

Reading Program Specifications



Reading Program Specifications

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INTRODUCTION

On September 7, 2001, by Executive Order Number 01-260, Governor Jeb Bush requested the Department of Education to make recommendations for reading programs. In response to the Executive Order, the Department has developed a set of specifications for local reading programs in coordination with numerous Florida stakeholders. As a result, this *Reading Program Specifications* document provides a comprehensive conceptual framework for all Florida educators as a blueprint for developing effective reading programs.

The purpose of the *Reading Program Specifications* is to provide a blueprint for effective reading programs in Florida. Reading programs must support high quality reading instruction so that all Florida students can meet the Sunshine State Standards. A menu of specific reading knowledge, resources, and instructional practices must be in place. Instructional strategies need to be grounded in scientifically based reading research and coordinated with a wide variety of reading materials. Teachers must know how to orchestrate instructional assessments and each of the major reading components. The plan must be comprehensive and well organized with an open door policy on opportunities for all students to learn to read. *Consequently, no one commercial program can provide this menu for reading to meet the needs of all students.*

As we implement the *Reading Program Specifications* throughout Florida, we can remind ourselves of what both a firm foundation and a strong framework have to offer. All children are born illiterate. For every year to come, Florida's children will need commitment and support to acquire literacy skills and meet the Sunshine State Standards. In following this blueprint, Florida educators can generate local capacity to construct and maintain an effective, comprehensive, and cohesive reading program that will teach all children at all grade levels to read and to read well.

GOAL: All Florida students will read on grade level or higher by the year 2012.

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READING PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS: The Four Strands

The following chart contains an outline of the *Reading Program Specifications*. Each strand of the *Reading Program Specifications* is a vital component in and of itself. Without compromise, each strand must be present in order for a reading program to provide any promise of student learning gains, and, therefore, deemed as effective. Jointly, with each strand locally present, a school has in place all of the core elements for an effective reading program that propels students to meet the Sunshine State Standards.

(See Florida's Curriculum Frameworks to view the Sunshine State Standards for Reading and Language Arts)

Specification 1: Professional Development

1.1.	Comprehensive Initial Professional Development
1.2.	Professional Development for Everyone
1.3.	Frequent and Continuous Professional Development
1.4.	Professional Development to Impact Change
1.5.	Professional Development Lead by School-site Expertise

Specification 2: Administrative Practices in Support of Reading

2.1.	Reading as a School-wide Priority
2.2.	Inservice and Evaluation Processes Focus on Reading
2.3.	Resource Focus on Reading Achievement

Specification 3: High Quality Reading Instruction is a Dynamic System

3.1.	Propels Student Learning in Essential Reading Components
3.2.	Expends Efficient Use of Instructional Time
3.3.	Contains Systematic Set of Assessment Practices
3.4.	Differentiated Instruction

Specification 4: Reading Text Materials and Resources

4.1.	Materials Align with Student Reading Levels
4.2.	Comprehensive Instructional Materials
4.3.	Wide Assortment of Diverse Text
4.4.	Flexible Use of Text
4.5.	Appropriate Use of Technology



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Specification 1: Professional Development

1.0 A high quality reading program has professional development that provides all educational stakeholders with the essential knowledge to teach all students to read proficiently.

To implement an effective reading program, the reading knowledge base of the teacher is critical to its effectiveness and, consequently, in the successful reading outcomes of students. With student reading acquisition dependent upon the reading expertise of teachers, it is necessary for Florida teachers to acquire comprehensive knowledge of the essential reading components, the reading process, and the framework for monitoring student learning. To positively impact student learning gains in reading throughout all of the grades, teachers must become proficient in the appropriate application and orchestration of comprehensive instructional strategies and instructional materials.

As the first of four *Reading Program Specifications*, Strand 1 is professional development. It is both a prerequisite and a priority in the development, implementation, and maintenance of any quality reading program. The professional development must have a supportive *context* with strong leadership. Additionally, it must include strong *content* in all components of reading instruction that is grounded in research. Finally, in order for the professional development to be effective, there must be in place an effective *process* of implementation.

1.1. Professional development in the area of reading is both comprehensive in nature and grounded in scientifically based reading research that impacts the quality of practice.

