

# GOLDEN APPLE AWARD

CELEBRATING THE SUCCESS OF OUR PARTNER SCHOOLS

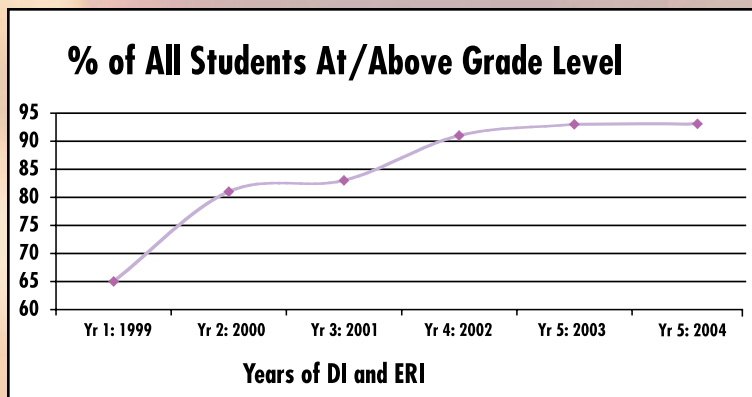
## FRANKLIN ACADEMY

WAKE FOREST, NORTH CAROLINA

Begun in 1998 as a K-5, public charter school, the Franklin Academy in Wake Forest, North Carolina now offers a K-10 program, as it adds a new grade level each year toward its goal of providing a comprehensive kindergarten through twelfth grade education. Presently, Franklin Academy serves more than 700 youngsters, the majority of whom are Caucasian and middle class. The school is based upon a set of principles that its founder, Robert Luddy, calls the “3-D’s”: Direct Instruction, Discipline, and Dress Code. At the core of Franklin Academy’s curriculum are several Direct Instruction (DI) programs implemented on a school-wide basis: Reading Mastery, Reasoning & Writing, Spelling Mastery, and Corrective Reading. Additionally, teachers and assistants are trained to generalize relevant DI strategies and tactics into other content areas. “DI is at the core of our curriculum and our school culture”, explains Denise Kent, Elementary School Administrator. “New teachers are automatically trained in Direct Instruction, and once they begin seeing weekly progress among their students, they understand why we are so committed to its process.” Ms. Kent adds that “if a teacher doesn’t buy into Direct Instruction’s methodology, this isn’t the place for him or her. Parents choose to send their children to Franklin Academy because they know that DI works for all children. It is so ingrained in our culture that we couldn’t survive without it.

“From its inception, the Franklin Academy also chose Educational Resources, Inc. (ERI) — a highly experienced consulting group that provides professional

development and hands-on training, coaching, and assistance to DI schools nation-wide — to guide Franklin Academy’s implementation of Direct Instruction. As with all our client schools, ERI has now trained a cadre of Franklin Academy staff to provide continuous staff development support and supervision, including classroom coaching, to every teacher and assistant. At Franklin Academy’s insistence, ERI remains involved with the school to enable the staff (especially the school leadership and coaching cadre) to further refine and enhance their implementation of Direct Instruction. Again, Ms. Kent: “ERI provides all of us with an opportunity to gain insight on a more advanced level than what our internal coaching is able to offer. It is a time for our school, teachers, coaches, and administrators to learn up-to-date and improved methods of DI execution, coaching, and supportive supervision. ERI provides that necessary connection between proper DI methods and continuous improvement.” In 1998-99, its inaugural year, 65% of Franklin Academy students scored at or above grade level on North Carolina’s rigorous End-of-Grade (EOG) Assessments. Five years and 500 additional students later (2002-2003), 93% of all Franklin Academy students scored at or above grade level on the EOG’s. In the Spring of 2003, the state of North Carolina recognized Franklin Academy as a “high growth” school and designated Franklin Academy as a “School of Excellence”, the highest award offered to any school in North Carolina. Clearly, middle-class students need not be satisfied with a middle-class education.



