

**TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CHALLENGES  
FOR  
READING/LANGUAGE ARTS SPECIALISTS  
IN CONNECTICUT**

**A Study by the Connecticut Association for Reading  
Research**

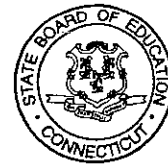


**In cooperation with  
Connecticut Reading Association  
Connecticut State Department of Education**



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



June 2004

Through the publication of this study, the Connecticut Association for Reading Research (CARR), a special interest council of the International Reading Association and the Connecticut Reading Association, has attempted to provide useful guidelines for those who hire and assign duties to school reading and language arts specialists. In addition, recommendations have been made for the preparation of reading and language arts specialists, both for universities and policymakers. Funding for the study has been provided by the Connecticut Association for Reading Research and the Connecticut Reading Association.

The report is being disseminated to Connecticut principals, superintendents, the State Board of Education, and the five universities that are accredited for the preparation of reading/language arts consultants. Permission is granted by CARR to copy this report for others in your district or you may request copies from CARR for \$10.00 each to cover the cost of printing and postage.

The Connecticut State Department of Education has been active in this study from its inception, through the drafting of the questionnaires and providing information from its databases. This two-year study has grown out of the need to update CARR's 1997 study on reading and language arts programs and personnel in Connecticut schools in light of recent federal mandates.

This final report provides many suggestions for building strong school leadership in reading and language arts programs, and we urge university department heads, school board members, administrators, and reading/language arts specialists themselves to give careful consideration to each recommendation. We recommend this report as an important source of information to help raise the quality of dialogue about improving reading/language arts instruction in our schools.

Frances M. Rabinowitz, Associate Commissioner  
Division of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

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**Jean Klein  
Lois Lanning  
Research Co-Chairs**

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Additional copies of this report are available through the Connecticut Association for Reading Research, a non-profit professional organization, for \$10.00 to cover the cost of printing and postage. Checks should be made payable to the Connecticut Association for Reading Research (CARR) and mailed to:

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The twenty-first century, once looked upon as the information age, has become the accountability age. This study was designed to find out what responsibilities reading specialists currently have, challenges of the role, and what new roles will be demanded of reading specialists as a result of increased mandates. Clearly for this century the role must be multi-tasked and a position of leadership if the achievement gap is to be diminished or, even better, eliminated entirely. CARR's study analyzed data derived from a questionnaire of reading professionals working in the field, interview questions for university professors who prepare reading specialists, and a random survey of principals. The triangulation of data led to common themes and to the Recommendations in Brief, pp. 40-41, which are explained in greater detail in pages 35-39. The recommendations are broad-ranging and are highlighted below for reading specialists, administrators, universities, and policymakers. In sum, all stakeholders need to change if they are to be effective.

### Reading Specialists

Reading specialists are spending the majority of their time, even if they are certified consultants, with intervention and remediation of students instead of guiding reading/language arts classroom instruction as well as the program as a whole. **The consultant's role must go far beyond coaching and modeling.** The role should be a **shared leadership position**, with the consultant forming a literacy team to develop support for, and guidance of, literacy efforts in the school. **CARR recommends at least one consultant to every school.** Staff development is a priority in schools; thus the consultant must be an ongoing resource to teachers in addition to providing professional development for all staff. Literacy is everyone's responsibility. Beyond the school, the consultant must reach out into the community to seek understanding and support of the literacy program. Financial support for special projects needs to be sought in budget-crunching times, and consultants must have input into the budget process if they are to be effective. Establishing relationships with preschool facilities is another way consultants can build community understanding of literacy needs prior to entering public schools and after. Clear job descriptions are needed for the multi-task role.

### Administrators

**Administrators need to become more knowledgeable about reading process and what good instruction looks like.** Many administrators have not had coursework in reading prior to becoming a principal. In their observations of classroom instruction, they need to know what practices are best and why. Principals are the evaluators of the effectiveness of classroom teachers, and while they may rely to some extent on the consultant's knowledge of best practices, they need to be supportive of those practices when observing.

CARR's findings indicate that many principals do not know the difference between the present two reading specialist certifications; i.e., 102 remedial reading and

language arts teachers 1-12, and 097 reading and language arts consultant K-12. Consequently, remedial teachers are being asked to take on a leadership role they are not trained to do, while consultants who are trained for leadership are spending the majority of their time remediating students. Principals report difficulty in finding certified individuals to take on the role of leadership. Teachers with reading specialist certification are remaining in the classroom for a variety of reasons: job security, extra responsibilities without extra compensation, role demands that are not supported by administration. Beyond a salary differential, the organizational conditions that promote success are the most important incentive for certified individuals to take on the multi-tasked role of a specialist. Principals can effect needed changes through evaluating classroom instruction, participating in staff development meetings held by the consultant, setting goals with teachers, promoting teamwork, and providing release time for professional development. Central office administrators have a role as well in promoting collaboration among staff and the public in a shared vision of literacy development.

### **Universities**

**CARR recommends one certification for a reading specialist; i.e., the 097 reading/language arts consultant.** Preparation must expand on the leadership role and particularly the “people” aspects of this position. As consultants meet with resistance to needed changes, they need to know ways in which they may be effective in bringing all participants to the table. The consultant endorsement should be obtained at the Master’s level but with credits beyond the usual requirements. Preservice training for classroom teachers must be strengthened at the Bachelor’s level; at the Master’s level individuals who wish to remain in the classroom should have appropriate coursework rather than the specialist endorsement. Potential administrators must have coursework in reading, and, in particular, how to use their consultants effectively. Further, more consistency is needed across state universities in consultant coursework, so that credits from one university to another are honored.

### **Policymakers**

**If literacy is to become a reality for all students, strong collaboration among all stakeholders is necessary.** School districts, universities, and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) share that goal. CSDE needs to be a leader in this endeavor, as they have been. But much more needs to be done. Regulations in the near future should allow only one endorsement for a reading/language arts consultant, whatever title is finally agreed upon. Job descriptions should reflect the certification necessary for the position. “Literacy coaches” should be required to have advanced literacy training and proper certification if literacy efforts are to be successful. In-depth coursework is needed for such a role. Moreover, CSDE can take a leadership role in providing professional development for administrators in the field who lack a knowledge base in reading process and how to use their consultants effectively. The full report is intended to be read by all constituents in the hope that further productive dialogue may ensue in the interests of all concerned. No one group can improve literacy on its own. Our students deserve no less than our best efforts to help them succeed.

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In 1997 the Connecticut Association for Reading Research (CARR) published a two-year study entitled *Literacy for All: Reading/Language Arts Programs and Personnel in Connecticut Schools*. This study revealed that 36% of Connecticut's 169 school districts did not have reading/language arts consultants. Even where consultant positions did exist, job responsibilities varied widely. In districts where the consultant had a leadership position and high priority was given to the reading and language arts program, Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) scores tended to be higher than other districts within their Education Reference Group (ERG). This investigation updates the findings of the previous research and helps to further promote an awareness of the complex role of the reading professional.

Currently in Connecticut there are two endorsements for a reading and language arts specialist: 102 remedial reading and language arts teacher 1-12 and 097 reading and language arts consultant K-12. Those educators desiring consultant certification must obtain the 102 endorsement at a Master's Degree level, work ten months as a remedial teacher in the field, and take additional coursework at the Sixth Year level. The main purpose of CARR's current investigation was to find out how many educators held these endorsements and what their responsibilities were in the light of twenty-first century challenges of accountability. Thus, the investigation had a four-fold thrust:

1. to determine the effects of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) on the role of reading/language arts specialists;
2. to update CARR's 1997 study of reading/language arts programs and personnel;
3. to determine the certification and responsibilities of Connecticut's reading/language arts teachers and consultants;
4. and to identify challenges of these roles.

In addition, CARR was aware that many Connecticut teachers held these endorsements but remained in the classroom. This study sought to find out the reasons why these educators did not take on the reading/language arts positions available in the field.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Phase I**

To survey the use of their credentials, a questionnaire was mailed to 1773 Connecticut teachers who held an active certification with either the 102 remedial reading/language arts teacher endorsement or the 097 reading/language arts consultant endorsement. Labels were provided by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) for 1907 persons working in the field with these endorsements, but prior to mailing, labels were eliminated for those individuals known to have administrative positions or non-teaching assignments. The questionnaire included open-ended questions as well as multiple choice responses to solicit opinions and to allow respondents numerous opportunities to further explain their answers and to generate ideas. The questionnaire had been field tested and reviewed by professionals from both the CSDE and state reading organizations before final revisions were made. The overall response rate was 23% (376 responses out of 1648 that were delivered, 125 being returned for lack of a forwarding address). Responses included elementary, middle, high schools, and vocational-technical schools from all Education Reference Groups (ERGs).

### **Phase II**

In Phase II a survey went to heads of reading/language arts departments in universities that had accredited programs for these two endorsements. At the time of CARR's survey there were five universities with this accreditation: Central Connecticut State University (CCSU), Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU), Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU), University of Bridgeport (UB), and the University of Connecticut (UCONN). All five universities responded. Questions on this survey focused on determining whether the university perspective of issues reading specialists face supports the issues identified by the teacher/consultant survey. Additional information and suggestions were also solicited to strengthen the study.

### **Phase III**

To triangulate the data, interviews were conducted of 150 randomly selected principals from across the state. Principals frequently voice their concerns about the availability of highly qualified reading teachers. Phone interviews were originally planned but abandoned because of time constraints. The interview questions were then mailed to the recipients and responses were received by 28 principals, representing a 19% response. An attempt was made to determine the consistency of the principals' perceptions of issues reading teachers and consultants face and to cross-check reporting by remedial teachers and consultants of how administrators structured and supported their jobs.

## BACKGROUND

The history of the reading specialist's role is pertinent to this study, in order to ascertain changes that have taken place since the 1960s and to evaluate the changes that are now needed in the twenty-first century. What is really new versus the customary role that was expected in years gone by? To answer this question, this study will highlight a few texts.

### **Positions on the Role of the Reading Specialist**

The position paper by the New England Reading Association (NERA), *A Position Paper of the New England Reading Association Regarding the Diagnosis and Remediation of Reading Disability* (1968) was concerned primarily with the "disabled reader" yet sought prevention over remediation. Concern was expressed over the reading instruction of those students named "learning disabled." However, the position paper decried the lack of fully qualified reading specialists to meet the demand. Even where they existed, the report states that the reading specialists were "further hampered by an impossible work load, poor working conditions, low priority on budget requests, and salaries commensurate with others of comparable education and responsibility." The position paper also called for a team approach in the case of a student at risk.

In 1972, CARR published jointly with the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) *Recommendations for Reading Programs*. This booklet covered information and research in the areas of qualifications, roles, and responsibilities of reading personnel in Connecticut and gave recommendations for the responsibilities of reading supervisors, coordinators, directors; reading consultants who work with teachers only; reading consultants who work with teachers and students; reading consultants who work with students only. Recommendations were also given for the number of reading personnel needed by schools, lines of communication, involvement of people in the community in the reading program, and salary differentials. Forty percent of the districts employing reading consultants showed a salary differential for consultants. The State Department and CARR recommended that reading consultants who work with both teachers and students should receive "a salary comparable to that given to a school vice-principal, or its equivalent in his school system, who has an equal number of credit hours in training and years of experience." The booklet included the Connecticut State Plan, approved by the State Board of Education, entitled, *Reading for the 70's*, describing twelve lines of attack to improve reading instruction in the state. Certification regulations for a reading consultant were quoted.

In cooperation with CSDE, CARR published another study in Connecticut, *Literacy for All: Reading/Language Arts Programs and Personnel in Connecticut Schools* (1997) to update the earlier report. The problems that existed in NERA's 1968 report still existed in the expectations and working conditions of the reading specialist.

