

Reading First Question & Answer for 2008-2009 Continuation Grants

1. What does “sufficiently implement the *Reading First* grant” mean?

This means that all the components of the grant are maintained and continued with fidelity. For example:

- Maintain the reading coach position at current levels to improve teacher learning and student learning;
- Implement the Comprehensive Core Reading Program (CCRP) with fidelity to provide instruction in all K-3 classrooms;
- Provide all students with at least ninety minutes of protected time for daily reading instruction;
- Administer the common set of state selected progress monitoring and end of year outcome measures, and use these data to inform instruction;
- Provide more intensive instruction to all K-3 students who demonstrate a reading deficiency in order to accelerate growth and close the gap between these students and their peers;
- Districts and schools work cooperatively with all *Reading First* stakeholders, including the reading coach assigned to the school for professional development purposes; and
- Districts and schools participate fully in all professional development activities required by *Reading First* at the state and district levels.

2. Which schools should districts consider for discontinuation?

As you are aware, *Reading First* schools have been provided a variety of resources and training to help them achieve the two goals of the *Reading First* grant: 1) increase the percentage of K-3 students reading at or above grade level and 2) reduce the percentage of students with serious reading difficulties. Consistent with these goals, schools that have participated in the *Reading First* grant should have shown an increase in the percentage of students reading at or above grade level and a decrease in the percentage of students at high risk. Schools that did not meet both of these goals were identified as focus schools, and these schools should be considered for discontinuation.

We also suggest that districts consider the level of commitment of each *Reading First* school. For example:

- The level of commitment demonstrated by school leadership:
 - Manages *Reading First* funds effectively
 - Supports all professional development and training
 - Provides support to the reading coach to protect the coach’s role as a staff developer
 - Uses data to inform instruction
 - Uses resources to support reading instruction
- The level of commitment demonstrated in the implementation of the grant:
 - Provides instruction with the Comprehensive Core Reading Program (CCRP)
 - Provides an uninterrupted 90 minute reading block

- Uses data to inform instruction
- Differentiates instruction based on student need
- Provides intensive interventions as an extension of or in addition to the 90 minute reading block for students demonstrating a reading deficiency
- Attendance at Just Read, Florida! and district professional development opportunities

3. What other funding sources are available to supplement the *Reading First* grant to fully implement *Reading First* with integrity?

There are other federal funding sources that districts may use, consistent with statutory requirements, to improve literacy instruction in grades K-3, including the following:

- Title I, Part A, in school-wide programs and, in some cases, targeted assistance schools (The Title I-A program in Florida is estimated to receive a 10% increase this year);
- Title II, Part A, especially for professional development in practices grounded in scientifically based reading research; and
- Title III, for Limited English Proficient students in some circumstances.

In addition, districts are encouraged to support K-3 literacy instruction using the authority in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for districts to spend a portion of their IDEA funds on early intervening services for students who are not children with disabilities, but who need additional academic or behavioral support to succeed in regular education. **Of course, districts must use funds under these programs consistent with existing program requirements.**

In addition to exploring alternative sources of federal funding, districts may use the transferability authority under ESEA Title VI and the Rural Education Achievement Program flexibility to support scientifically based reading instruction in their schools.

The reading allocation of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) is another funding source to support high-quality reading instruction in *Reading First* schools.

4. How will the district notify the Just Read, Florida! Office of the changes to their existing *Reading First* grant to reflect accurate information for the 2008-2009 school year?

Within their continuation grant, Cohort 1 districts must submit a detailed narrative and budget supporting the approach taken to ensure full implementation of the *Reading First* grant in the 2008-2009 school year. If districts choose to discontinue schools in order to implement the grant with fidelity. These districts must include the rationale for selecting schools for discontinuation and provide the data used to determine discontinued schools. The continuation grant will also

include a narrative addressing how the district will supplement the grant to sufficiently implement *Reading First* with fidelity.

5. How will the Reading Adoption impact the selection of programs for *Reading First* schools?

All newly state adopted Comprehensive Core Reading Programs (CCRPs) are permitted. We will also allow CCRPs that were included in specific districts' original *Reading First* grant, but were not state adopted as CCRPs. The two programs that fall into this category are Reading Mastery Plus and Success for All, so these two programs may continue to be used as originally approved. Any program changes, including supplemental and intervention program changes, must be submitted through the *Reading First* continuation grant process for review and approval.