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## RAY THOMPSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

GADSDEN, ALABAMA

Ray Thompson Elementary is an inner city, Title I, public school that serves approximately 200 youngsters in Gadsden, Alabama. Most of these students come from low income, single parent homes; many are being cared for by grandparents. Ninety-five percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Thompson Elementary became an Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) school in 1999; however, the school continued to produce very little growth in reading. In 2004 the school employed a full time reading coach and became an ARI Plus school. Additionally, and very importantly, Thompson implemented a systematic, SBRR-driven, Direct Instruction (DI) curriculum in Reading/Language Arts. The Reading Mastery Program was adopted as the core program for students in grades K-2, while the Corrective Reading Program provided the intervention plan for students in grades 3-5. Both programs are published by SRA/McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Reading Mastery and Corrective Reading, as exemplars of Direct Instruction, are not only the core of our reading curriculum; additionally, teachers and assistants are encouraged and trained to generalize relevant DI strategies and tactics to other content areas. Newly hired K-2 teachers, for example, are now automatically trained in the specifics of Reading Mastery, as well as the generalizable strategies and tactics of Direct Instruction. Follow-up training, via a systematic routine of in-classroom coaching, is provided to all staff on an ongoing basis.

To maximize staff expertise, and consequent student achievement, high-quality professional development must be tightly integrated into DI curricula and instructional practices. Consequently, Ray Thompson Elementary School employs Educational Resources, Inc. (ERI) — a highly experienced and successful consulting group that provides professional development expertise via hands-on training (both initial & advanced), in-class coaching, and leadership assistance to DI schools nation-wide. Since the initiation of Direct Instruction at Thompson Elementary, ERI remains our school partner to enable the staff (especially the school leadership and coaching cadre) to further refine and enhance their implementation of Direct Instruction. Thompson Reading Coach, Susan Davidson, says, “We are able to gain a different and valuable perspective by seeing Thompson through a different pair of eyes: those of an expert in effective school organization, curriculum, and instruction. The ERI

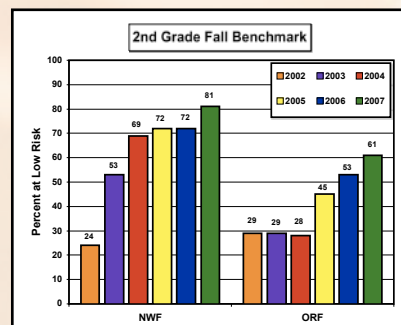
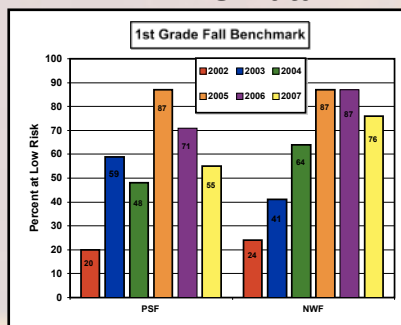
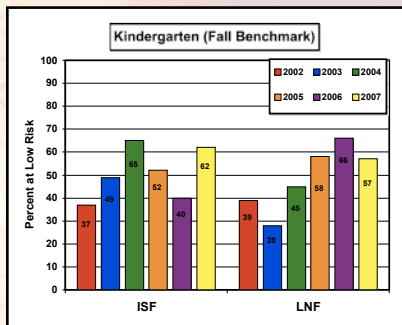
consultant validates and/or refines decisions we have made concerning student placement, grouping, scheduling, and data collection; curricular options plus instructional refinements and/or interventions for students; and, of course, advanced staff development. In short, ERI provides the necessary connection between Direct Instruction, staff expertise, and consequent student achievement.”

Since the introduction of DI, and the consequent arrival of ERI, Thompson students have shown steady growth in reading achievement. From the Spring of 2003 to the Spring of 2007, Kindergarten “phonological awareness” scores, measured by the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) show an average, annual gain of 10% in the number of students who have met or exceeded the “benchmark” standard. Even more remarkable, “alphabetic principle” scores, measured by the DIBELS nonsense words assessment, show an average gain of 32% for the same years. Among first graders, “oral reading fluency” scores have improved from an average of 42% of students meeting benchmark to 67% of students at or above benchmark. On the December, 2007 DIBELS assessment: 81% of first graders benchmarked in “oral reading fluency”. Jubilantly, remembering the demographics at Thompson Elementary, no even one first grader scored in the “intensive” category. Thompson second graders, the group that has received DI and Reading Mastery since kindergarten, have likewise shown dramatic gains in reading achievement. From the Spring of 2003 to December of 2007, the number of students meeting benchmark on the DIBELS “oral reading fluency” assessment has risen from 32% of students meeting benchmark to 85% of children at or above the benchmark standard. Additionally, second and third graders also performed well on the SAT assessment given in the spring of 2007.