However, even more responsibilities had been added to the reading specialist's role. In Connecticut two certifications had replaced the single consultant certification mentioned in CARR's 1972 study. The two certifications became Remedial Reading and Language Arts Teacher 1-12 (102 endorsement) and Reading and Language Arts Consultant (097 endorsement). CSDE's *Regulations Concerning State Educator Certificates, Permits and Authorizations* (1995 and 2003) listed these two certifications, which are still in existence today. Coursework reflected research that supported "balanced reading instruction." The 2003 regulations were due to be changed but have been postponed. Recognizing the need expressed by principals to have a reading professional who could work with both teachers and students, CARR's 1997 study recommended one certification as a reading/language arts specialist; i.e., the Reading/Language Arts Consultant endorsement (097) and elimination of the Remedial Reading and Language Arts Teacher endorsement (102), which had caused confusion in the field.

CARR's affiliate, the Connecticut Reading Association (CRA) supplemented the 1997 study with a brochure sent to all principals and superintendents in Connecticut, *Why You Need a Reading/ Language Arts Consultant in Your School* (CRA, 1998). Competencies were listed under the broad categories of instruction, diagnosis and assessment, and leadership, which were similar to the International Reading Association's (IRA) position statement, *Teaching All Children to Read: The Roles of the Reading Specialist* (2000). This position statement referenced CARR's 1997 study, which showed that schools with reading/language arts consultants in a leadership capacity showed higher achievement in reading for their students on state tests. The importance of reading specialists is further supported by another study, *Exploring High and Improving Reading Achievement in Connecticut* (Baron, 1999).

### **Standards for Reading Professionals**

As research changes our view of reading instruction, so changes in the specialist's role parallel those views. The International Reading Association (IRA) has provided standards for reading professionals over the years. *Guidelines for the Specialized Preparation of Reading Professionals* (1986) described ten roles and responsibilities for reading professionals, including classroom teachers. The ten roles included classroom teachers for early childhood/elementary school and secondary school; reading specialists titled diagnostic remedial specialist, developmental reading-study skills specialist, reading consultant/reading resource teacher, reading coordinator/supervisor, reading professor; and allied professions, such as special education teachers, administrators, and support service providers. Competencies required for each of these roles were delineated.

Those guidelines were changed again in 1992 and revised six years later. *Standards for Reading Professionals Revised* (1998) showed an expansion of categories for the classroom professional and a reduction in the categories for specialized reading professionals. Classroom teachers were listed for early childhood, elementary school,

middle and secondary school, special education, and adult education. Under the heading, "Specialized Reading Professional" three categories were shown as opposed to the five in the 1986 report: reading specialist, reading coordinator, teacher educator. Competencies reflected new research in reading instruction and changing needs of school districts.

*Standards for Reading Professionals Revised 2003* has just been released (IRA, 2004). These guidelines are expected to be used by universities and State Department staff to plan preparation programs for reading educators and administrators as well as to evaluate candidates and programs. Among other important updates the guidelines show an increased focus on candidate performance, a consideration of culturally and linguistically diverse educational contexts, an emphasis on using technology in literacy instruction, and now only five reading professional categories: paraprofessional, classroom teacher, reading specialist, teacher educator, and administrator. These standards are to be used nationally to improve teacher preparation programs.

### **National Research on the Role of the Reading Specialist**

While the National Research Council's report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) supports the importance of struggling readers having access to a reading specialist (p. 333), very little research was done on the role of the specialist until recently. The International Reading Association (IRA) formed the Commission on the Role of the Reading Specialist to study what reading specialists were actually doing. Dr. Rita M. Bean, University of Pittsburgh, served as chair of that commission, which resulted in the position statement of 2000 mentioned above. The Commission's findings also have given rise to many articles and a new book by Bean.

*The Reading Teacher* of May, 2002, contains an article, "What do reading specialists do? Results from a national survey" (Bean, Cassidy, Grumet, Shelton & Wallis, 2002). Some of the changes described included more of a leadership role, increases in the amount of paperwork, the need to function as a resource to teachers, the need to plan collaboratively with teachers, plus more in-class instruction, more involvement with special education students and parents, and a greater role in staff development. Time for the multiple roles was further hindered by being assigned nonreading-related tasks, such as hall or cafeteria duty or covering classes for teachers.

The February, 2003, issue of *The Reading Teacher* carried an article on exemplary schools, "Reading specialists in schools with exemplary reading programs: Functional, versatile, and prepared" (Bean, Swan & Knaub, 2003). The leadership aspect of the reading specialist's role was highlighted as being responsible for improving the quality of classroom teaching and for improving the school reading program as a whole. In addition to instructing students, the reading specialist not only served as a resource to classroom teachers but to allied professionals, parents, community members, volunteers, and tutors. They not only coordinated the reading program but also contributed to the analysis of test results, coordinated the testing schedules, and assisted in the development of assessment instruments. Both this article and the article cited above call for changes in

university preparation of reading specialists, particularly the development of leadership skills.

A recent issue of *The Reading Teacher* (February, 2004) carried an article entitled, "The changing role of the reading specialist in school reform," by Janice Dole. Dole primarily focuses on the role of the "literacy coach." Unfortunately, in Connecticut this term has had the connotation of classroom teachers fulfilling this role rather than certified reading/language arts consultants. Dole points out that reading coaches have to have a greater level of reading expertise than the teachers they are coaching. She states further that "there is no substitute for a knowledgeable and skillful reading specialist in a school building." Coaching is but one part of the multiple roles a reading/language arts consultant must play in the twenty-first century. Dole recognizes the critical role that reading specialists play in the professional development of teachers but she does not in this article go beyond the coaching model to explain the leadership role in its multiple aspects.

### **University Preparation in Reading Instruction**

IRA has continued to research quality teacher preparation programs. *Prepared to Make a Difference: Research Evidence on How Some of America's Best College Programs Prepare Teachers of Reading* (IRA, 2003) focuses largely on undergraduate programs for classroom teachers. The publication describes eight research findings of exemplary reading teacher preparation programs and calls for further research on the effectiveness of master's degree programs as well as alternative certification programs in the light of these findings.

Key coursework for the leadership role of a reading/language arts consultant is described in Connecticut's *Regulations* as "Organization, administration and supervision of reading and language arts programs" in addition to a practicum in consulting and a course in advanced diagnosis. Connecticut universities tend to go beyond the requirements listed in the *Regulations* and they vary as well in the texts that they use in the administrative course. Only recently has there been an increase in the number of texts available to universities for such a course for the reading/language arts consultant role. Some universities, accustomed to using *The Administration and Supervision of Reading Programs* (Wepner, Feeley, & Strickland, 1995), have moved on to other texts. One such text is *Systems for Change in Literacy Education: A Guide to Professional Development* (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). Responsibility for professional development in reading and language arts necessitated a careful look at what constitutes high-quality professional development. This text is geared to K-6, but many of the concepts could be applied to higher grades.

Two recent texts hold more promise for improving the preparation of reading/language arts consultants in this information age. Some universities have already begun to use them. *Reading Specialists in the Real World: A Sociocultural View* (Vogt & Shearer, 2003) describes case studies of the multiple roles of the reading specialist



and provides a context for improving how specialists function. The text strongly supports the view that specialists must form literacy teams within their schools if they are to successfully improve reading and language arts instruction, developing a vision and a viable plan of action. Multiple roles that the specialist must assume in these times are covered from early elementary grades through adolescence and go beyond into adult literacy. Reading specialists are cautioned to be knowledgeable about the research underpinnings of new approaches or methods and not to "jump on a bandwagon" (p. 225). Reading specialists must be lifelong learners and participants in professional organizations to keep abreast of the latest research while keeping a balance in literacy instruction that resists fads, in the opinion of these authors. The current movement in social constructivism (see IRA's *Handbook of Reading Research Volume III*, 2000) in advancing literacy learning is applied in Vogt and Shearer's text.

The other text which promises to move reading specialist preparation forward is *The Reading Specialist: Leadership for the Classroom, School, and Community* (Bean, 2004). In many respects, this book appears to push for similar preparation for reading specialists but is a complement to the Vogt & Shearer text, not a duplication. Bean draws upon her research on the role of the reading specialist and focuses attention on the need for these specialists to reach out to the community for understanding and support of the literacy program. She suggests forming a partnership between the school and families and the community at large, including preschools. Literacy study groups, as well as literacy teams, could be initiated. Funding sources in the community and outside the community are resources the specialist should not overlook in building the literacy program. Beyond knowledge, the reading specialist must have enthusiasm (p. 186), states Bean, to be a successful leader.

Teacher preparation programs are currently under attack as never before. It is refreshing to note the above attempts to meet the challenges of this century. Neither Volume I nor Volume II of the *Handbook of Reading Research* addressed the problem. The *Handbook of Reading Research Volume III* (Kamil, Mosenthal, Pearson & Barr, 2000) raised some serious questions about teacher education in Chapter 38, "Teaching Teachers to Teach Reading: Paradigm Shifts, Persistent Problems, and Challenges" (Anders, Hoffman & Duffy). These authors stated that our increasingly diverse society demands we alter our way of thinking about teaching educators how to teach reading, and the emerging literature in social literacies may inform us. The social constructivist views applied to practices in Vogt and Shearer's text and the expanded roles of the specialist in Bean's book cited above indeed do just that.

### **Pendulum Swings in Reading Education**

Many researchers point to the pendulum swings in education which influence not only practices in the field but in teacher preparation. The role of the reading specialist changes as new beliefs take hold. In the last few decades, we have gone through movements such as a skills hierarchical approach, an emphasis on phonics, whole language, and abandoning basals in favor of a literature-based program, just to name a

few. So what are educators saying about reading instruction in the twenty-first century? In *No Quick Fix: Rethinking Literacy Programs in America's Elementary Schools* (1995), Allington and Walmsley describe some of the beliefs that gave rise to changes in elementary education. Chapter I, "Redefining and Reforming Instructional Support Programs for At-Risk Students," gives a brief history of the effectiveness of remedial and special education, and the authors offer six principles for redefining instructional support programs (pp. 26-34):

1. All staff are responsible for the education of all students.
2. All children are entitled to the same literacy experiences, materials, and expectations.
3. Children should be educated with their peers.
4. We need to define what counts as the literacy curriculum.
5. We need to offer high-quality instruction.
6. We need an organizational infrastructure that supports the teaching of literacy.

With regard to principal six, Allington and Walmsley call for a more unified approach for instructional support services. They not only call for collaboration between the specialist and the classroom teacher, they call for a greater emphasis on supporting at-risk children in the classroom. Merging support services into a unified whole, in Allington and Walmsley's opinion, means that "the quality of core curriculum instruction will require all teachers to renegotiate their roles and responsibilities" (p. 34). Specialists are not responsible alone for the teaching of at-risk children, and when they do work with them, whether in-class or out, classroom instruction and intervention practices need to be coordinated if the students are to succeed. In the "Afterword" the authors express the concern that all children should receive adequate preschool literacy experiences (p. 255). At this writing Connecticut legislators are wrestling with how to accomplish universal preschooling. Within the next decade, the prediction is that universal preschooling will be a mandate.

Allington decries any attempt for a national curriculum but is afraid that the time is here. His book, *Big Brother and the National Reading Curriculum: How Ideology Trumped Evidence* (2002) critiques the *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* (2000). In Chapter I, "Troubling Times: A Short Historical Perspective," he describes his thirty years as a researcher and his concern that once again reading instruction is under attack. Yet we are doing better than the media would have us believe. He points to studies that show international comparisons rank the United States' fourth graders as second, Finland being the top. Other international comparisons, however, indicate the United States needs to improve its reading instruction in middle and high schools, since international rankings place American adolescents in the middle rather than the top.

In Chapter 12, Allington worries that we are going in the wrong direction. In his view, we seem to be getting away from local control of curriculum and instruction, and as the federal government gains control of curriculum and instruction, they are also targeting materials and packaged programs. He complains that bureaucrats do not seem to understand that materials don't teach, teachers do (p. 248). There is no evidence, he states, to support the federal government's reliance on scripted or "proven" programs or that good classroom instruction alone will solve the problem of struggling readers. Some children will need expert, intensive intervention for sustained periods of time, "even across their whole school career" (p. 256). Even so, Allington says we can and should improve the quality of classroom reading instruction (p. 258). While not convinced that national standards are a good idea, he believes that they are going to be with us and, if so, "it is best for education professionals to have a go at developing them, rather than leaving the task to a federal bid winner" (p. 260).