For professional development to be considered comprehensive, it must address the body of knowledge grounded in scientifically based reading research. It must also be in alignment with the National Staff Development Council Standards. *See the National Staff Development Council Standards and Appendix E: Florida's Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol*

The comprehensive training for reading includes a focus in each of the following indicators:

- 1.1.1. Five essential components of the reading process
- 1.1.2. Diagnosis and instructional assessment to problem solve, inform instruction, intervene, and monitor progress continuously
- 1.1.3. Delivery systems consistent with the recommendations and standards

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of the National Staff Development Council

1.1.4. High quality reading instruction as a dynamic system in the classroom

1.2. Professional development in the area of reading is provided for everyone who affects student learning.

Although some educators consistently have greater responsibility than others for building student capacity to read, all educators and stakeholders are to some degree responsible for building student reading proficiency. As part of the educational system, all educators and stakeholders that impact student learning need to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of reading that is grounded in scientifically based reading research.

Those impacting student learning of reading include the following:

- 1.2.1. Teachers providing initial instruction and intensive intervention
- 1.2.2. Teachers providing instruction through reading in the content areas
- 1.2.3. Administrators developing, identifying, managing, and supporting reading instruction
- 1.2.4. Personnel supporting reading instruction such as paraprofessionals, mentors, and volunteers

1.3. Professional development in the area of reading that is frequent and continuous is provided for everyone who effects student learning; it contains follow-up support that focuses on both expansion of reading knowledge in the latest scientifically based reading research and the delivery of high-quality reading instruction.

Educators need to expand upon their initial and comprehensive knowledge base in reading instruction in order to refine their instructional delivery and increase their effectiveness. Therefore, professional development needs to be continuous with follow-up support. Options could include study groups, collaborative teams, individual projects, peer observations, demonstrations, coaching, apprenticeships, classroom action-research projects, observations and feedback from those who have more expertise in the area of reading, and pilot programs. Activities should be grounded in clear statements about the goals, content, and practices of evidence-based reading instruction. Finally, these activities should be focused on classroom application.

See the National Staff Development Council Standards and Appendix E: Florida's Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol

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1.4. Professional development provides teachers with the knowledge and skills to impact change. Teachers learn to identify, diagnose, and prescribe solutions for the reading challenges and difficulties of individuals or groups of students.

For teachers assigned the major responsibility of teaching reading to students, their instructional decisions preserve and maintain student engagement in the reading process as a primary focus. Instructional activities and strategies that build student engagement in the reading process have precedence in the use of instructional time. Either as an individual teacher or as a cooperative team, time and instructional effort focus upon seeking solutions to overcome reading challenges facing the student or group of students.

See Strand 3 of the Reading Program Standards: High Quality Reading Instruction is a Dynamic System.

1.5. Professional development includes school-site expertise for ongoing instructional support as part of continuous training.

To facilitate the need for professional development that is continuous with follow-up support, it is necessary for school-site educators to have access to reading leadership throughout the school year. School-site leadership such as coaches provides extra professional development to teachers early in the school year if there are presentation problems that result in insufficient student gains in reading. This leadership must have sustained contact with teachers who are learning new skills in the area of reading to assist with setting goals, establishing priorities, and refining instructional delivery. School-site leadership provides assistance with data-driven decision making, classroom observations, and instructional modeling. Teachers can learn how to maximize the effectiveness of their instruction through differentiating instruction, flexible grouping, and assessment-driven intervention.



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Specification 2: Administrative Practices in Support of Reading Instruction

2.0: An effective reading program is sustained through the effective practices of the school and district administrators that support high quality reading instruction throughout the school year for all students.

To implement an effective reading program, the knowledge base of the administration within a school and district is vital to its effectiveness. As leaders of a local educational community, Florida administrators need to attain basic knowledge of scientifically based reading research that functions as the foundation for instruction throughout a school or district. They must attain an understanding of the essential reading components, the reading process, and a variety of instructional assessments in order to clearly communicate expectations as a leader and to effectively allocate resources for reading. Additionally, the management skills of an administrator impact instructional expertise, instructional design, learning opportunities, and student reading proficiency.

