

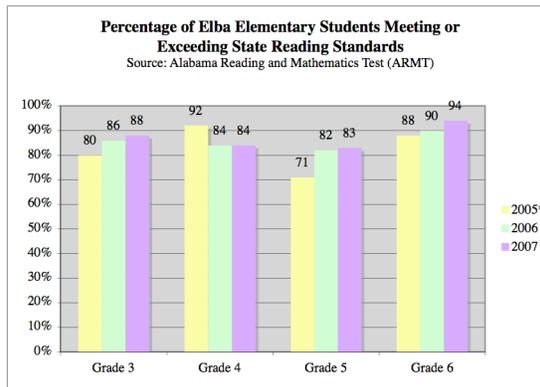


About the School:		About the Students:	
Grades:	K-6	African American:	55%
Number of Students:	470	Caucasian:	42%
Test(s):	ARMT	Hispanic:	3%
Reduced Price Lunch:	72%	Asian:	-
		Other:	-
		ELL	-



Reading Scores Rise at Alabama Elementary With Reading Mastery Plus

After only one year of SRA/McGraw-Hill's *Reading Mastery Plus* in Grades K–6, students' state reading scores at this small Alabama school began to rise. A second year (2007) proved to be just as promising.



* Before Reading Mastery Plus began.

Reading Mastery Plus began in fall 2005. After two years, the percentage of Grade 3 students meeting or exceeding state reading standards on the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test increased from 80 to 88. The Grade 4 score decreased in 2006 for two reasons: teacher turnover and a large number of incoming students who couldn't read or read poorly, according to school officials. Grade 5 students, however, increased from 71 to 83 and Grade 6 students rose from 88 to an impressive 94!

Curriculum Coordinator and Assistant Principal Gina Price said success lies in the program's strategy.

"The strategy within *Reading Mastery Plus* is effective for both our teachers and students," she explained. "First, it helps teachers deliver instruction in an organized, systematic manner to quiet, receptive students. We even see teachers using this Direct Instruction style in other subjects. Second, students know what is required of them and perform accordingly. Even with the daily routine, our kids don't get bored because *Reading Mastery Plus* moves at a pace to which they're accustomed."

Price returned to Elba Elementary School after working for the state's Reading First Department where she served as a regional reading coach and helped Reading First schools implement their Reading First plans. She said she became "sold" on *Reading Mastery Plus*; therefore, she obtained a leadership degree and returned to Elba Elementary School, where she first began her teaching career.



“I felt the desire to actually implement the program at a school rather than train other people to do so,” she said. “I’ve been at Elba Elementary School since 2004 and am thoroughly enjoying the experience. As a child, I attended Elba City Schools and graduated from Elba High School, so I’ve come home.”

Progress Monitoring Is Key

In fall 2006, a large number of new students enrolled at Elba Elementary School. Many could not read or read poorly. Principal Lakesha Brackins said *Reading Mastery Plus* helped them a great deal through progress monitoring.

“We monitor students closely and work one-on-one with at-risk students,” Brackins said. “Students are well aware of their progress, and when they hit the Benchmark level on DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), they are so proud. They immediately ask if they can tell Gina or me, and we shower them with praise.”

Professional development also plays a key role in success. Professionals from Educational Resources, Inc. provided the initial two-day training for all faculty and now return monthly to observe each classroom for 30 minutes and provide feedback.

“Staff development helps our teachers prepare and perform their jobs exceptionally,” Brackins said. “The uniformity within *Reading Mastery Plus* and the training we’ve received benefit **all** our students in the long run. We also use it with approximately 30 special education students. One fifth grader who couldn’t read the word ‘it’ when he started reads really well now,” she added.

Reading Coach Kim Gibson works directly with teachers and students at Elba Elementary School. She said *Reading Mastery* covers phonics so well in the lower grades that teachers don’t have to spend a lot of time on it in the upper grades.

“If we do need to intervene in the upper grades, we use SRA’s Direct Instruction program *Corrective Reading* with students in Grades 3–6. During the 2006–2007 school year, we used the program with 11 students in Grade 3. By the beginning of the 2007–2008 school year, they were all on grade level except for one. *Corrective Reading* is a very good program, and it works.”

About Elba Elementary School

Serving approximately 470 students in Grades K–6, this Title I school’s student population is 55% Caucasian, 42% African American, and 3% Hispanic. Seventy-two percent of children qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. For more information about the Elba Elementary School, please visit <http://elba.ecse.schoolinsites.com>.

For More Information

If you would like to learn more about success with Direct Instruction programs in your school or district, please contact us today at **1-888-SRA-4543**.