In this same book Cathy Toll writes in Chapter 7, "Can Teachers and Policy Makers Learn to Talk to One Another," that she is disturbed that teacher expertise and experience has been ignored in the National Reading Panel's report. She raises questions about research that would honor decision making by teachers and worries that such research might not be accepted according to "notions of science." "Better science is not going to lead us to a utopia condition in which all educators know the answers to all of education's difficult questions," she writes (p. 152), and calls for "meta-discourses" about school change. Toll is particularly concerned about how educators deal with differences in the classroom for teachers as well as students. She cautions that although classroom teachers must be considered in a collaboration model, power play can interfere with productive discourse. The introduction to Toll's article also criticizes the National Reading Panel report for not dealing with the issue of motivation although there have been studies about engagement in reading and learning that would count as "scientific research."

And now the information age has turned into the accountability age. The controversy over the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is raging. Pi Lambda Theta, an education honor society, discusses this act in a recent issue of *Educational Horizons* entitled, "*No Child Left Behind*": *Failed Schools – Or Failed Law?* (Winter, 2004). In the words of the Executive Director of Pi Lambda Theta, J. Ogden Hamilton, "This issue demonstrates the nature of the balance between educators' urgent need to understand today's hot topics and their less urgent but more fundamental need to understand the underlying issues that will continue to drive successive waves of hot topics until they are understood and addressed" (p. 118). NCLB is a serious challenge to educators, but Hamilton feels it will "pass into history just as every act before it has..." (p.119). He goes on to say that there is a consensus among his colleagues in Pi Lambda Theta that NCLB has good intentions that are beyond reproach but as written and administered, NCLB cannot succeed. It is more a "subject for short-term survival workshops than long-term intellectual thinking" (p. 120). While many of the articles in

this journal state what is wrong with NCLB, Hamilton offers in the final article, "Seize the Day," the notion that educators need to go beyond complaining and use the act as an opportunity to better respond to the needs of today's society. America's schools have too long been "buffeted by the forces of politics" in Hamilton's opinion, and educators need to agree on a direction and give schools the "stability and security they will need to weather the waves that inevitably will continue to hit them" (p. 168). The flaws in the law, he feels, will be corrected before 2007, when NCLB will be up for reauthorization.

With all the attacks against reading instruction today, CARR decided to find out how reading specialists were being affected and what Connecticut's remedial reading/language arts teachers and reading/language arts consultants were doing. Moreover, CARR wished to know how they were feeling about their responsibilities and whether those responsibilities had changed in this age of accountability. The next section of this report will detail those findings.

## FINDINGS

The surveys of reading professionals, principals, and universities purposely did not have headings categorizing questions in order that responses would not be skewed. However, responses have now been categorized. Demographic and Descriptive Data were tallied from responses to questions 1B, 1C, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14A, 14B, 18A, 18B, 18C, 20A, 20B, 23C, 23D, 23F, 23G. Data on the Roles and Responsibilities of Practicing Reading Professionals were gathered from questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, 19A, 19B, 20B, 23F, 23G, 24, 25. Questions 1A, 6, 17, 21A, 21B, 21C, 23A, 23H yielded information on Reading Specialist Preparation, while questions 7, 22A, 22B, 22C and 26 gave insight into Support for Reading Specialist Positions. There was some overlapping of information among the various categories. "Specialist" in this report refers to both certifications: Remedial Reading/Language Arts Teacher and Reading/Language Arts Consultant, while "Reading Professionals" includes the classroom teacher.

### PHASE I. READING PROFESSIONALS

See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire which was sent to reading professionals in Connecticut who had 102 and/or 097 certifications.

#### Demographic and Descriptive Data

##### Responses

Of the 1773 questionnaires mailed, 1648 were actually delivered due to lack of forwarding addresses for 125 individuals. A total of 376 responses, a 23% response rate, represented all Education Reference Groups (ERGs). Vo-Tech and high schools were predominantly 9-12; the majority of middle schools were 6-8; and elementary schools were predominantly K-5, but many variations were apparent as with middle schools. The breakdown of responses fell into the following categories of where they worked and the jobs they held:

| <u>Schools</u>  | <u>Reading Tchrs.<br/>&amp; Consultants</u> | <u>Classroom<br/>Teachers</u> | <u>Other</u> | <u>Totals</u> |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Vo-Tech         | 4   | 4                             |              | 8             |
| High            | 22  | 9                             |              | 31            |
| Middle          | 41  | 27                            |              | 68            |
| Elementary      | 201   | 48                            |              | 249           |
| No ERG listed   | 3   | 1                             |              | 4             |
| Special schools | 2   | 3                             |              | 5             |
| Administrators  | -   | -                             | 11           | 11            |
| Totals          | 273   | 92                            | 11           | 376           |

The schools listed as "special" were mainly special education residential schools.

**Teaching Background**

Summarizing only the four types of public schools, reading professionals were veteran teachers:

|                     | <u>Average Years<br/>in Present Position</u> | <u>Average Years<br/>in Teaching</u> |
|---------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Vo-Tech Schools     | 9  | 27                                   |
| High Schools        | 11   | 25                                   |
| Middle Schools      | 8  | 20                                   |
| Elementary Schools  | 7  | 19                                   |
| Total Average Years | 9  | 23                                   |

**Lines of Communication**

In all cases, classroom teachers are supervised by the principal. Reading specialists may be supervised by the principal and/or department chair and/or central office personnel.

**Greatest Need in the School**

Staff development outranked all others, but was tied with intervention and/or remediation in the Vo-Tech schools.

**Service to School(s)**

The vast majority served only one school.

**School Population Served**

Average size of the schools, average numbers of teachers, and the average numbers of remedial students or students requiring intervention that were the reading specialists' responsibility are listed below:

|           | <u>School<br/>Population</u> | <u>Number<br/>of Teachers</u> | <u>Number of<br/>Remedial Pupils</u> |
|-----------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Vo-Tech   | 754                          | 52                            | 158                                  |
| High S.   | 1378                         | 106                           | 60                                   |
| Middle S. | 771                          | 48                            | 44                                   |
| Elem. S.  | 481                          | 23                            | 27                                   |

**Personnel Providing Reading Intervention**

Reading teachers with 102 certification and consultants with 097 certification are the major providers of services to pupils in need of reading intervention. Special education teachers run a close second at the Vo-Tech, high school, and middle school levels. At the elementary level, classroom teachers and paraprofessionals rank second in frequency.

### Majority Intervention Practices

Averages are listed below, indicating differences by school levels. At the secondary level, in-class intervention predominates, while pull-out predominates at the elementary level. Caution is to be exercised in interpreting these results as in-class at the secondary level often means the specialist has classes of students needing intervention, whereas at the elementary level in-class generally means in the student's own classroom. The closeness of the averages between pull-out and in-class at the elementary level may mean in-class instruction is a trend.

|                    | <u>Average<br/>Pull-Out</u> | <u>Average<br/>In-Class</u> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Vo-Tech            | 30%                         | 69%                         |
| High Schools       | 72%                         | 89%                         |
| Middle Schools     | 64%                         | 72%                         |
| Elementary Schools | 66%                         | 52%                         |
| Average Totals     | 58%                         | 71%                         |

### Other Interventions

Except for high schools, the total number of responses at each level indicates summer school is most frequently provided while Saturday classes are almost non-existent.

|                    | <u>Summer School</u> | <u>Before/After School</u> | <u>Saturdays</u> |
|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Vo-Tech            | 8                    | 2                          | 0                |
| High Schools       | 5                    | 9                          | 1                |
| Middle Schools     | 33                   | 21                         | 1                |
| Elementary Schools | 154                  | 59                         | 13               |

### Reading Enrichment

Information on the kind of reading enrichment programs was unclear or sketchy. Reading/language arts consultants provide enrichment in addition to others, such as content area teachers, teachers of the gifted and talented, library media specialists, and volunteers. Total numbers of responses are indicated below:

|                    | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--------------------|------------|-----------|
| Vo-Tech            | 6          | 2         |
| High Schools       | 9          | 10        |
| Middle Schools     | 22         | 18        |
| Elementary Schools | 114        | 82        |

### **Interventions Prior to Pupil Placement Team (PPT) Referral**

Classroom modifications (such as audio tapes, modified assignments, extra time, etc.), in-class support, extra support by the reading specialist, tutoring, and para-professional help, along with diagnostic testing, were the most frequent responses. Reading specialists and classroom teachers were the most frequent intervention providers. Intervention time prior to a PPT varied greatly from a few weeks to a few years, with individual needs the deciding factor.

### **Information on NCLB and Other Mandates**

Reading professionals primarily receive information on NCLB and other mandates through their school administrators or central office personnel. At the time of our survey not much information had been received. Reading professionals, especially consultants, expressed the desire to receive information directly from the CSDE and through state and local workshops, with time for questions and answers.

### **Common Planning Time**

Answers varied, but many respondents said classroom teachers had some common planning time, but the time did not include the reading specialist.

### **Use of Standardized Assessments and Monitoring Student Gains**

In addition to the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT), schools use a variety of standardized tests as well as diagnostic tests. The CMT and the CAPT, along with the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), seem to be the only common denominators. Commercial standardized tests are frequently in use as well as informal inventories. The trend is to establish databases and spreadsheets to track student performance.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Practicing Reading Professionals**

### **Position Titles**

Some respondents listed more than one job title, making it difficult to know what the person's position actually is, except where they listed themselves as consultant or classroom teacher. Certification and qualifications did not appear to determine the role. Job titles for reading specialists included the following designations: reading/language arts teacher, language arts specialist, reading teacher, reading specialist, reading/language arts coordinator, literacy specialist, remedial teacher, Title I, integrated language arts specialist, early literacy teacher, literacy leader, instructional resource teacher, literacy coach, reading/writing teacher. From the CSDE database of August 2003, a total of 2249 individuals are working in public schools with 102 or 097 certifications in the following assignments:



|  |     |      |
|--|-----|------|
| Reading consultants                    | 440 |      |
| Remedial reading specialists           | 646 |      |
| Developmental reading                  | 133 |      |
| Integrated language arts               | 52  |      |
| Total in specialist positions          |     | 1271 |
| English teachers                       | 107 |      |
| Classroom teachers & administrators    | 871 |      |
| Total teachers & administrators        |     | 978  |
| Grand total with 102/097 certification |     | 2249 |

### **Primary Role**

The majority of reading specialists who responded to our survey indicated that their primary role is intervention and remediation.

### **Percentage of Specialists' Time**

In keeping with the reading specialist's perception of their primary role, the following averages show that most of the specialist's time is spent in direct instruction of students, with much less time spent on a mix of other duties.

|                    | <u>Direct Instruction</u> | <u>In-Class Support</u> | <u>Pull-Out Support</u> |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Vo-Tech Schools    | 69%                       | 54%                     | 41%                     |
| High Schools       | 71%                       | 64%                     | 72%                     |
| Middle Schools     | 58%                       | 48%                     | 61%                     |
| Elementary Schools | 56%                       | 37%                     | 59%                     |
| Average Percentage | 64%                       | 51%                     | 58%                     |

### **Role in Diagnosis and Assessment**

Reading specialists ranked their major roles according to the following categories, with almost equal weight being given to certain responsibilities.

|  | <u>Vo-Tech</u> | <u>H.S.</u> | <u>M.S.</u> | <u>Elem.</u> |
|--|----------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Diagnosing/assessing individual students   | 1              | 1           | 1           | 1            |
| Planning instruction based on assessment   | 1              | 1           | 1           | 1            |
| Explaining diagnosis to parents            | 1              | 2           | 2           | 2            |
| Developing appropriate assessments         | 1              | 3           | 3           | 4            |
| Coordinating and analyzing schoolwide data | 2              | 4           | 3           | 3            |
| Training teachers in assessment practices  | 3              | 3           | 4           | 2            |

### **Role in Developing the Reading/Language Arts Budget**

For all levels, responses were almost equally divided between "yes" (136) and "no" (131), 51% responding "yes" and 49% responding "no." Of those responding "yes," 70%, or 95 respondents, said it is a collaborative model with teachers and administrators, usually the principal.