2.1 An administrator of an effective reading program establishes and maintains reading as a school-wide priority.

Reading is the requisite skill for student success in all subject areas and predominantly remains as a requisite skill throughout a lifetime. An administrator's commitment to reading as a school-wide priority is vital to the reading success of the entire school. The principal needs to establish effective communication networks regarding reading to all stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, teachers, administrators, etc.)

The principal is the instructional leader who uses effective management skills to meet the following performance indicators:

- 2.1.1. The principal clearly articulates the vision, mission, and expectations that all children can read, and establishes that reading is the primary priority.
- 2.1.2. The school improvement plan details specific goals, objectives, and strategies focused on reading improvement.
- 2.1.3. Effective communication with parents and the community is evident around reading vision, mission, etc.
- 2.1.4. School governance is a shared decision-making model that focuses on building local capacity in reading.

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2.2 An administrator uses effective management skills to assure that professional development and teacher evaluation processes are focused on reading.

To ensure positive reading outcomes, school and district administrators must provide and preserve instructional leadership in the area of reading to monitor student reading gains, provide help to those not making sufficient progress, and support ongoing professional development. Selection, development, and retention of the highest quality personnel for all instructional staff are achieved through ongoing professional development and the evaluation processes based upon recommendations and standards of the National Staff Development Council. Administrators need to possess knowledge of the reading process and the elements of successful reading programs. They must be familiar with instructional assessments for reading and the use, interpretation, and management of the data.

See Appendix E: Florida's Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol

The principal is the instructional leader who uses effective management skills to meet the following performance indicators:

2.2.1. There is active participation in initial and follow-up reading professional development activities with teachers (e.g., action research, study groups, etc.) in support of recommendations and standards of the National Staff Development Council.

See Appendix E: Florida's Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol

2.2.2. The teacher professional development plan is focused on reading improvement in creating a climate where all teachers are accountable for reading achievement gains school-wide.

2.2.3. Summative and formative feedback to teachers is focused on reading.

2.2.4. Principals are knowledgeable about adult learning theory, change processes, and school culture to organize and implement effective staff development processes.

2.2.5. Principals are able to connect research to practice.

2.2.6. Instructional design includes evidence of effective practices from reading research and classroom assessment to produce positive student reading gains.

2.3 An administrator assures school-wide resources are focused on reading achievement for all students.

To ensure positive reading outcomes, school and district administrators must provide funding and other resources required for an effective reading program to equip the teachers with both the knowledge and the resources to deliver reading instruction that effectively builds the reading process for all

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students within the school. Administrators must preserve and provide funding and time to equip students with ample opportunities for increasing proficiency in the reading process. They must make decisions regarding time, funding, and other resources that determine both the quality and quantity of reading resources available throughout the school for both student learning and delivery of effective reading instruction. Administrators arrange for extra support for teachers when student progress is insufficient, and this extra support is promptly provided upon first detection of reading difficulties.

The principal is the instructional leader who uses effective management skills to meet the following performance indicators:

- 2.3.1. Resources are clearly dedicated to the achievement of reading mastery for all students within the school.
- 2.3.2. The necessary resources (time, funding, personnel, staff development, etc.) are identified, allocated, and managed to increase reading achievement for all students.
- 2.3.3. External funding sources are pursued to support reading.
- 2.3.4. Academic learning time in reading is appropriate in time and substance to meet the individual needs of all learners.
- 2.3.5. Vertical and horizontal curriculum planning matrices in reading are established and implemented across and between grade levels and feeder patterns.
- 2.3.6. The school organization provides the structures necessary to allow teachers to meet reading achievement goals. (e.g., planning time, teaching teams, etc.)
- 2.3.7. The administrator is aware of and uses research-based criteria for selection of curricular materials.



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Specification 3: High Quality Reading Instruction is a Dynamic System

3.0: High quality reading instruction effectively exhibits a consistent set of characteristics that are research based and that are guided by ongoing assessment of student progress.

