

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**JUST READ, FLORIDA! RECOGNIZES TOP 25 PERCENT OF *READING FIRST* DISTRICTS**

**TALLAHASSEE** – The Department of Education’s Just Read, Florida! Office today recognized 12 Florida school districts for being in the top 25 percent of all *Reading First* districts in the state of Florida. These districts increased the percentage of students reading at or above grade level and reduced the percentage of students with serious reading difficulties at an exceptional rate. *Reading First* grants assist Florida school districts and schools with implementation of proven methods of scientifically-based reading instruction in classrooms in order to prevent reading difficulties in grades K-3.

“The *Reading First* program has been implemented in the state of Florida since 2003, and we are excited about the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the districts that have made tremendous gains over the past few years of implementation, said Just Read, Florida! Executive Director Dr. Evan Lefsky. “These districts have worked diligently on *Reading First* implementation and as a result more students are meeting grade level expectations and fewer students have serious reading difficulties.”

Florida *Reading First* serves 584 schools within 45 districts. *Reading First* schools are given a variety of resources and training through the federal *Reading First* program to help them achieve two goals: 1) increase the percentage of students reading at or above grade level; and 2) reduce the percentage of students with serious reading difficulties.

There are three cohorts (groups) of *Reading First* schools.

- Cohort (Group) 1-represents 33 districts/318 schools in their 5<sup>th</sup> year of *Reading First* implementation serving roughly 120,000 students.
- Cohort (Group) 2-represents 8 districts/70 schools in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of *Reading First* implementation serving roughly 26,000 students.
- Cohort (Group) 3-represents 18 districts/196 schools in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of *Reading First* implementation serving roughly 76,000 students.

Top 25 percent of *Reading First* districts serving Cohort (Group) 1 schools.

<b>District Name</b>	<b># of <i>Reading First</i> Schools</b>	<b>% Increase at Grade Level</b>	<b>% Reduction at High Risk</b>
Dixie	2	20.42	20.61
Taylor	3	20.17	17.00
Collier	11	14.23	17.09
Putnam	10	13.04	10.13
Lee	17	11.73	11.36
Marion	12	11.92	10.02
Suwannee	3	9.84	10.21

Charlotte 4 10.50 7.00

Top 25 percent of *Reading First* districts serving Cohort (Group) 2 schools.

<b>District Name</b>	<b># of <i>Reading First</i> Schools</b>	<b>% Increase at Grade Level</b>	<b>% Reduction at High Risk</b>
Holmes	2	20.54	19.35
Madison	2	11.42	4.31

Top 25 percent of *Reading First* districts serving Cohort (Group) 3 schools.

<b>District Name</b>	<b># of <i>Reading First</i> Schools</b>	<b>% Increase at Grade Level</b>	<b>% Reduction at High Risk</b>
Collier	2	7.36	4.57
Okeechobee	1	2.34	7.05
Holmes	1	7.81	0.85
Pinellas	11	5.04	1.48

For more information about the *Reading First* program in Florida, please visit [http://www.justreadflorida.com/reading\\_first.asp](http://www.justreadflorida.com/reading_first.asp).

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