As increased national attention is focused on school achievement, administrators face constant pressure to demonstrate results and build support for effective programs. With Reading Recovery’s emphasis on data collection and results, administrators have strong evidence of effectiveness, yet the challenge remains to use the information to inform each community about Reading Recovery’s power.

Last fall, about 30 administrators gathered at the South Dakota Reading Recovery Conference to discuss strategies they use to promote Reading Recovery. These administrators from rural midwestern states said the challenge is the same no matter the state or district: building support is an often overlooked and never-ending leadership task. They also agreed that the savvy administrator will keep in mind a variety of ways to build and sustain support. The strategies named below are not in hierarchical order, but are some of the activities these administrators have found useful.

1. **Invite people to observe a lesson or a teacher training session.**
   The best way to build understanding of the complex teaching decisions in Reading Recovery is to see an actual lesson. Another option is to invite other teachers, central office administrators, parents, elected officials, and other key supporters to observe a Reading Recovery training class session. If possible, accompany guests to the session or lesson, then talk with them about what they see. Urge visitors to tell others about the powerful teaching they have observed.

2. **Get parents involved.**
   Parents can be strong supporters for Reading Recovery because they see and appreciate their children’s progress. Administrators keep parents involved by informing them about Reading Recovery in the school newsletter, Web site, and parent nights. Parent involvement also includes participating in advisory teams, writing letters to elected officials, and speaking with others about their children’s experiences in Reading Recovery.

3. **Participate in professional development.**
   Because Reading Recovery is constantly refined and because administrator turnover is high, continued professional development through Reading Recovery conferences is essential for administrators. Districts must initiate professional development activities to inform new leaders who will replace those expected to retire in the next decade.

4. **Build awareness through media.**
   Several kinds of media can help tell the Reading Recovery story, including daily and weekly newspapers, radio talk shows, and TV news. When thinking of the media mix, in-school opportunities such as newsletters, brochures, and Web sites are also important tools. Working with media requires thoughtful planning so that external reporters have the information needed for a positive story.

5. **Speak at service clubs.**
   Since service clubs are a gathering place for community leaders, they offer a great opportunity for administrators or Reading Recovery personnel to speak and answer questions.

6. **Update the school board, especially with the budget in mind.**
   School board members have the ultimate budget approval, and the wise administrator knows board members cannot support what they do not understand. Be sure school board members see results and know the powerful difference Reading Recovery can make in a child’s achievement. Prepare an annual school Reading Recovery report and ask for agenda time to explain Reading Recovery and report results. Some school administrators have invited children who have discontinued their lessons to read to the school board. Others have demonstrated children’s reading progress by showing the books children are able to read at the beginning of their lessons and the books they can read at the end of their lessons.

7. **Collect and report data.**
   Parents and teachers no longer have to rely on hopes and promises to find reading success for all children. Several studies with longitudinal data are available to demonstrate the power of Reading Recovery instruction and the sustained effects on student achievement. (Go to www.readingrecovery.org and select Sustained Gains.) This is convincing and useful in this climate of federal and state accountability.