High quality reading instruction is a cohesive system that involves a dynamic interplay between assessment, teaching, and effective student learning. It maintains as priority a focus upon student development of the reading process, yet simultaneously, a focus upon the development of reading comprehension. To accommodate both of these goals from grade pre-k through grade 12, the content of the reading instruction needs to be comprehensive in scope; there are numerous major reading components that must comprise a student's daily instruction. Decisions regarding instruction for each of the essential components are systematically guided by a set of tangible assessment measures that reflect the extent of student learning in each component. Such measures guide the teacher in making instructional goals and planning instructional time for each student. Focus upon each essential component is necessary until such time that the student has acquired independence with the skills for that component. Systemic planning at the district, school, grade, classroom, and individual levels is based on data gained from ongoing student progress measures. *(See Florida's Sunshine State Standards)*

3.1. Effective reading instruction propels student learning in all major reading components.

Effective reading instruction focuses all major reading components as it develops student knowledge of the reading process. The content of the reading instruction should be comprehensive in scope. Therefore, explicit and systematic instruction that includes numerous major reading components must be a part of the student's daily experience.

The major basic reading components of reading instruction include the following indicators: *(See Appendix A and Florida's Sunshine State Standards)*

- 3.1.1. Phonemic awareness and phonemic analysis skills such as blending and segmenting to manipulate sounds of language
- 3.1.2. Fluency and automaticity in reading text
(See Appendix B)
- 3.1.3. Learning phonics skills and using orthographic and structural analysis
- 3.1.4. Vocabulary development including morphemic analysis and effective use and understanding of oral language *(See Appendix C)*

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- 3.1.5. Comprehension of text and understanding of the purposes and functions of written language (See Appendix C)

3.2. Effective reading instruction expends efficient use of instructional time.

Effective reading instruction makes maximum use of all time devoted to reading, increases the duration of time devoted to instruction for those students who can profit from additional skills practice, and intensifies instructional strategies for students who are unable to progress at satisfactory rates.

Efficient use of time includes the following indicators:

- 3.2.1. Significant instructional time is dedicated to reading instruction.
- 3.2.2. Explicit, systemic approach to instruction through skill scaffolding and monitoring of student learning gains
- 3.2.3. Students actively engage in learning during instructional time.
- 3.2.4. Reading activities accessible beyond the school day
- 3.2.5. Collaborative and coordinated efforts within the school and between the school and home

3.3. Effective reading instruction contains a systematic and systemic set of assessment practices.

Assessment is the process of collecting data in order to specify and verify problems and to make decisions about students that will enhance learning. Assessment procedures must be selected carefully in order to provide the answers to specific questions one might have about the reading skills of each student as well as individual student progress in acquiring the necessary skills to meet or exceed grade-level expectations. Appropriately trained personnel must administer data gained from student assessment. It should be compiled and analyzed in numerous ways so that individual student needs can be identified, teachers and parents will be informed about effective strategies to guide the reading process, and administrators will be able to create and maintain school cultures that value and support high standards for reading. A problem-solving model facilitates the appropriate interpretation and application of information gained from assessment activities as well as sustaining the dynamic interplay between assessment and instruction.

The set of systematic assessment practices include each of the following indicators:

- 3.3.1. Students are screened at the beginning of the school year to determine basic reading development and to detect the presence of any difficulty.
- 3.3.2. Comprehensive diagnostic measures are used to investigate the nature of reading problems for students with detected reading difficulties
- 3.3.3. Progress monitoring of skill acquisition is periodically administered throughout the school year to detect and steer reading progress.

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3.4. Effective reading instruction is differentiated and applies instructional practices that are appropriate for student development in the reading process.

Although some students begin their academic careers with sufficient communication skills to become accomplished readers in a relatively short number of years, many others require explicit and systematic instruction for a much longer period of time. Reading instruction that meets the needs of all students requires a universal perspective and qualities of flexibility in instruction and in instructional grouping. In providing reading instruction with a universal design, the skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking become meaningful and effective ways of communicating for all students provided enough opportunities.

Instructional practices that support differentiated instruction include the following indicators:

- 3.4.1. Flexible grouping based on the instructional needs of students
- 3.4.2. Prompt instructional feedback to shape learning in a timely fashion
- 3.4.3. Appropriate text level for instructional reading as well as independent reading
- 3.4.4. Extensive practice and multiple opportunities for skill-building reading activities
- 3.4.5. Frequent monitoring of progress using appropriate assessment procedures and scaffolding of instruction to accommodate learning needs
- 3.4.6. Instructional adjustments based on assessment of student skills and identified needs
- 3.4.7. Text accessibility with frequent and broad assortment of diverse texts in classrooms and media centers



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Specification 4: Reading Text Materials and Resources

4.0: An effective reading program maintains a print-rich environment with ample supply of quality and up-to-date resources and texts for students and teachers to read for a variety of reasons at numerous times throughout the school day.

