aligned to the scope and sequence of the Core program.

Teacher Observation

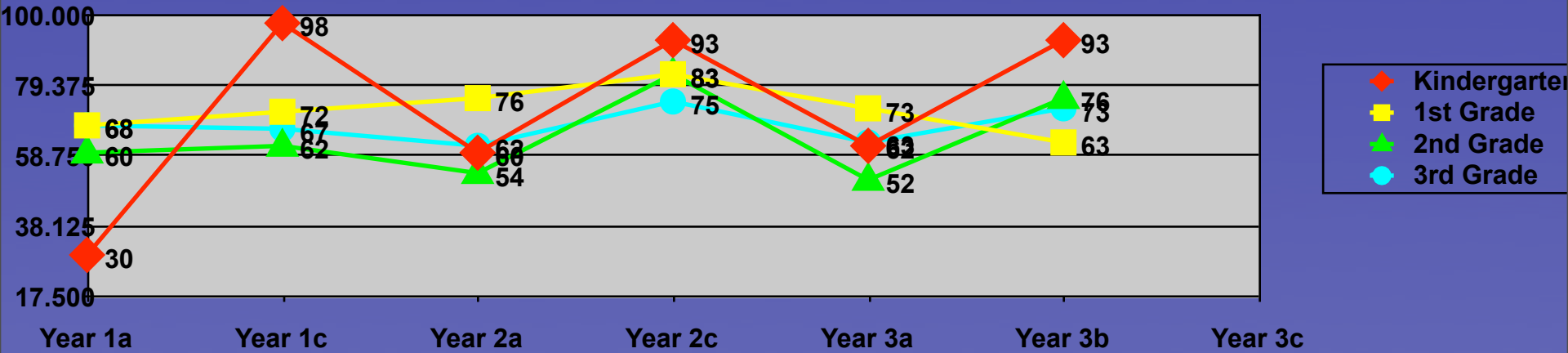
➤ Teachers' observation of their students in the comprehensive literacy environment are valued and encouraged. Their professional judgments and conversations are of utmost importance.

