In 2007-2008, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) will conduct the statewide evaluation of Idaho Reading First. NWREL acknowledges that evaluation activities take time – a resource always in short supply in schools. Our goal is to collect data in an efficient and unobtrusive manner. We welcome your questions or suggestions throughout the year.

What is NWREL? NWREL is a private, non-profit institution that provides research and development assistance for the improvement of educational outcomes. The Center for Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (CREA) is home to a community of professional researchers with expertise in evaluating the effectiveness of programs.

Who are the evaluators? NWREL’s Evaluation “Reading Team” includes six evaluators who work together on Reading First evaluations in six states (AK, AZ, ID, MT, WA, WY). Team members combine strengths in data collection and analysis with a deep knowledge of scientifically-based reading research. They have visited over 200 Reading First schools, observed over 1,000 reading classrooms, and attended dozens of state and national Reading First meetings and trainings.

Why do we need an evaluation? First, the evaluation provides state project staff with data and recommendations from “outside eyes” that state staff can use for program planning. Second, the evaluation identifies student outcome trends at the state and school levels through detailed analyses of AIMSweb and ITBS data. Third, the evaluation helps meet federal reporting requirements.

What will the evaluation require of our school? In 2007-2008, the primary data collection activities take place in the spring. They include:

- Surveys of all teachers, principals, reading coaches, and district coordinators
- Site visits to 15 randomly selected schools
- Analysis of AIMSweb and ITBS data

Evaluators will also attend various meetings and professional development activities.

Are responses anonymous? Yes! We take this issue very seriously. We never report survey, interview, or observation results by individual, school, or district names.

When and how will schools be surveyed? Surveys will be mailed to coaches in early April 2008 and schools will have approximately three weeks to administer and return the surveys to NWREL. Coaches will receive all of the necessary survey materials, including postage-paid return envelopes.
What does the survey ask?  The survey asks about many facets of implementation such as professional development, core program instruction, interventions, grade-level meetings, coaching, and assessments.

What do site visits entail?  Each of the randomly selected schools will be visited for one full day in spring 2008.  Coaches will be asked to schedule activities in a way that works best for your school.  These include:

- Interviews with the reading coach and the principal
- A focus group with randomly selected teachers
- Observations of three randomly selected classrooms during the reading block
- Observation of a grade-level meeting

What do classroom observations entail?  Before the site visit, evaluators provide the coach with criteria for randomly selecting three classrooms to observe.  Teachers will be told ahead of time that they will be observed.  Each observation is 20 minutes in length during which time evaluators take detailed notes of what is happening in the classroom.  These notes provide a “snapshot” of what implementation looks like.  All observation data are anonymous.

What if I have questions about the evaluation?  Please contact Kari Nelsestuen at NWREL:

Kari Nelsestuen
Senior Advisor
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
(800) 547-6339
nelsestk@nwrel.org

Thank you for your support of the Idaho Reading First Evaluation!
Idaho Reading First Evaluation
Spring 2008 Site Visits Schools

The following 15 schools were randomly selected\(^1\) for a site visit in spring 2008. Schools not selected in 2008 will be visited in subsequent years.

Adams Elementary
Bickel Elementary
Butte View Elementary
Central Canyon Elementary
Glenns Ferry Elementary
Harwood Elementary
Heyburn Elementary
Homedale Elementary
Lewis and Clark
Lincoln Elementary
New Plymouth Elementary
Paul Elementary
Popplewell Elementary
Priest River Elementary
Sacajawea Elementary School
*Alternate: Archer Elementary*

In February or March, each school will be contacted by a NWREL evaluator in order to find one day in March, April, or early May that works for the school and the visitor.

\(^1\) Schools were stratified into three geographical areas and random selection occurred within those three clusters to ensure representation from all areas of the state. Schools were assigned numbers and a random number generator was used in Excel to select the schools.