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October 16, 2006

TO: *Reading First* District School Superintendents

FROM: Evan B. Lefsky, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Just Read, Florida!

RE: *Reading First* Funding

This memorandum is written to notify you of the status of *Reading First* funding after the 2007-2008 school year. If the funding for the *Reading First* program is not extended beyond current limits by the United States Congress, the last year that Florida will be able to provide these funds to districts is the 2007-2008 school year. This will apply to all *Reading First* schools in your district, regardless of how long they have had the *Reading First* grant.

There is a possibility that Congress will continue making appropriations for the *Reading First* program beyond the time limits established in the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*. The *NCLB Act*, which includes the *Reading First* program, is scheduled for reauthorization in 2007-2008. If reauthorization is delayed, Congress has the option of continuing to fund the *Reading First* program at current levels. If the *NCLB Act* is reauthorized, there is a possibility that *Reading First*, given its success around the country, would be reauthorized as well.

In Florida, 584 schools in 45 districts are currently receiving *Reading First* funds to help improve reading instruction in grades K-3. Our latest outcome data show that, on average, schools in all cohorts made improvements over the previous year in increasing the percentage of students reading at grade level and reducing the percentage of students with serious reading difficulties at each grade level, K-3. Even with this great success, we still have a long way to go before we can say that we are leaving "no child behind" in reading growth in the early elementary grades; thus, it is our intention that the *Reading First* program continue.

EVAN B. LEFSKY, PH.D.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JUST READ, FLORIDA!

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The *Reading First* program has not only had an impact on the schools receiving *Reading First* grants, but many “*Reading First* practices” have spread to schools that are not funded by the program, and we have been able to provide training to thousands of teachers who do not work in *Reading First* schools.

We, of course, are concerned about being able to sustain the gains we have made in Florida through the *Reading First* program. We encourage you to begin discussions within your district about ways to sustain the elements of the program that you have found most useful and successful. If you have any questions about funding issues arising from this letter, please contact Cari Miller, Director of Elementary Reading at Cari.Miller@fldoe.org.

Thank you all for your continued support and hard work in making *Reading First* a success.

EBL/cm