Student Performance Outcomes

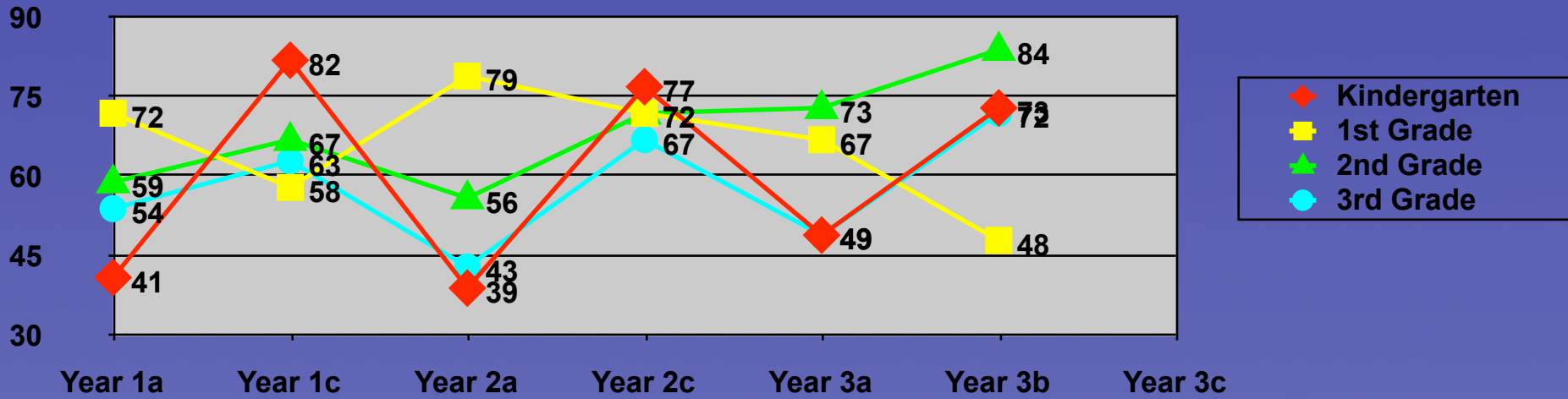
- North



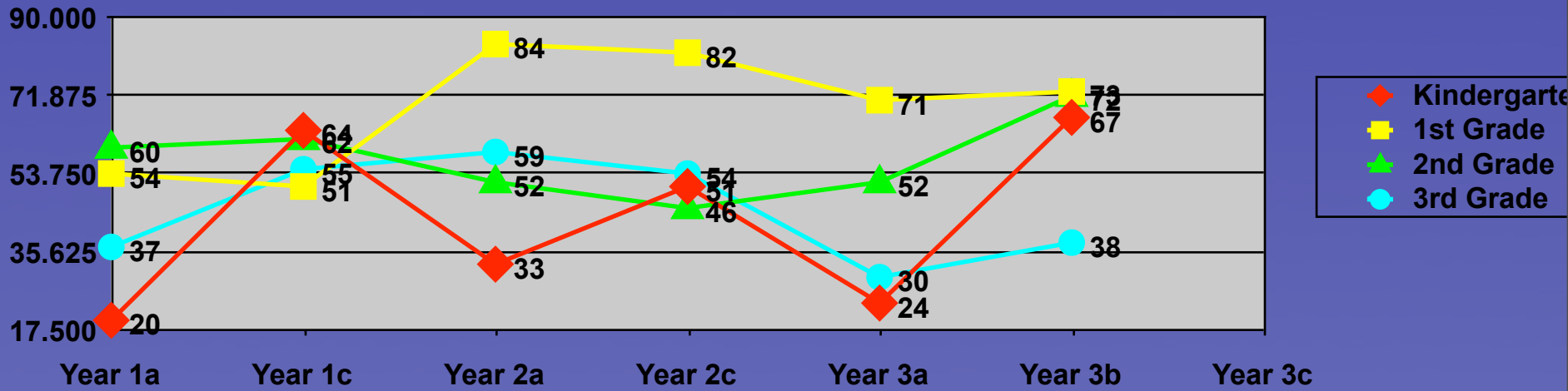
Oregon



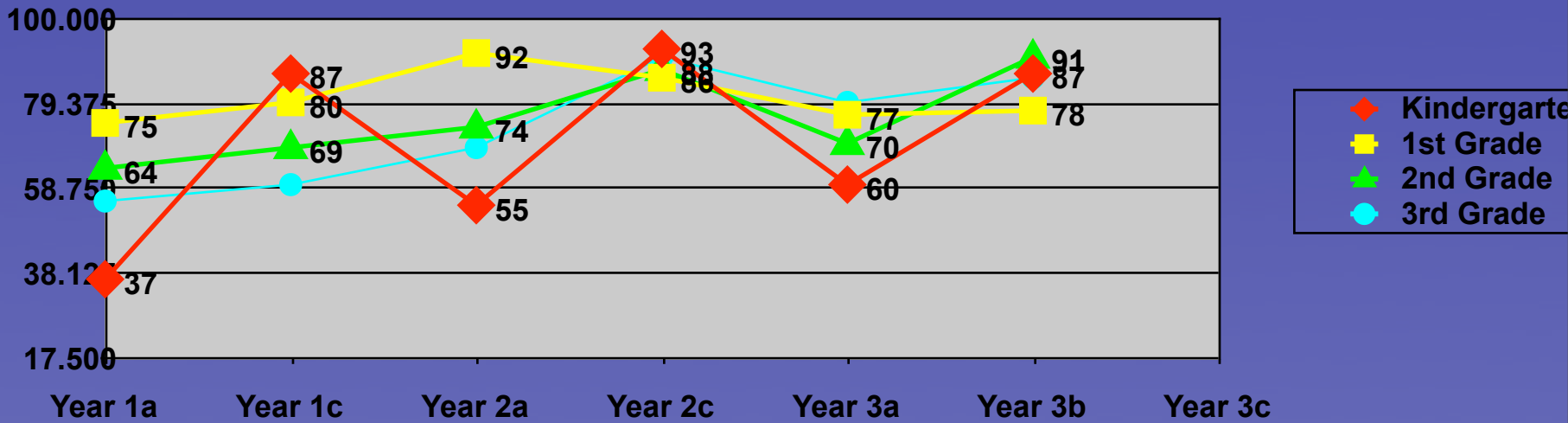
La Luz



Sacramento



Yucca



District Recognition

Our district has been recognized by the state in both years 2 and 3 of the Reading First program as having the second highest percentage of students performing at Benchmark in September. In addition **Yucca**

Elementary is one of two schools in the state with more than 72% of their students at Benchmark in September. Yucca was also recognized by the state for having the highest number of 3rd graders at Benchmark, with 83%.

Oregon Elementary received the Pinon Award from SQS Quality New Mexico this year. Continuous improvement and data driven decisions are a hallmark of this school.

Ongoing Professional Learning

In support of the national Reading First initiative, the College of Santa Fe, in Santa Fe, NM, has established a Reading Endorsement Program, a national on-line curriculum for teachers' professional development through concentrated courses of study in reading instruction.

The eight courses offered through the Reading Endorsement Program are based on a strong theoretical framework developed via current research findings that support reading as an interactive process emphasizing the development of strong comprehension skills.

Reading Endorsement Program

College of Santa Fe

24 graduate hours of coursework featuring:

Philosophy of Reading

Classrooms That Work by Patricia Cunningham and Richard Allington

Literacy for Second Language Learners

Bilingual & ESL classrooms: Teaching in Multicultural Contexts
by Carlos Ovando, Virginia Collier, and Mary Carol Combs

Instructional Strategies for the Teaching of Reading

The Art of Teaching Reading by Lucy Calkins

Teaching Reading to Diverse Learners

The Multiple Intelligences of Reading and Writing: Making Words Come Alive

by Thomas Armstrong

Celebration!

We celebrate our journey with our colleagues. We are grateful for the many partners we have in Southern New Mexico that march on to build schools that never quiet down or quit.