In the absence of a wealth of reading materials, neither an elementary nor a secondary reading program can be effective. Students need much reading instruction and reading practice with a wide variety of reading resources. Frequent accessibility to a wealth of reading resources in each classroom and school library media center propels student development and practice in each of the essential reading components of decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. With flexible access to a wide assortment of diverse texts and resources, students will have ample opportunities to satisfy their reading needs and interests.

4.1 An effective reading program incorporates both instructional and supplemental materials that align with the reading level of the individual student.

An effective reading program includes regular use of a wide variety of reading materials that match students' independent reading levels. Content-area learning incorporates alternative texts that students can read and comprehend independently. Therefore, students within the same class will read different reading materials based on their independent reading level.

Reading text materials that align with student reading needs include the following:

- 4.1.1. Instructional materials contain texts with varying reading levels to accommodate the different independent reading levels and instructional needs of individual students within a class.
- 4.1.2. The classroom library contains texts of varying reading levels to accommodate the different independent reading levels and interests of individual students within a class.
- 4.1.3. The school library media center houses and circulates materials of varying reading levels to accommodate the different independent reading levels, interests, and instructional needs of all of its students at all grade levels. *(See American Association of School Library's Standards: Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning)*

4.2. An effective reading program incorporates a comprehensive set of instructional materials to meet the reading needs of all students.

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An effective reading program builds communication skills, comprehension, and reading proficiency of all students. Research-based reading criteria are used to select both content-area and instructional reading materials. In order to learn to read diverse texts, students must have explicit instruction in the text structure of a variety of texts and practice reading these texts. Therefore, a wide variety of content-area texts and supplemental material are essential components of a classroom's comprehensive instructional materials. Systematic, explicit instruction and sufficient practice in the essential components of reading are integral to reading instruction. *(See Strand 3: High Quality Reading Instruction)*

A comprehensive set of reading text materials include the following:

- 4.2.1. Instructional materials are research-based, comprehensive in nature, and sufficient in quantity in order for teachers to differentiate instruction and meet the various instructional needs of students within a class.
- 4.2.2. Reading materials within a classroom contain supplementary content-area texts that support both the comprehensive instruction and the various instructional needs of students.
- 4.2.3. The school library media center houses and circulates supplementary content-area materials that support both the comprehensive instructional materials for reading and the various instructional needs of all of its students at all grade levels.

(See American Association of School Library's Standards: Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning)

4.3. An effective reading program incorporates a wide assortment of diverse texts to support reading for a variety of purposes and to create a print-rich school environment.

An effective reading program that meets the needs of all students provides a variety of diverse texts both in the classroom and in the school library media center. Time spent reading from a variety of diverse texts provides opportunities for students to engage in the pleasurable and informational act of reading as they increase reading fluency, develop vocabulary and comprehension skills, and apply higher order thinking skills. In order to build background knowledge and construct new perspectives, students need a variety of texts at their independent reading level on the same theme or topic. Texts should vary widely and include children's literature, novels, newspapers, magazines, informational text, student-published writing, internet, reference materials, primary source documents, handbooks, instruction manuals as well as textbooks and other supplementary materials. *(See Appendix D)*

A print-rich school environment includes each of the following:

- 4.3.1. The classroom contains a diverse collection of both literary and expository

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texts and content-area resources to establish a print-rich environment that invites student reading for a variety of purposes.

4.3.3. Reading instruction challenges students to read from diverse texts and Content-area materials, to read for a variety of purposes and to synthesize and learn from multiple sources.

4.3.4. The school library media center houses a large collection of diverse resources and circulates a wide assortment of materials for students to read and learn with support of parents and faculty.

(See American Association of School Library's Standards: Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning)

4.4. An effective reading program incorporates flexible use of text to develop reading flexibility and to foster a literacy environment for all students.