### **Providing Intervention**

The major providers of reading intervention are those specialists with either the 102 remedial reading/language arts teacher endorsement or the 097 reading/language arts consultant endorsement. The majority of responses indicated there is collaboration with classroom teachers and special education teachers, and sometimes with others. Services may also be provided by classroom teachers, special education teachers, para-professionals, Reading Recovery teachers. Volunteers are used more frequently at the elementary school level than in other grades; however, tutors, peer tutors, college interns, English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers are reported at middle and elementary school levels and with less frequency at the secondary level.

### **Training of Others in Remediation Strategies**

The majority of the reading specialists responding reported that they train classroom teachers in remediation strategies. Some reading specialists train special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and tutors. At the elementary level, reading specialists also provide training for volunteers, Title I tutors, early literacy teachers, and parents.

### **Involvement with PPT, Child Study Team, Student Assistance Team**

At all levels, 91% of the respondents who answered this question (N=268) said they were involved; 9% said they were not. Involvement consisted largely of sharing information on assessment and diagnosis, and planning an intervention program. The majority are considered regular members of the team, especially when there are reading concerns. Others attend only upon request, usually for one of their remedial students.

### **Delivering Intervention Prior to a PPT**

At all levels, reading specialists with 102 and/or 097 certifications service students with reading needs prior to referrals to a PPT, sometimes in conjunction with others, such as the classroom teacher, or with a team approach.

### **Responsibility for Analysis of Schoolwide Assessment Data, Including Disaggregation**

At the middle and high school levels, reading specialists were less involved with analyzing schoolwide data, whereas at the elementary level most reading/language arts consultants were involved. Some were not yet certain whose responsibility this would be in meeting the demands of the NCLB. The responsibility for this role is usually not the reading/language arts consultant's alone but is a shared responsibility with principals and other administrators. Of those that said they tracked students, some tracked only their own students, while others who had this responsibility tracked all the students in the school.

### **Guidelines for Working With Specialized Personnel**

Of the 258 responses to this question, 65%, or 267 specialists, indicated they had no such guidelines. Of the 35% (90) that said they did, the guidelines were primarily for working with special education teachers, and at the high school level with department heads. In a few cases, guidelines existed for other specialists on staff.

### **Job Description**

Of the 247 responses to this question, 45% (110) indicated they had a job description; 55% (137) said they did not have a job description. Of those that had a job description only 45% (50) sent copies. The job descriptions varied greatly in job title and responsibilities, and many were old and had not been updated. In addition to job descriptions for reading/language arts consultants or remedial teachers, some job descriptions received were for Reading Recovery teachers, early literacy teacher coach, instructional resource teacher, instructional aide, remediation specialist, reading teacher, reading specialist, reading teacher/coordinator K-8, language arts consultant, special education teacher, integrated language arts specialist, literacy class teacher (TLC), et al. In many cases, no certification requirements or qualifications were listed for the position.

### **University Preparation for Reading Specialists**

#### **Certification**

At all levels, those with 097 reading/language arts consultant certification outnumbered the 102 remedial reading/language arts teachers. In counting 356 responses (eliminating 20 that were administrators or in special schools, and those who did not list an ERG), 175 (49%) held the 097 endorsement, 114 (32%) held the 102 endorsement, and 67 (19%) held both endorsements.

#### **Rating of College Coursework in Preparation for the Specialist Role**

Of the 277 responses to this question, an overwhelming number (89%) rated their graduate coursework as strong (45%) or adequate (44%), while only 11% rated their coursework as inadequate.

#### **Keeping Up With Trends, Research, Advances in Reading/Language Arts Education**

Rankings were the same for all levels except the Vo-Tech schools. The following were the primary ways specialists keep up, although they listed some other ways as well, such as networking with colleagues, Internet, and visits to other schools. Rankings were:

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Workshops                       | 1 |
| Professional journals and books | 2 |
| Conferences                     | 3 |
| Professional organizations      | 4 |
| College coursework              | 5 |

Vo-Tech specialists chose workshops and professional organizations as first, conferences and journal/book readings as second, and additional coursework as third.

### **Coursework and Professional Development for the Specialist Role**

The responses to these three questions were highly individual and therefore difficult to quantify. For college coursework that they felt best prepared them, many replied that all or most of their graduate reading courses were valuable. Although other courses were listed, the following had the highest frequency:

- Reading Clinic
- All Assessment Courses, including Tests and Measurements
- Diagnosis and Remediation
- Adolescent and Children's Literature
- Practicum, Internship, Field Work
- Reading in the Content Areas
- Administration and Supervision

A question was asked about additional preparation they felt they needed as they began their specialist role. The majority said none, but some said the following would have been helpful:

- More coursework in comprehension strategies
- Keeping up with newer assessments
- Advanced clinical diagnosis (required for 097, not 102 endorsement)
- Curriculum development
- More secondary level courses, including literature and content reading
- How to be a change agent, management, and individualization

Another question asked about professional development that they found valuable. Responses were very varied here as well, but the majority expressed preference for workshops that were focused (examples were content reading, strategy instruction, writing) and that had choices and time for discussion with colleagues. Conferences at both the national and state level (IRA, CSDE, CRA, CARR) were highly valued, but released time to attend them was difficult to obtain. Reading Recovery training was given high praise, as was the Columbia Writing Institute and CSDE workshops.

### **Preparation for NCLB and Other Mandates**

Of the 250 respondents to this question, 44% felt that they had been prepared by their administrators, 52% felt unprepared, 4% were not sure or felt somewhat prepared.

### **Attendance at Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs)**

There were 262 responses to this question, with 83% indicating they did not attend RESC meetings. Only 17% said they did, and many indicated that they did not know of these meetings.

## **Support for the Specialist Role**

### **Rating of Administrative Support for the Specialist Role**

Overall, administrators appear to support the position of a reading specialist, as responses tended to show administrative support was either strong or moderate, with few rating administrative support as "little." While there is strong support for the position, the comment section shows concern about lack of support in actual practice. However, with regard to this specific question, of 272 responses, which included all levels, 65% indicated in-house support as strong, 26% indicated in-house support as moderate, and 8% said there was little or moderate-to-little in-house support. For central office support, results were similar, except at the high schools support from the central office was more moderate than strong. Central office percentages for 256 responses showed strong support as 55%, moderate as 33%, and little or moderate-to-little support as 12%.

### **Roadblocks With Students**

Time and scheduling head the list as major roadblocks with students and also with teachers and others. Time and scheduling are frustrations for all, and caseloads and class size for many. The list below delineates the most frequent responses at all levels as to roadblocks with students, but other roadblocks too numerous to describe were scattered throughout the responses.

- Time and scheduling
- Home environment (poverty, social-emotional problems, lack of parental support, language barriers)
- Lack of motivation
- Class size and caseload
- Lack of resources (materials and personnel) due to lack of funds
- Attendance and mobility
- History of reading failure
- Inaccurate placement
- Pull-out versus in-class (pros and cons both ways)

### **Roadblocks With Teachers**

- Time and scheduling
- Teacher attitudes, lack of knowledge and understanding
- Teacher inflexibility and resistance to change
- Conflicting philosophies
- Refusal to co-plan or make modifications
- Not using strategies or best practices
- Lack of training for content teachers
- Teachers not wanting students to leave class
- Take no responsibility for students who are serviced by the specialist

- Lack of understanding of the specialist's role
- Lack of funding for professional development
- Mobility

### **Roadblocks With Others**

- Time and scheduling
- Parental lack of support
- Lack of understanding by staff and community of reading process
- Unqualified teachers used as specialists training teachers
- Budget constraints for resources (materials and personnel)
- Issues with special education
- Administrative issues
  - Too many changes too fast
  - Lack of support for and/or understanding of the specialist role
  - An emphasis on scores rather than instruction
  - Lack of support for discipline issues
  - Lack of knowledge and understanding of the reading process
  - Inattention to teacher inflexibility
  - Few guidelines for reducing conflicts
  - Lack of support for a coordinated reading/language arts program
  - One-size-fits-all mandates

### **Comments**

#### **Classroom Teachers**

Classroom teachers were asked to answer only the first two questions dealing with certification, supervisor, and position title. Then they were asked to skip to the Comment section to tell why they elected not to take a specialist position even though they had completed graduate work to be certified as either the 102 Remedial Reading/Language Arts Teacher or 097 Reading/Language Arts Consultant. The most frequent responses are listed below:

- Job security is threatened.
- There is no incentive to take on extra responsibilities without extra pay.
- The position has been eliminated in their district and they do not wish to move out of district.
- They like working in the classroom with a heterogeneous mix of students.
- They do not wish to be responsible for staff development.
- They do not feel ready for a highly demanding position.

## **Remedial Teachers and Consultants**

Many specialists took this opportunity to vent frustrations. The general impression from responses to the survey is that Remedial Reading/Language Arts Teachers are asked to do a consultant's position without the training or certification to do so, while many Reading/Language Arts Consultants are simply used as remedial teachers. And yet some voiced the opinion that they could not get a job as a remedial teacher because principals wanted a consultant who could work with teachers as well as students. They felt it was unfair that state Regulations mandated working as a remedial teacher for ten months before they could become a consultant with additional graduate coursework. Other frequent comments concerned the job of a consultant and can be categorized as follows:

- Individuals are allowed to do a reading consultant's job without certification in reading.
- CSDE needs to take initiative in clarifying the role as a leadership role and maintain requirements.
- The job is not defined and is used to "plug holes."
- Do not lower standards for consultants but provide incentives.
- An alternate route to consultant certification cannot be successful without sufficient time for in-depth training, and any such program should require an internship with a veteran consultant.
- School systems recognize the need but do not accord consultants appropriate status and compensation.
- A salary differential is needed for consultants, who have an enormous workload and responsibilities.
- Principals need to be educated regarding consultant capabilities, and consultants need their support as they have much responsibility and no authority.
- It is difficult to be a change agent when administrators do not support the consultant in any conflict with classroom teachers.
- More students are being referred due to the pressures of state testing and NCLB accountability, yet there is a lack of resources, both in personnel and materials.

The following quote appears to sum up many of the comments CARR received:

"A reading consultant has an enormous workload and many different responsibilities... Although principals I worked for had full confidence in my knowledge-base and ability, they did not help to pave the way for work with classroom teachers in an effort to improve student achievement. When controversy arose with classroom teachers, the principal would usually back down and not address the problem with the classroom teacher(s). Therefore, the reading consultant, who is employed to act as a change agent to improve classroom instruction and student achievement, often finds that all her efforts are for naught in circumstances such as this. ... The principal must ensure that classroom teachers view the reading consultant as a resource to help achieve their agreed upon goals. Without strong administrative support, a reading consultant, who has much responsibility, but no authority, will be ineffective, frustrated, and likely to seek another position."

- Reading Recovery Teacher and Reading/Language Arts Consultant, with a Ph.D.

## **PHASE II. UNIVERSITIES**

Currently there are five Connecticut universities that offer an accredited reading certification program and each participated in this study. Members of the Reading Department at the universities were asked to respond to questions about how the current certification requirements for reading specialist certification are working for their students and also how their pre-service education programs in reading training for classroom teachers are working. In analyzing the survey responses and the follow-up conversations, some specific concerns and suggestions for improvement were offered. The findings of the twelve survey questions are summarized below by category. Questions 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 12 are summarized in the first category: Recommendations for Improvement in the Preparation of Reading Specialists. The findings from questions 2, 5, 6, are included in the next category: Problems in the Field. The last category, Reactions to Proposals, includes findings from questions 10 and 11. For a copy of the questionnaire sent to the universities, see Appendix B.

