



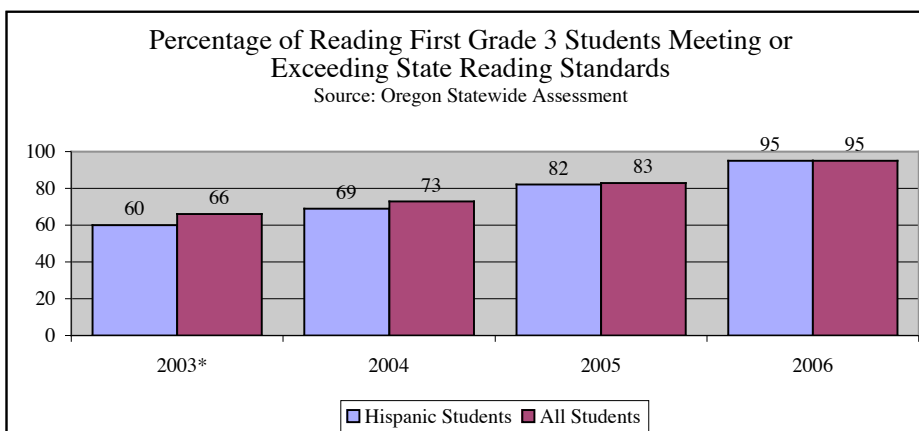
About the District:		About the Students:	
Grades:	K-12	African American:	-
Number of Students:	2,059	Caucasian:	49%
Test(s):	OSA	Hispanic:	50%
Reduced Price Lunch:	72%	Asian:	-
		Other:	1%
		ELL	58%



## Oregon Reading First Project Uses Reading Mastery Plus As Core Reading Program

When educators in Milton-Freewater Unified School District 7 were granted Reading First funds for a five-year project in Grades K–3, they chose SRA/McGraw-Hill’s *Reading Mastery Plus* as their core reading program. The project began at the start of the 2003–2004 school year, and while success is apparent with all students, it is particularly obvious with Hispanic students, the majority of whom are classified as English-Language Learners (ELL).

By 2006 (three years into the project), the gap between all students and Hispanic students has closed. In addition, the percentage of both student groups who met or exceeded state reading standards has dramatically increased.



The two reading coaches involved with the project said success starts in Kindergarten.

“The majority of ELL students graduating Kindergarten are no longer classified as non-English speakers,” explained Judy Chesnut, retired district elementary principal and part-time reading coach. “Not one of the ELL students going into Grade 3 who has been in our program for three years is classified as non-English speaking.”

Tricia Perez is the other reading coach involved with the Reading First project. She said before *Reading Mastery Plus* instruction began in the early grades, approximately 15% of Grade 3 students started the year reading at Level 1.



“Now the majority of our Grade 3 students start the year reading at Level 3 or above,” she explained. “By fall 2006, only two students were working at Level 1. The continuity of this program makes all the difference in the world for our kids. Since every teacher uses *Reading Mastery Plus*, we all speak the same language as students move from one classroom to the other. The children also know expectations are the same. They are asked to respond in a certain manner and know the appropriate time to do so, which means less disruption.”

Chesnut echoed that sentiment and added that another reason for student success is the program’s systematic approach to reading instruction and its strong oral language components, particularly in Kindergarten and Grade 1.

“All teachers move in the same direction and use the same vocabulary while teaching, which means student transition from one classroom to another or from one reading group to another is seamless. The other piece that makes a huge difference with regard to success is the extremely dedicated instructional staff at both schools. They are absolutely focused on the process.”

The Reading First program involves all students at Grove Elementary School, which is a Grade K–2 school in the district, and Grade 3 students at Freewater Elementary School, which is a Grade 3–5 school.

“When dedicated educators choose a strong core reading program like *Reading Mastery Plus*, and you combine that with the professional development and financial support that comes with being a Reading First school, the children are the ultimate winners,” Chesnut concluded.

**About Milton-Freewater Unified School District 7**

Serving approximately 2,059 students in Grades K–12, this district’s student population is 49% Caucasian, 50% Hispanic, and 1% multicultural. Seventy-two percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and 58% of the Hispanic students are English-Language Learners (ELL). For more information about this district, go to [www.miltfree.k12.or.us](http://www.miltfree.k12.or.us).

**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**.