Besides instructional reading, an effective reading program provides ample opportunities for students to read independently, in pairs and small groups, and during whole-class instruction. An effective reading program also encourages parental involvement to engage in reading, talking, and thinking together about a variety of texts. Both parents and teachers use informational text, such as newspapers, magazines, and the internet, to supplement television viewing and the news.

Flexible use of reading text materials include each of the following:

4.4.1. Educators expect, encourage, and provide opportunities for students to read and respond to a variety of reading material in various contexts throughout the school day.

4.4.2. Educators incorporate diverse text into their comprehensive reading instruction to deliver differentiated instruction and increase student interest and experience.

4.4.3. Educators throughout the school maintain a policy of flexible access to the school library media center for reading that is relevant to learning and

personal enhancement of students, parents, and staff.

(See American Association of School Library's Standards: Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning)

4.5. An effective reading program incorporates technology with fidelity to the purpose and function of the reading software's original design.

Technology should be accessible to all students for independent and classroom use. Student use of technology should enhance learning and become a tool to achieve academic purposes and real-world applications. An effective reading program incorporates technology to promote communication, critical reading and research skills. Additionally, effective use of computer-assisted instruction can enhance basic reading skills of students. Although technology is not regulated primarily for remedial

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use, it is appropriate for additional practice opportunities in order to attain mastery of some reading components. Technology does not replace active reading instruction provided through the knowledge and expertise of the teacher nor does it replace actual reading of a variety of texts. The use of all software should be contingent upon the teacher's evaluation of a student's total reading plan and maintains the intended purpose of the software's design.

Appropriate use of technology software for reading includes each of the following:

- 4.5.1. Plans for student use of technology for purposes of reading development are determined by results of instructional reading assessments.
- 4.5.2. Educators expect, encourage, and provide appropriate opportunities for students to use technology as a learning tool to enhance the student's reading plan.
- 4.5.3. Educators throughout the school maintain a policy of flexible access to the school library media center for relevant use of technology for students, parents, and staff. *(See American Association of School Library's Standards:*

Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning)

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CONCLUSION

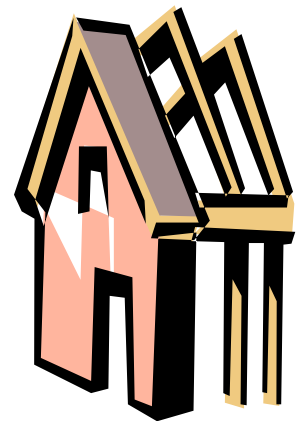
The *Reading Program Specifications* have been developed for Florida schools and districts to use as a blueprint in constructing local reading programs that allocate opportunity for their students to meet the Sunshine State Standards. These specifications identify the major factors that support high quality reading instruction and create opportunity for both elementary and secondary students to learn to read well. These major factors include professional development, administrative practices, high-quality instruction, and reading text materials and resources. Together, these factors serve as a framework for making wise decisions in designing a reading program that is comprehensive and cohesive. The *Reading Program Specifications* require a total effort on the part of the educational community. The commitment and support of both school and district administration is essential.

In order to implement the *Reading Program Specifications* in schools and districts, local educators need to become familiar with the latest research in reading. Administrators and instructional personnel must inventory resources. They must prioritize instructional strategies. Schools and districts must build a strong framework to support high-quality reading instruction that takes charge of change in the classroom. Such instruction is a dynamic system that changes the lives of students. It minimizes the expense of remediation in reading and reduces the numbers of student placements into special education programs. The *Reading Program Specifications* will assist educators to apply the research and implement a dynamic system that generates success for all students.

Specifications for Building a Framework

The *Reading Program Specifications* provide a framework to assist educators and students in meeting Grade Level Expectations and the Sunshine State Standards. As a framework provides structure to any building, *the Reading Program Specifications* gives stability to a local reading program.

- The basic framework achieves and maintains the stability necessary to endure challenging conditions.
- Core structures of the foundation must be a sustained priority but other features can be added to fit local needs.
- It is the framework that provides strength and enduring purpose.



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Appendix

The *Reading Program Specifications* document has been linked to several existing resources for clarification and alignment of local reading programs. Those resources include the National Staff Development Council's Standards for professional development, excerpts from the *Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol* of the Department of Education, and excerpts of the *FCAT Test Specifications*.