Having seen the stunning results of a systemic, school-wide integration of Direct Instruction technology and ERI-guided professional development, the staff of Thompson Elementary, along with the school’s principal, Mrs. White, are proud to advance Ray Thompson Elementary School as a “proof-of-concept” model for anyone sincerely interested in maximizing the reading achievement of America’s children.

To the students & staff of Ray Thompson Elementary School in Gadsden, Alabama: WE SALUTE YOU — THE “GOLDEN APPLE” IS MERITORIOUSLY YOURS!

### DIBELS Data



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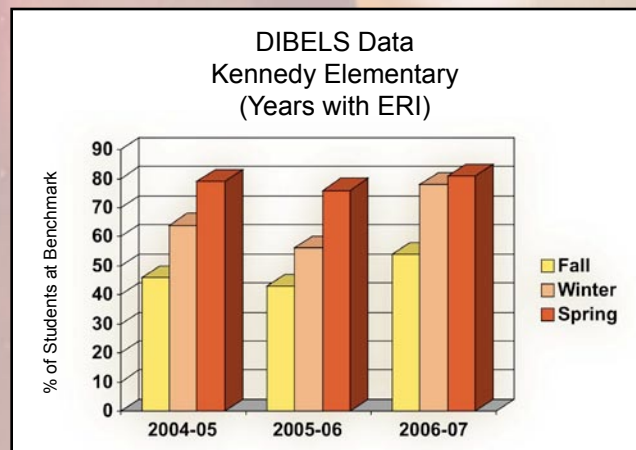
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## KENNEDY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUTTE, MONTANA

Kennedy Elementary is one of six K-6 schools in Butte, Montana. Kennedy has a population of about 300 students and is a Title I school, with around 65% of the students qualifying for free and reduced lunch. On DIBELS (Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills) in the fall of 2006, 48% of our incoming Kindergarteners were considered intensive. Our record of poor test scores qualified us to apply for a Reading First grant in 2003, and in the fall of 2004, we became a Reading First school.

We did a lot of professional development with Educational Resources, Inc. and hired a building reading coach. We extended the learning time for our students to a 90-minute reading block with a 30-minute intervention block in the afternoon. After much hard work, spring of the first year finally came. On DIBELS, we started out with 46% of K-3 students at benchmark, and ended the year with 79% at benchmark. On the ITBS, our 4th grade students scored 82% proficient, while on the state MontCAS, we were up to 84% proficient from 32%. In our second year of Reading First, 2005-06, we began with 43% of our K-3 students hitting benchmark on DIBELS. We ended the year with 76% hitting benchmark. On the ITBS we were up to 90% of our students being proficient, and 84% proficient on our state MontCAS. Kennedy began the 2006-07 school year with 54% of our K-3 students at benchmark on DIBELS. We ended the year with 81% of our K-3 students at benchmark. On the ITBS and MontCAS state tests, we were scored 84% and 87% proficient respectively.

At Kennedy we are proud of our hard work, both students and staff, and committed to making each child achieve to the best of their ability.



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## HILL CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JASPER, GEORGIA

Hill City Elementary School, a K – 5 public school is located in rural North Georgia. After four complete years of Direct Instruction implementation, reading test scores have increase school wide by 7% with several grade levels increasing as much as 17% as measured by the Georgia's Criterion Reference Competence Test (CRCT). Working with the ERI staff and using the instructional framework of Direct Instruction, other subject test scores have also increased at similar rates. According to principal, Dr. Carlton Wilson, much of the school's success is a result of a highly dedicated and very talented staff using the "best practices" instructional strategies imbedded in the Direct Instruction Model.

During the 2003-04 and 2004-05 school years. Hill City Elementary School received national recognition for narrowing the achievement gap between socioeconomic disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students while raising achievement scores in math and reading for all students. Additionally, HCES has achieved the following recognitions:

- 2002-2006 - No Child Left Behind's (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
- 2004-06 - NCLB's Adequate Yearly Progress
  - Georgia's Platinum Award
  - Distinguished Title One School (First year eligible)
- 2005-06 - Georgia's Platinum Award (only elementary school in Ga. that received consecutive Platinum Awards in Greatest Gain Category)
  - One of Seven Georgia Elementary Schools to qualify for the U.S. Department of Education's National Blue Ribbon School

Dr. Wilson stated, "Our goal, since we opened in 2002, was to become one of the premier elementary schools in Georgia. Direct Instruction and ERI are playing a significant role in our success."