### **Recommendations for Improvement in the Preparation of Reading Specialists**

#### **Certification**

Universities that currently offer a reading certification program were divided about whether or not they believe there should be one certification (097) offered. Approximately half of the respondents felt: "Positively. One certification eliminates the many problems of the dual certification." "[There would be] no negative impact. The preference is to have a single certification as all literacy leaders need consultation skills." Others, however, expressed concerns that one certification would have a negative impact on the field as there are many graduates who have no desire to work as consultants. They point out that the 102 remedial reading/language arts certification allows specialists who are not interested in doing consultant work to continue to provide at-risk readers with a highly qualified professional. Their thoughts are that without this certification, children who need the most help may end up with paraprofessionals rather than with certified reading specialists.

When asked how many teachers with a 102 endorsement go on to earn a reading consultant endorsement (097), approximately half of the respondents reported 50% or more of their graduates go on to earn an 097 endorsement. Half of the university respondents reported less than 50% go on to earn a reading/language arts consultant endorsement (097). One university's reading certification program is new; therefore no data were available. Reasons found for the reluctance of graduate students to pursue an 097 endorsement included the following:

- "[They are] insecure about the position; unclear job descriptions."
- "The consultant endorsement requires additional coursework (for Masters candidates). All 6<sup>th</sup> year candidates complete coursework for 097 certification."



- “There are no incentives [for students to go on] and there are many requirements for [teachers] with after school meetings.”
- “Districts often do not reimburse [students] for courses. [Teachers] spend tens of thousands of dollars in tuition and fees to obtain the certification.”
- “There is less job security for consultants.”
- “They want to work with children not with programs; [working] the required one-year work experience under the 102 endorsement before being able to apply for a 097 has been a problem.”

Many of these reasons reoccur in the findings when respondents discussed problems post-graduates encounter when they secure a position in the field.

### **Pre-Service Training**

Universities are frequently accused of providing insufficient training to pre-service classroom teachers in the teaching of reading. Respondents were asked what changes, if any, they believe should be instituted at the Bachelor and Master's level. The findings showed that university respondents believe there should be more undergraduate level credits in literacy required as well as a course in writing instruction and children's literature. More financial support is needed to hire extra faculty members. At the graduate level, university respondents believe a course in reading should be required for all education majors. There were also suggestions for more state-supported grants to create an increase in university/public school professional development opportunities.

All the university respondents indicated they offer content area reading courses both at the undergraduate and graduate level (if they have an undergraduate program). One respondent said there are reading course requirements for pre-service special education teachers; other respondents were unaware if they did or did not offer a special education program.

Finally, the findings showed that every university is responding to the demand for information literacy. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) process includes a focus on information literacy, and it was noted that faculty incorporate technology when it improves their instruction. A typical university response was, “All students are required to take a technology course, and ... incorporate technology into their lessons and units. A new generation of teachers are coming to our university with a great deal of technology know-how. They naturally incorporate technology into their planning and teaching. We are now able to concentrate on demonstrating, modeling, and coaching our students on the many ways to use technology to improve their teaching. In the past, we had to train students first on how to use the technology, and then on how to use it to improve instruction.”

### **Other Recommendations Offered**

Several specific recommendations were suggested beyond changing the current certification requirements:

- “We believe a stronger partnership between the Connecticut Department of Education, Connecticut school principals and superintendents, leaders of the Connecticut Reading Association, and the Connecticut universities that prepare reading specialists would be extremely beneficial to the preparation of reading specialists. There would be a significant improvement if these groups met once or twice a year as a certification advisory board to discuss current issues and needs.”
- “Another way to improve the preparation of reading specialists in our state is to create regional literacy research centers at various universities in Connecticut.”
- “The BEST Program should be extended to cover a portfolio for reading specialists.”

### **Problems in the Field**

#### **Reluctance to Opt for Reading Consultant Certification**

The findings show that the problems that were well documented by previous CARR research are still persistent today. Many are reluctant to pursue reading consultant certification for a variety of reasons. University participants asked graduate students why and found the lack of clear job descriptions, the lack of understanding about the distinctions between the two types of certifications, and the lack of job security were repeated themes. Some additional comments universities shared are listed below:

- “The job description is unclear or nonexistent. [Students get] mixed messages from universities, districts, schools, and state department.”
- “Students have reported needing more preparation in consultancy skills. We have redesigned our program to meet this need.”
- “Our graduates are not willing to take positions that require more work and responsibility without an increase in pay. The role of the specialists has changed; it has become a more administrative role than in the past. The role now requires less time working with children, or and in many cases, no time at all with children. Our graduates indicate they still want to work with children at least half of their time.”
- “Another concern is job security. These are not mandated positions, and people serve at the pleasure of the superintendents. This means when tough budget times occur they are often the first positions to be eliminated or reduced.”
- “The basic problem is that school principals, etc. do not understand the difference between a 102 and a 097 certification. They want consultants but want them to do the tasks that require only a 102.”

#### **Reluctance to Use Reading Certification**

University participants were asked the reasons why some of their students who hold reading consultant endorsements (097) choose not to use them. Responses ranged from the lack of available positions in their district to job security:

- “There is no position available in their system and they do not want to move and lose their tenured position.”

- “The classroom offers more job security. By the time our graduates obtain all the required training they are near the top of their pay scale and are reluctant to make a move without a pay increase.”
- “Some graduate students enroll in our program to strengthen their skills as classroom teachers of reading. The additional certification is not a priority.”
- “[Concerns about] tenure, unclear job descriptions, an unwillingness to risk a new job, and no opening in [their] district.”

## **Reactions to Proposals**

### **State Department Proposal for an Alternate Route to Certification**

If an alternate route to certification for a reading specialist is approved, similar to that of a library media specialist, all university respondents believe it would result in providing schools with inadequately trained consultants. “Rather, a partnership program between the state and those universities with reading programs for graduate students (with stipends and tuition reimbursements)...would be a step in the right direction. The main reason for shortages in this area, in our opinion, is very few teachers are willing to work at the administrative level without administrative pay.”

Other respondents said, “An ARC program in reading would reduce the shortage, but [we] do not support this and anticipate that some students may choose the quick way rather than the best way to obtain certification.”

“This is a big mistake!!! My current consultant students are incensed as they hear about such a proposal. Personally I was quite affronted when a representative from the CT State Dept. said that an alternate route to reading/language arts certification would not be held to the standards to which the universities are held. This is incredibly insensitive to all the work we have done at the university level to insure [there are] competently prepared teachers of reading.”

### **CARR Proposal for a Certified Reading/Language Arts Consultant in Every School**

Reactions to this proposal from university respondents are listed below. They felt CARR’s proposal for a reading consultant in every school would work only if other steps were taken:

- “With one certification – Reading Specialist.”
- “Districts would have to stop “renaming” literacy personnel and encourage teachers to obtain certification to serve in literacy roles.”
- “As long as the position is not a mandated position, this will never happen in our opinion. If the state of Connecticut is serious about literacy, the state would write the position into legislation.”
- “The only way is for the state to require it... or give some kind of “bonus” to schools that do.”

### PHASE III. PRINCIPALS

Surveys were mailed to 149 principals randomly chosen from all Educational Reference Groups and from a cross section of school levels. There was a 19% response rate with surveys returned from each school level. The findings of the six survey questions are summarized below by category. Questions 1 and 2 are summarized in the first category: Descriptive Data. The findings from questions 3, 4, and 5 are included in the next category: Preparation and Expectations. The last category, Background of Principals, includes findings from question 6. For a copy of the questionnaire sent to the principals, see Appendix C.

#### Descriptive Data

Of the responses received, 89% principals reported they have reading specialists working in their building. Eleven percent of the principal respondents said they did not. Those that answered "no" were asked a follow up question about how the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) will affect their need for a reading specialist. Some respondents were greatly concerned about this; one was concerned prior to NCLB and is seeking support from a neighboring district, and another feels their staff will need more professional development in integrating reading across the curriculum.

The principals that reported they did not have a reading specialist were also asked if offering a stipend for the position would help them attract well-qualified reading professionals. A couple of principals responded to this question even if they did have a reading specialist in their building. Thoughts about this issue were divided. One principal felt that a stipend would not be fair to other staff, one felt the salary would not matter and that the teacher's contract would not allow a stipend to be added to a reading consultant's salary, and two respondents felt it may help.

Principals that reported having a reading specialist were asked the type of certification their reading specialist holds. Some respondents reported different types of certification within the same school when there were multiple positions. Additionally, many principals said they did not know the certification.

| Type of Certification  | % of Teachers Reported Holding |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 102 Certification  | 16%                            |
| 097 Certification  | 72%                            |
| Do Not Know or reported other certifications that are not reading certifications | 12%                            |

The 24 principals that reported having reading specialists in their building were asked about the primary responsibilities of the position. Fifty-six percent of the principal respondents said that their reading specialist works directly with identified students in small pull-out groups or in classrooms or they work one-on-one with students. The majority of these teachers also provide consultation to other classroom teachers and

provide staff development. Another common job responsibility was the coordination of language arts programs, data analysis, and parent training. The supervision of paraprofessionals was another job responsibility mentioned.

Principals who have reading specialists were asked about the job title for the position. Responses are listed below:

| <b>Job Title</b>   | <b>Number of Responses</b> |
|--|----------------------------|
| Reading Consultant   | 2                          |
| Reading Specialist   | 5                          |
| Title 1 Reading  | 1                          |
| Reading Teacher  | 4                          |
| Language Consultant  | 3                          |
| Reading Resource Teacher   | 2                          |
| Reading Language Arts Consultant                                 | 1                          |
| Language Arts Curriculum Specialist: Title 1 Reading Supervision | 1                          |
| Developmental Reading Teacher                                    | 1                          |

Next, principals were asked how the university preparation for the two reading certifications, 102 and 097, affect the needs of their positions versus the role principals would expect the specialist to fill. Forty-two percent of principals who answered the question did not see a difference in the preparation of teachers with one certification or the other. Principals emphasized they need “someone who can apply reading strategies in the classroom, work with students, understand the reading process, understand research and assessment, and serve as a staff developer to promote reading across disciplines.” Most principals did not recognize that one certification (097) better prepares a reading specialist for these responsibilities. Three of the principals did recognize a difference in certifications and felt that teachers holding an 097 are better able to supervise teachers, interpret test results, prescribe reading plans, and have more “authority” with staff. Finally, many principals added that no matter what the certification is, the person is what is most important to them.

### **Preparation and Expectations**

Principals were asked whether they believe reading specialists have adequate training to be effective. Eighty-eight percent of the principals who responded said that they do. They not only attributed this to pre-service training but also to the ongoing professional development of the reading specialists. One person felt that newly certified people are not as well trained as veteran reading consultants.

The three people who felt that reading specialists do not have adequate training were asked what the teachers lack. Some principals who responded that the training was

adequate responded to this section also. Comments included:

- “Linguistics background, knowledge of English grammar, language structure, phonics, phonemics, speech.”
- “Few people I have worked with have strong backgrounds in secondary reading programming.”
- “Leadership abilities, how to work with and help teachers make changes in their instruction.”
- “More on the job training and internship needed.”

Principals who feel that reading specialists do have adequate training were asked what evidence they use to support their belief. Most reported they gather their evidence from student performance data, parent and teacher feedback and the teachers’ perseverance in addressing the needs of students. Other evidence mentioned included: the workshops they provide, the evaluation process (e.g. observations and goal attainment), and the information they share with other staff.

Over 80% of the principal respondents said the most essential skills and knowledge they look for when hiring a reading specialist centered around the following: a thorough knowledge of current, effective teaching and learning strategies in language arts diagnosis, the ability to lead others, work ethic, and knowledge about program development. Other areas frequently mentioned were collaboration skills, the ability to interpret data, the personality to work with staff, and building “fit.”