APPENDIX A - Correlation to Specification 3.1.

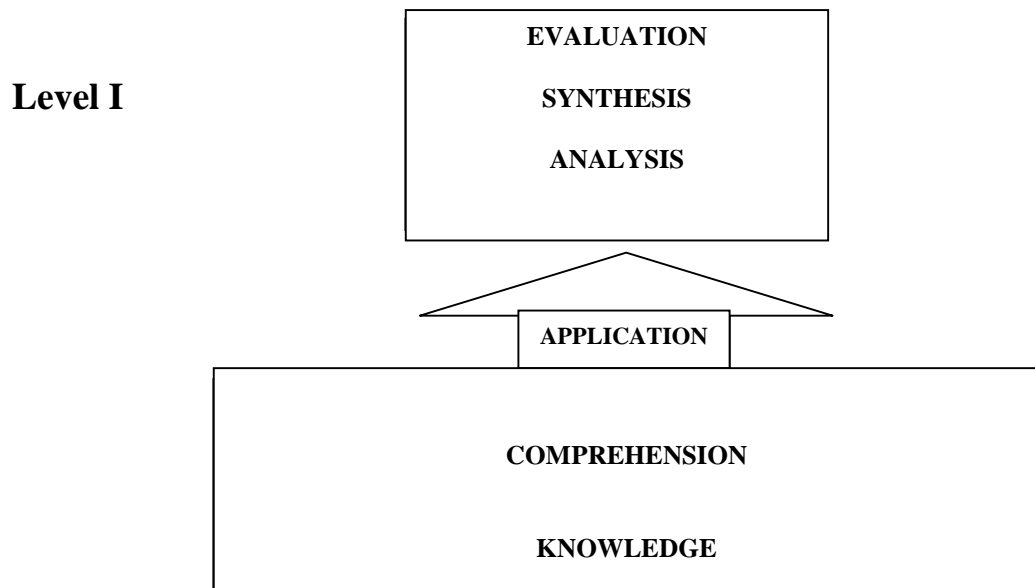
The following questions can be considered in analyzing the students' classroom environment to assist in planning and forming instructional decisions:

The chart listed below has been extracted from the *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Specifications*. The information on the chart has several instructional implications.

BACKGROUND: The benchmarks in the *Sunshine State Standards* identify knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire, with the underlying expectation that students demonstrate critical thinking. The FCAT test contains Level I and Level II questions based on Bloom's taxonomy. It consists of the following levels of thinking: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The figure below represents this classification system of questions.

1 Bloom, B. S., et al. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*. New York: McKay, 1956.

Cognitive Task Classification Guidelines for FCAT



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Level II

The table below indicates the approximate percentage of Level I and Level II test items and performance tasks to be included in FCAT for each grade. These percentages represent the challenging levels of thinking and problem solving mandated for Florida students. Educators can consider the following questions in relation to questioning techniques during classroom discussion and provided in instructional materials.

- What proportion of questioning levels are asked of students at each grade level in the course of a lesson? Or a unit? Or throughout the year?
- Are students asked Level I and II questions about new vocabulary? During the reading of passages in the content areas and with literary text? During classroom dialogue?
- Are the questioning techniques scaffolded well enough for students to easily see patterns in thought processes from Level I questioning to Level II?
- How frequently do students have the opportunity to observe modeling of Level II thinking processes?
- Is there a plan in place for questioning techniques so that instruction can be systematic enough to build Level II thinkers?

Reading Cognitive Task Levels		
Grade	Level I	Level II
3	60%	40%
4	50%	50%
5	50%	50%
6	50%	50%
7	40%	60%
8	40%	60%
9	30%	70%
10	30%	70%

APPENDIX B – Correlation to Specification 3.1.2.

The following questions can be considered in analyzing the Passage Length Chart to assist in forming instructional decisions:

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The chart listed below has been extracted from the *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Specifications*. There are several instructional implications provided through the information on this chart regarding the functional ability of students. Students' functional reading must be adequate in order for them to successfully read with endurance on grade level and construct meaning independently.