Principals were asked how they believe administrators can best support the role of the reading specialists to maximize their effectiveness. Fifty-two percent of respondents said it is important that a principal maintain a focus on reading; that the teachers, administrators, and reading specialists work as a strong team, and that principals support the professional development the reading specialist does for staff. This support includes following up the professional development with an expectation that teachers will be using what they learned from the reading specialist in the classroom. Holding staff accountable to changes brought forth by the reading specialist, giving reading specialists the time, resources and emotional support they need to be successful were also important considerations mentioned.

### **Background of Principals**

Principals in this survey were asked about their background in reading instruction. Most of the principals felt that they have learned about effective reading instruction through their experience and through the professional development they have attended. Fourteen percent of the principals who responded have reading certification; 18% reported having had experience in teaching reading during their career.

## **DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **Needs of This Century**

When viewed collectively, some common themes emerge across all participants – reading professionals, universities, and administrators. The triangulation of data supports these themes and leads us to make some conclusions about the problems reading professionals are encountering in this century. While the reading program needs of districts are greater (information age, federal mandates, statewide accountability, diverse school populations), the role of the reading specialist has not changed in many schools to keep pace with the growing demands. Staff development is the greatest need, as expressed by all participants in this study, and yet the reading/language arts consultant is spending the majority of the time with intervention or remediation instead of building a successful reading and language arts program within each classroom and the school as a whole.

### **Need for Administrative Support and Understanding of the Role**

The two reading specialist certifications in Connecticut (102 remedial reading/language arts teacher and 097 reading/language arts consultant) are not understood by administrators. Approximately one-third of the principal respondents revealed confusion about the two certifications and the subsequent job responsibilities each certification prepares reading specialists for. For example, remedial teachers are being asked to provide leadership for the reading/language arts program, yet the 102 certification does not prepare them for that role. Worse yet, unqualified teachers (not certified as reading specialists) are being hired as “literacy coaches” to provide staff development without the in-depth training needed for such a role.

Conversely, reading/language arts consultants are often asked to spend most of their time remediating struggling readers, while the inadequacies of the classroom program receive little attention. The 097 consultant certification program does prepare these reading professionals to provide leadership for the classroom and schoolwide reading and language arts program. Those consultants who do provide leadership to a school are often assigned building administrative responsibilities that are not related to reading and language arts. As the role of the principal expands to unrealistic proportions, the reading/language arts consultant becomes an easy person to turn to for support, especially when there is not an assistant principal. The better the consultant’s leadership skills, the more likely this may happen. Consequently, reading/language consultants feel the shift toward noncurricular, noninstructional duties leads to work overload, stress, role ambiguity, and role conflict for the consultants as they try to balance school-level responsibilities with student-teacher level responsibilities.

### **Job Description**

The majority of the respondents to the reading professional survey either have no job description or one that is out-of-date. Where there is no job description, the

specialist's role is not understood by staff and often leads to conflict. A job description is particularly important for the reading/language arts consultant's leadership role if classroom teachers are to utilize the consultant's expertise as a resource. Further, a well-designed job description makes expectations of the role clear to all concerned, including the consultant. The job descriptions received had many different titles which had little to do with certification; consequently qualifications for the position were often omitted. As the pressures of NCLB continue to be applied to schools, having the "right people on the bus and in the right seats" (Collins, 2001) is a necessary first step toward achieving the expected results.

### **Organizational Conditions for Success**

Assuming a reading/language arts consultant is working in an appropriately assigned position, in order for the consultant to work well, principals need to provide him or her with guidance and support as well as a means of accountability. Schools have leadership-resistant architectures (Donaldson, 2001). The culture and social norms of schools often conspire against the leadership development of reading/language arts consultants and can paralyze their efforts to effect curriculum and instructional change. Respondents to the reading professional survey revealed there is little time to convene people to plan, organize, and follow through. Making sure reading/language arts consultants have a structure that accommodates the work they are expected to do is basic to their effectiveness. Common planning time did not exist in a number of the schools responding to the reading professional survey. If the schedule does not provide common planning time for grade levels, it becomes extremely difficult for a reading/language arts consultant to collaboratively plan and communicate with teachers.

In conjunction with the organizational structure of school, it is what is done within that structure that is important – changing structure is not synonymous with changing the social organization and culture of a school (Fullan, 2001). The majority of principals in this study recognize that administrative support for the building reading position is essential. They reported that they provide this support by maintaining a focus on reading, promoting strong teamwork, and by supporting professional development. Consultants responding to CARR's survey were more specific in communicating the conditions that are necessary for their effectiveness. While administrators generally support the position, consultants report they need more help in working through teacher resistance to change. Principals need to make sure staff development is transferred to classroom practice as they conduct observations and develop staff performance goals. By participating in the staff development led by the consultant, principals can help effect the changes desired. However, consultants report that when administrators desire too many changes too fast, initiatives are ineffective.

### **Leadership in Promoting School Improvement**

The reading/language arts consultant's role as a leader in school improvement is vital to effecting needed changes in classroom instruction that will result in increased student achievement. The consultant cannot be relied upon as the primary means for



school improvement, however. Recent texts designed for university preparation of reading specialists (Bean, 2004; Vogt & Shearer, 2003) promote the idea that literacy teams are effective. Consultants should be part of a schoolwide network of leadership among teachers, the building principal, parents, and members of the community. Substantial research makes it clear that a principal's leadership is crucial to school improvement but principals alone cannot provide all the leadership necessary to promote and sustain improvement over time. Ogawa & Bossert (1995) argue that leadership occurs not through the actions of individuals but through interaction among individuals. Thus, leadership should not be confined to certain roles but should be distributed across different roles.

Distributed leadership is consistent with the logic of involvement of the people most instrumental to the solution of problems. Reading/language arts consultants are but one player in the school community, but they often bear more than their share of building responsibilities. They need to have time to cultivate the relationships with teachers that are necessary for their success. A principal's primary reliance on the building reading/language arts consultant can unknowingly create tension and conflict among teachers. While ensuring school conditions to support the success of the consultant, administrators need to think creatively about how curriculum and/or instructional leadership of other staff members may be cultivated. The literacy team is one step.

#### **Incentives for the Consultant Role**

Principals report difficulty in finding qualified individuals to fill the role of a reading/language arts consultant. The majority of the principals responding to this survey indicated that when hiring and/or evaluating a reading specialist, they have expectations that go well beyond a strong background in reading. Principals want reading/language arts consultants who have the ability to lead others, have an understanding of program development, and who possess good collaboration skills. They want a person who is a "fit" with their building staff. While the principals' requirements have implications for university preparation, there are also implications regarding the reluctance of certified specialists to take on the role of a consultant, preferring to remain in the classroom. CARR's survey of reading professionals revealed many certified specialists who said they had no incentive to take on such a demanding role. Teachers who had obtained their certification as a reading specialist but wished to remain in the classroom reported the consultant's responsibilities extended far beyond classroom responsibilities but without additional compensation. Principal respondents were divided as to whether or not they believe a salary differential would help attract well-qualified reading personnel.

Beyond a salary differential, the incentive of a working environment conducive to successful implementation of the role seemed to rate high in the responses. Consultants must stay current in their field in order to provide parents and classroom teachers with meaningful resources and staff development. They need to stay abreast of educational trends, issues, and mandates that have a significant impact on literacy. However,

consultants report difficulty in obtaining release time to attend workshops and conferences. They also need release time to work collaboratively with other consultants within their districts and across the state. Funding for memberships to professional organizations and subscriptions are gestures that show administrators value the position. Many respondents to the reading professional survey indicated that they had no part in preparing the reading/language arts budget. The budget is another area where principals can show they value the position, and it provides another opportunity for collaboration among the principal, consultant, and staff members.

A large disincentive reported by those individuals with the certification, but no desire to take a consultant role, was the tentativeness of the position. During difficult budget times, the consultant position is often one of the first cuts on the chopping block. Sacrificing the position not only makes qualified people skittish about applying, it is a shortsighted solution. Research has shown that an effective reading/language arts consultant is instrumental to promoting school improvement and ensuring best practices in classroom instruction (CARR, 1997). A collective administrative effort to fight for the position, along with the other incentives mentioned, could make a significant difference in a district's ability to attract and retain highly qualified reading/language arts consultants.

### **Knowledge Base of Consultants**

The majority of the respondents to the reading professional survey reported that they felt well prepared by their universities for their role. Very few took additional coursework but kept up with trends and research in reading through professional organizations, conferences, workshops, and reading professional books and journals. Keeping informed is particularly difficult when release time is not provided to attend state and national conferences.

Practicing consultants, even though they are veteran teachers as indicated by their responses, would find it worthwhile to obtain a copy of each of the new texts for reading specialists (Bean, 2004; Vogt & Shearer, 2003). These books give case studies of problems that consultants encounter and new insights in ways to become more effective. Another book that should be on the consultant's reading shelf is *Schools that Work: Where All Children Read and Write* (Allington & Cunningham, 2002). Allington and Cunningham look at what is needed in reading and writing for school-based instruction, including assessment, professional development, background, roles, and family involvement. Their previous book, *Classrooms that Work: They Can All Read and Write, Second Edition* (Allington & Cunningham, 1999), is still a worthwhile read as a complement to their 2002 text. The authors talk about optimum instruction in reading and writing in the classroom, how to help struggling readers, reading instruction in the content areas, and why some classrooms fail in both reading and writing instruction. Since many of the respondents to our reading professional survey indicated they would like more background in writing instruction, these books would help fill that gap.

While many consultants purchase professional books on their own, administrators might encourage professional resources by including in the reading and language arts budget a line item for professional books to be available to teachers as well as to the consultant. Books that would provide a wealth of knowledge on reading and writing strategies, trends, and research are included in our references. *Literacy in the Information Age: Inquiries Into Meaning Making With New Technologies* (Bruce, Ed., 2003); *Exemplary Literacy Teachers: Promoting Success for All Children in Grades K-5* (Block & Mangieri, 2003); *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction, Second Edition* (Morrow, Gambrell, & Pressley, Eds., 2003); *Evidence-Based Reading Instruction: Putting the National Reading Panel Report Into Practice* (International Reading Association, 2002). Practical strategy books that would assist classroom teachers as well as reading specialists are also included in our references: *Vocabulary Instruction: Research to Practice* (Baumann & Kame'enui, 2004); *Strategies for Content Area Learning: Vocabulary, Comprehension, Response* (Johns & Berglund, 2002); *Classroom Strategies for Interactive Learning, Second Edition* (Buehl, 2001); *Reading & Learning Strategies for Middle & High School Students* (Lenski, Wham, Johns, 1999); *Building Reading Comprehension Habits in Grades 6-12: A Toolkit of Classroom Activities* (Zweirs, 2004).

### **Knowledge Base of Administrators**

Very few principals who were surveyed have reading certification. Most principals said they learned about reading through experience as an administrator and through professional development opportunities. From the reading professional survey it is clear that administrators need to become more knowledgeable about what good reading instruction looks like. Since a course in reading is not currently required in the regulations, practicing administrators would benefit from specific training in the structure of exemplary reading programs and the pedagogy required to achieve literacy proficiency for all students. Such training could be provided by the CSDE or Connecticut professional organizations for administrators, which would provide needed support for principals in their literacy leadership role. Principals need to know the names and resources of the most noted practitioners and researchers in the area of literacy instruction and assessment so they can refer to their work when looking for specific direction and practical advice to offer building staff. In addition, they need to know a range of children's authors, genres, and sources of information about children's literature. While they may use their consultant as a resource, they also need to widen their own knowledge base.

Sharing their love of books with colleagues, faculties, parents, and students helps to promote a literate culture. Knowing the district curriculum, and making sure classroom teachers deliver it, is one of the attributes of principals of high performing schools. Respondents to the reading professional survey felt this was an important area in supporting their role.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

All of the surveys yielded both quantitative and qualitative data. While the number of open-ended questions made it more difficult to summarize results, the triangulation of data provided support for the findings. The smaller samples of the university and principal responses might be considered a limitation of the study. Nevertheless, with the congruence of the data from all three sources – reading professionals, universities, and principals – together with the review of literature, we are confident our findings are valid. All of the participants in our study have a vested interest in improving literacy, but none can accomplish needed reforms on their own. The recommendations which follow are suggestions for all who are involved in the process of instructional reform: reading specialists, administrators, and policymakers. Changes in the Regulations are also suggested to meet the literacy needs of the twenty-first century.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS CENTURY

Recommendations come from the problems revealed by the study. The "Recommendations in Brief" at the end of this section are intended to remedy some of these problems. The list is insufficient by itself; therefore, the more in-depth text which follows below is intended to provoke thought for needed reforms.

### **Every school building in Connecticut should have at least one literacy specialist.**

The number one priority that CARR expressed in its 1997 study was to see that every school in Connecticut has the services of a reading/language arts consultant. This recommendation still holds if students and teachers are to be properly served. In the twenty-first century, this position may be called something else, such as "literacy coach" or "literacy specialist." The fact remains that whatever this position is called, the need is for highly trained specialists to be leaders in literacy development for the schools they serve. Without the leadership of a person with in-depth knowledge of reading and language arts, schools will see little progress in literacy. While New England educators, and Connecticut in particular, try to avoid mandates, perhaps it is time for our state to require every school to have the services of a literacy specialist. Some states already have such legislation (Wisconsin is an example). Without such a mandate, struggling readers are at the mercy of paraprofessionals, peer tutors, volunteers, or teachers who do not have the necessary intervention training. Thus, struggling readers are doomed to failure, a loss our society cannot tolerate with the demands of the twenty-first century.

### **The role must be one of vision and expertise in developing an effective, well-articulated program throughout the school and goes beyond coaching and professional development.**

While teachers need and deserve ongoing professional development that a literacy specialist can provide, the task for the reading/language arts consultant goes beyond professional development and coaching. The leadership qualities of the specialist are critical in analyzing a school's literacy needs and having the know-how and ability to meet the ever increasing demands of this information and technological age. This specialist will be ineffective, however, if there is not full support from administration. *Reading Today* (April/May, 2004) features an article, "Coaches, controversy, consensus." The term "literacy coach" is often applied to individuals who have little or no educational training or experience, such as volunteers and paraprofessionals. In Connecticut, this term has been used to hire classroom teachers to train other classroom teachers in reading, thus avoiding the requirement to hire a qualified specialist, who is usually higher on the salary scale due to training and experience. It is encouraging to note in the *Reading Today* article that IRA is conducting a survey of requirements for coaches in all fifty states and will be issuing a position statement on qualifications literacy coaches should have. Standards will be developed in line with the competencies needed by reading specialists listed in IRA's *Standards for Reading Professionals* (Revised 2003).

**Alternate routes for certification as a literacy coach or specialist must maintain high standards for in-depth training.**

The Reading First legislation and shortages of reading specialists in a number of districts have prompted Connecticut to consider developing a short-term alternate route for certification as a reading/language arts consultant, thus by-passing university programs. While CARR does not endorse the notion of alternate routes, fearing inadequacies in the training, key members of CARR and its state affiliate, the Connecticut Reading Association (CRA), will seek to work with the CSDE to develop as rigorous a program as possible in a short term. Literacy is too important to allow minimally-trained individuals to take a leadership role.

**Administrators need to deepen their understanding of the distinctions between the qualifications of teachers who hold the 102 endorsement as a remedial reading/language arts teacher and those who hold the 097 certification as a reading/language arts consultant.**

CARR's study indicates that many administrators are not fully aware of the differences between these two reading specialist endorsements. Individuals with the 102 endorsement are being asked to do a consultant's job which they have not been trained to do, while consultants with the 097 endorsement are too often confined to remedial duties instead of using their leadership skills to move the school's literacy program forward. The confusion with the two certifications has led CARR to recommend one certification, that of the reading/language arts consultant, but in the meantime the two certifications will remain. Administrators should be familiar with the preparation required for these endorsements to utilize specialist services appropriately and effectively.

**Administrators need to provide the organizational conditions necessary for reading/language arts consultants to function effectively.**

Working conditions are paramount in attracting specialists to the position of a consultant in a leadership role and in retaining them. A salary differential is an important incentive as well, but the organizational conditions under which a consultant must work take priority. In the "Discussion" section, ways were suggested by which an administrator can help the consultant to be more effective. Incentives were suggested as well that would make the position more attractive to those individuals who possess the proper certification.

**More consistency is needed across universities in the reading/language arts consultant program coursework and expectations.**

Students who transfer from one state university to another should not lose ground, yet credits do not necessarily transfer from one Connecticut university to another. While reading coursework varies somewhat from university to university, all five universities with accredited programs for reading/language arts consultant certification go beyond the minimum requirements in the Regulations. As these universities try to encourage their graduate students to pursue the consultant endorsement, collaboration with districts and CSDE would be beneficial in working toward common standards in the field. As the

imperative for high levels of literacy continues to rise across all spectrums of society, only the most highly qualified teachers will be able to address the challenges schools face in meeting these demands. A certified reading/language arts consultant has the prerequisite training and range of knowledge to provide systematic professional development to building staff.

**Universities need to place more emphasis on preparing reading/language arts consultants for the leadership roles they are expected to assume.**

Consultants need to see the “big picture” of school improvement. Principal responses were very consistent in expressing how important it is for the consultant to be able to work with all building staff – new classroom teachers, veteran teachers, content area teachers, special education teachers, and other specialists on the staff. The consultant must be a “people person” in order to lead. In more recent leadership literature, leadership is recognized as a social influence and process aimed at achieving some collective or organizational end (Yukl, 1998). In this definition, leadership permeates organizations rather than residing in particular people or in formal roles of authority. In their coursework, consultants may benefit from more of an emphasis on conflict resolution, peer coaching, data-based decision making, the change process, and adult learning theory.

Another way universities may strengthen leadership development is to offer courses in action research or teacher as researcher. The issue of influence is central to the notion of teacher research as a means to enhance teacher leadership. Advocates of teacher research argue that teacher research can “challenge the hegemony of a university-generated knowledge base for teaching” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 282).

**Universities need to work closely with state reading organizations, school leaders, and the State Department of Education to address reading shortages.**

Through the Fall Hiring Reports, the State Department of Education identifies districts that are unable to find qualified reading/language arts specialists. In reviewing these reports for this study, CARR found that the shortages did not just occur in urban or priority districts. Districts reporting shortages may need assistance in revising job descriptions, updating expectations for these positions, and understanding the distinctions in reading certification. By partnering with districts, universities may be able to encourage students who would be a good “fit” for specific schools to pursue positions there. As universities participate in more meaningful outreach to districts, administrators and teachers will become more aware of the university’s programs. University respondents in this survey recognize strong collaboration would benefit all stakeholders. Working collaboratively could avoid mandates that may not be perceived as the best way to address existing problems.

**University respondents in this study recommend BEST portfolios for reading specialists and the creation of regional literacy research centers.**

Two recommendations come directly from the university respondents in this

study and warrant investigation. Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support Program (BEST) is designed for beginning teachers but there is no requirement for beginning reading specialists to develop a portfolio. By including reading specialists in the BEST portfolio program, some university respondents feel the position would be better understood and recognized. On the other hand, other universities might feel the practicum and field experience that consultants must go through is adequate. The second recommendation made by university respondents was to establish regional literacy research centers at various Connecticut universities. These centers could not only help to strengthen the preparation of reading specialists but could be a valuable resource for districts to turn to for support and guidance.

**Policymakers should exert strong leadership in the area of literacy.**

State leadership is more essential than ever as districts respond to the complexities of the No Child Left Behind legislation. In order to ensure Connecticut retains its high student performance standards and comprehensive view of literacy in a high stakes environment, beliefs and values about literacy learning, instruction, and assessment must be communicated regularly by the State Department of Education to all stakeholders. CSDE must be aggressive in influencing those in Washington who are seeking simple, silver-bullet solutions to the complex challenges in teaching all children to be efficient and critical readers, writers, speakers, and listeners. Connecticut needs to make literacy a priority and become an active player in improving literacy for all students. Some suggestions for CSDE to be a strong literacy leader are listed below:

1. Support and participate in reading research centers at universities that offer reading/language arts consultant certification.
2. As part of administrative certification, require fifteen hours of CEUs for principals at all levels on literacy leadership.
3. Ensure that the State Department reading/language arts consultants are certified and qualified to lead the state effort.
4. Establish a statewide "literacy network" via a website so teachers could access exemplary lesson plans, assessment tools, and self-directed professional development.
5. Co-sponsor with state reading organizations an annual reading conference/convention to bring the latest in research, best practices, and instructional resources to area teachers.
6. Provide inservice in using data from the CMT, CAPT, and other assessment tools to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in reading programs, inform instruction, and identify appropriate support systems to ameliorate problems.
7. Provide funding and incentives to use Reading Recovery or similar models for language deficient young readers.
8. Provide scholarships for outstanding classroom teachers to pursue reading/language arts consultant certification.



9. Establish a partnership with universities and professional associations in designing a comprehensive support system for school districts and teachers to access help in improving student performance in reading.
10. Establish required minimum reading coursework requirements for administrative, special education teacher, and content area teacher certification.
11. Work with legislators to mandate that a certified reading/language arts consultant be hired by priority schools and by schools with less than 60% of their students scoring at or above the reading goal on state assessments for two consecutive years. Ideally, *all* school faculties should include a reading/language arts consultant.
12. Ensure that our most at-risk students receive reading instruction from the most qualified teachers. A learning disabled student's reading instruction, as an example, should be under the direction of a certified reading/language arts consultant who has much more in-depth training than a special education teacher.

The suggestions above result from CARR's recent studies as well as from the present research. The "Recommendations in Brief" which follow are a listing of possible solutions to the problems uncovered in researching what reading professionals are actually doing in Connecticut schools, what they should be doing, and what their preparation needs to be in the twenty-first century. It is hoped that the recommendations will promote dialogue on role issues and lead to improved literacy instruction in Connecticut schools.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS IN BRIEF**

### **Consultant Role**

1. Consultants should have an active role in developing the reading/language arts budget and in analyzing school and districtwide assessments, including high stakes testing results.
2. Consultants should spend no more than one-third of their time in direct instruction of students and the other two-thirds developing the school and districtwide literacy program working with classroom teachers and others.
3. Staff development should be a major part of the consultant's role as a leader in ensuring best practices in literacy.
4. The consultant should develop a literacy team in the school to assist with the development and implementation of the reading/language arts program.
5. The literacy team should reach out into the community for support of the reading/language arts program as well as to work directly with families for understanding of the process of reading and its integration with language arts.
6. A job description is essential for the consultant role in order that responsibilities are clear to all concerned, including classroom teachers, and the job description should include reference to the certification requirements for the job.
7. Guidelines should be developed for working with other specialists in the school and for conflict resolution.
8. Consultants need release time to be able to attend conferences and workshops to upgrade their own skills as well as to provide background knowledge for professional development in their districts.
9. To serve the reading and language arts needs of students effectively, the recommendation is for one consultant per 500 students at the elementary level, one consultant per 600 students at the middle school level, and one consultant per 800 students at the high school level, with collaboration between them to plan a well-articulated reading/language arts program.

### **Administrators**

10. Administrators need to deepen their understanding of the distinctions between the qualifications of teachers who hold a Connecticut certification with a 102 endorsement (remedial reading/language arts teacher) and a 097 endorsement (reading/language arts consultant).
11. Administrators need to support the multiple responsibilities of reading/language arts consultants and provide the organizational conditions necessary for reading/language arts consultants to function effectively, including workload, time, and scheduling.
12. Administrators need to find ways to provide more effective incentives to attract reading/language arts consultants and to retain them.
13. Administrators need to become more knowledgeable about what good reading instruction looks like.

**Policymakers**

14. Universities value their uniqueness, yet more consistency is needed in designing reading/language arts consultant program coursework of the highest standards so that consultants meet the essential competencies for the twenty-first century.
15. University programs should place more emphasis on preparing reading/language arts consultants for the leadership roles they are expected to assume.
16. University programs for potential administrators should include a course in reading and language arts that will develop their understanding of the process by which literacy is acquired and to learn how to use their consultants effectively.
17. Personnel from the universities that offer a reading certification program need to work closely with state reading organizations, school leaders, and the State Department of Education to address reading/language arts consultant shortages.
18. State policymakers need to exert strong leadership in the area of literacy.

**Regulations**

19. New regulations should provide for one reading/language arts specialist endorsement; i.e., the reading/language arts consultant endorsement.
20. This consultant endorsement should be given with significant graduate study beyond the Master's Degree, with competencies developed jointly by the universities and the State Department of Education.
21. New regulations should also remove the obstacle of ten months as a remedial teacher prior to becoming a consultant, since clinical experience already meets this requirement.
22. As part of a Master's Degree program, graduate study in reading and language arts should be developed for classroom teachers who want more training in reading but who do not want to become reading/language arts consultants.
23. At the Bachelor's Degree level, better alignment is needed between the preservice university program in reading and language arts and the expectations for beginning classroom teachers.
24. Regulations should mandate professional development in reading and language arts as part of the renewal of requirements for administrative certification.



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**APPENDIX A**

**Reading Professional Survey**



**CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR READING RESEARCH**  
**READING PROFESSIONAL SURVEY**  
(ALL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL)

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Name: _____           |  |
| School: _____         | Town: _____                              |
| Grade Level(s): _____ | Educational Reference Group (ERG): _____ |

1. A. What Connecticut certification in reading do you hold?

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 102 Remedial Reading and Language Arts Teacher 1-12 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 097 Reading and Language Arts Consultant K-12       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other certification: _____                          |

B. How many years have you been in your present position? \_\_\_\_\_ in teaching? \_\_\_\_\_

C. Who is your supervisor?

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Building Principal  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Department Chair  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Central Office Personnel Title: _____                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Collaborative Supervision by Principal and Central Office Personnel |

2. Please check one that most closely describes your position and/or job title and grade levels.

|                          |                                    |                       |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Classroom Teacher                  | Grade level(s): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reading/Language Arts Teacher      | Grade level(s): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Language Arts Specialist           | Grade level(s): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reading/Language Arts Consultant   | Grade level(s): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Literacy Specialist or Coordinator | Grade level(s): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Remedial Reading Teacher           | Grade level(s): _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____                       | Grade level(s): _____ |

**NOTE: IF YOU ARE A CLASSROOM TEACHER, PLEASE SKIP TO NUMBER 26 AND BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHY, IF YOU HAVE EITHER OF THE ABOVE SPECIALIST CERTIFICATIONS, YOU HAVE ELECTED NOT TO TAKE ON THE ROLE OF A SPECIALIST. THANK YOU FOR THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO COMPLETE OUR DATA.**

3. What is your primary role? Please rank 1-4.

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Intervention and/or remediation – students only                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Modeling for teaching and providing intervention                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Staff development in reading and language arts                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reading/Language Arts curriculum development                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Leadership role in developing the reading/language arts program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Student assessment  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____  |

4. If you work with teachers and students, approximately what percentage of your time is devoted to the following?

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | % direct instruction of students  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | % testing students  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | % consultation with teachers regarding individual student and program needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | % classroom support/modeling  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | % working with administration in developing program initiatives             |

5. What percentage of your time is spent in direct instruction of students?

|                          |                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | % pull-out support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | % in-class support |

6. How would you rate your college coursework in preparing you for your job responsibilities during your first few years in a district?

|                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | strong     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | adequate   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | inadequate |

7. How would you characterize administrative support for your position? Please circle one.

|                 |        |          |        |
|-----------------|--------|----------|--------|
| In-house:       | strong | moderate | little |
| Central Office: | strong | moderate | little |

8. What do you see as the greatest need in your school for reading and language arts? Check one.

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Staff development   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Organization and supervision of the reading/language arts program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Intervention and/or remediation                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Resources (books and materials)                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Assessment  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Curriculum development  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____  |

9. What is your role in diagnosis and assessment? Please check all that apply.

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Diagnosing individual students                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Training teachers in assessment practices                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinating and analyzing schoolwide assessment data              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Developing appropriate assessments as needed                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Explaining diagnosis and assessment data to parents                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Planning instruction and interventions based on assessment results |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____   |

10. Do you have a role in developing the reading/language arts budget? Yes or No

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Collaborative model with teachers, principal, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | With principal only                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Full responsibility                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____                                       |

11. How many schools do you serve?

|                          |                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | One school                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | More than one school: How many? _____ |

12. How many pupils are in the school(s) \_\_\_\_\_.

How many teachers? \_\_\_\_\_ (classroom teachers only)

How many pupils do you directly serve remedially? \_\_\_\_\_.

13. Who provides intervention to students in your school who need extra support in reading? Please check all that apply.

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Remedial reading/language arts teacher (certificate 102) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reading/language arts consultant (certificate 097)       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Paraprofessionals  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Classroom teachers (within the class)                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Volunteers   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Peer tutors  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reading Recovery teachers                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Special Education teachers                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____   |

14. A. How is the majority of intervention provided in your school? Check one.

|                          |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Pull-out _____% |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | In-class _____% |

B. What other interventions are provided? Check all that apply.

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Before/after school: no. of days per week _____           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Summer school: no. of weeks _____ grade level(s) _____    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Saturday classes: no. of weeks _____ grade level(s) _____ |

15. With whom do you collaborate in planning remediation? Please check all that apply.

|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Classroom teachers         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reading Recovery teachers  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Special Education teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Paraprofessionals          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Volunteers                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Peer tutors                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Administrators             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____               |

16. Do you personally provide training in remediation to any of the following people? Please check all that apply.

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Classroom teachers                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reading Recovery teachers                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Special Education teachers                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Paraprofessionals                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Volunteers                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Peer tutors                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Teachers/tutors in before/after school programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Teachers/tutors in summer school programs       |

17. How do you keep up with trends, research, advances in reading/language arts education? Please check all that apply.

|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Professional organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Conferences                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Professional journals      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Workshops                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Additional coursework      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____               |

18.A. Does anyone provide reading enrichment programs for students in your school? Yes or No

B. If yes, who provides this support? \_\_\_\_\_

C. Briefly describe the kind of support that is given: \_\_\_\_\_

19. A. Are you involved with the Student Assistance Team, Child Study Team and PPT meetings for students with reading difficulties? Yes or No

B. Briefly describe your involvement: \_\_\_\_\_

20.A. What are some of the reading/language arts interventions that are tried prior to convening a PPT? \_\_\_\_\_

B. Who delivers the service? \_\_\_\_\_

C. How long are the interventions tried? \_\_\_\_\_

21. A. Thinking about the college coursework you completed to obtain your present certification – which courses do you believe best prepared you for your work? \_\_\_\_\_

B. In what areas (if any) do you feel you needed more preparation? \_\_\_\_\_

C. Thinking about the professional development programs you have participated in, which programs best prepared you for your work? \_\_\_\_\_

22. A. What in your opinion is the greatest roadblock to the success of your work with students? \_\_\_\_\_

B. With teachers? \_\_\_\_\_

C. With others? \_\_\_\_\_

23. The *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) requirements may affect your role. How is your school handling this legislation? Please answer the following questions.

A. Do you feel prepared for the requirements? Yes or No

B. How did/do you receive information about the NCLB and other mandates? \_\_\_\_\_

C. How would you like to receive information? \_\_\_\_\_

D. Do the classroom teachers you work with have common planning time? \_\_\_\_\_

E. Do you currently use standardized assessments? Yes or No Which? \_\_\_\_\_

F. Will you be responsible for the analysis of student assessment data, including the disaggregation?

Yes or No If not, who? \_\_\_\_\_

G. How do you monitor annual student gains? Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

H. Are you attending state meetings (held at the RESCS) on this important legislation? Yes or No

24. Do you have specific guidelines for working with the following specialized personnel when responsibilities for students overlap? Yes or No

|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Special Education teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other specialists on staff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Department chairs          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Title I teachers           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Reading Recovery teachers  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other: _____               |

25. Do you have a job description? Yes or No IF YES, PLEASE ATTACH TO THIS SURVEY.

26. Additional comments:

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**Thank you for responding to this important survey in an effort  
to improve reading/language arts instruction in our schools!**

Jean B. Klein, Research Co-Chair, CARR  
Lois Lanning, Research Co-Chair, CARR

Please mail your response by February 15, 2003 to:

Jean B. Klein  
3 Budd Drive  
Newtown, CT 06470

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Interview Questions for Universities**





# **CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION**

## **FOR READING RESEARCH**

### **Interview Questions for Universities**

1. As a university that currently prepares teachers for both the 102 remedial reading/language arts teacher certification and the 097 reading/language arts consultant certification, what are your recommendations for improvement in the preparation of reading specialists in the revision of the 2003 regulations?
2. What are the problems reported by your graduates when they take either of these positions (102 or 097) in the field?
3. Since districts appear to be reluctant to hire two types of reading/language arts specialists in a building, a single specialist endorsement at the Master's level (i.e., that of the 097 reading/language arts consultant certification) has been proposed by CARR. Do you believe this change would affect your program and the shortages in the field positively or negatively?
4. In the data that we received from the State Department, it appears that many teachers with the 102 endorsement do not go on to obtain the 097 endorsement. What percentage of your 102 students go on to the 097 program?
5. What do you believe are the reasons for the reluctance of graduate students to opt for the consultant endorsement?
6. What reasons are given by your students with either of the above endorsements to remain in the classroom instead of taking a specialist position?
7. Since universities are currently being accused of giving insufficient training to preservice classroom teachers in the teaching of reading, what changes, if any, do you believe should be instituted at the Bachelor's level to improve reading instruction of preservice teachers? And at the Master's level for teachers who are in service?
8. Have you instituted a course or courses for content area teachers in the teaching of reading in the content areas? If so, what is the course and at what level – graduate or undergraduate?
9. In your university, what are the requirements in reading for preservice special education teachers?

10. If an alternate route to certification for a reading specialist is proposed, similar to that of a library media specialist, how do you believe this could be accomplished and how do you see it affecting the current shortage of reading/language arts consultants in the districts?
11. CARR has proposed that there should be a certified reading/language arts consultant in every school building if students are to be properly served. In your opinion, how could this recommendation be implemented?
12. How are you preparing your students, both graduate and undergraduate, for technology literacy?

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Survey Questions for Principals**



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION FOR READING RESEARCH  
SURVEY QUESTIONS – PRINCIPALS (September 2003)

1. Do you currently have a reading specialist working in your building? YES NO

- If NO, how do you believe the No Child Left Behind Act will affect your need for a reading/language arts specialist:
- If NO, some districts offer a salary differential for the position - how would such an offer affect your ability to attract well-qualified reading professionals to your school:
- If YES, what type of certification:
- If YES, what is the primary responsibility:
- If YES, what is the specialist's job title:

2. How does the difference in university preparation between #102 and #097 reading/language arts endorsements affect your needs versus the role you expect this specialist to fill? Or do you not see any difference?

3. From your experience, do reading specialists have adequate training to be effective? YES NO

- If NO, what training do they need but lack:
- If YES, what evidence do you use to support your belief in their effectiveness:

4. What are the most essential skills/knowledge you would look for when evaluating and/or hiring a reading specialist?

5. To maximize effectiveness, how can administrators best support the role?

6. What is your own background in reading instruction?

ALL INFORMATION WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL AND ANONYMOUS IN OUR FINAL REPORT, BUT PLEASE SIGN IN CASE WE HAVE A QUESTION. THANK YOU.

School \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_ Principal \_\_\_\_\_