1. **Independent reading level:** Can the student read a grade level passage with fluency so that he or she can successfully construct meaning and comprehend the passage?
2. **Reading endurance:** Can the student read with endurance; in other words, can the student fluently read a passage of the specified length at the specified grade level in order to comprehend the entire passage?

Length of FCAT Reading Passages

Grade	Range of Number of Words per Passage	Average Number of Words per Passage
3	100-700	350
4	100-900	400
5	200-900	450
6	200-1000	500
7	300-1100	600
8	300-1100	700
9	300-1400	800
10	300-1700	900

APPENDIX C – Correlation to Specification 3.1.4. and 3.1.5.

The following questions can be considered to systematically include higher order thinking and questioning techniques in lesson plans throughout the school year.

The chart listed below has been extracted from the *Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Specifications*. It lists the four clusters of benchmarks that are reported on student performance in meeting the Sunshine State Standards for reading comprehension. Each individual benchmark represents a comprehension skill or set of skills in the hierarchy of higher order thinking. Throughout the year, educators can both monitor and model questions and answers as they talk and read with students.

- Educators can monitor the quantity and quality of questions that they ask students during the reading process and during classroom dialogue.

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- Educators can model the process of higher order thinking during classroom dialogue and during the reading process.

FCAT Reading Benchmark Content Clusters

GRADES 3 – 5

1 Words and Phrases in Context	2 Main Idea, Plot, and Purpose	3 Comparisons and Cause/Effect	4 Reference and Research
A.1.2.3 meaning of words in context; word analysis	A.2.2.1 main idea; supporting details; chronological order	A.2.2.7 use of comparison and contrast	A.2.2.8 organization and interpretation of information
	A.2.2.2 author's purpose in a simple text	E.1.2.3 similarities and differences among characters, settings, events	
	E.1.2.2. plot development and conflict resolution	E.2.2.1 cause-and-effect relationships	

GRADES 6 – 8

1 Words and Phrases in Context	2 Main Idea, Plot, and Purpose	3 Comparisons and Cause/Effect	4 Reference and Research
A.1.3.2 words in context; drawing conclusions; organizational patterns	A.2.3.1 main idea; relevant details; organizational patterns	A.2.2.7 use of comparison and contrast	A.2.3.5 organization, interpretation, and synthesis of information
	A.2.3.2 author's purpose or point of view	E.2.2.1 cause-and-effect relationships	A.2.3.8 validity and accuracy of information
	E.2.3.1 character and plot development; point of view; setting; conflict resolution; tone		

GRADES 9 – 10

1 Words and Phrases in Context	2 Main Idea, Plot, and Purpose	3 Comparisons and Cause/Effect	4 Reference and Research
A.1.4.2 words in context; inference; interpretation of data presentations	A.2.4.1 main idea; supporting details; methods of development	A.2.2.7 use of comparison and contrast	A.2.4.4 identification and synthesis of information
	A.2.4.2 author's purpose; point of view	E.2.2.1 cause-and-effect relationships	A.2.4.7 validity and accuracy of information

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	E.2.4.1 complex elements of plot, conflict resolution, setting, tone		A.2.4.8 synthesis of information from multiple sources
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APPENDIX D – Correlation to Specification 4.3.

The following questions can be considered in analyzing the students' classroom environment to assist in planning and forming instructional decisions:

The chart listed below has been extracted from the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Specifications. The information on the chart has several implications for school classrooms. It is only through much reading experience that students can strengthen functional reading skills, read with endurance, and comprehend what they read. Students need many reading text materials in order to do this. In examining the chart below, educators can ask the following questions:

Do students experience a print-rich environment *throughout the year* in the classroom and in the school library media?

- Do they read a wide assortment of text materials throughout the year?
- Do they read numerous text materials for a variety of purposes throughout the year?
- Do students read numerous text materials throughout the year so that they have plenty of opportunity to become successful independent readers with reading endurance on grade level?

The chart below contains a list of examples of informational and literary text material that may be represented on the FCAT reading test for all grade levels. Informational passages listed below can include both primary and secondary sources that address content areas of science, social studies, foreign language, the arts, health education, and physical education. Literary texts address a variety of themes appropriate for the interest of students at the designated grade level and contain the qualities of good literature.

It is important that the classroom environment contain a wide assortment of texts for both independent and instructional reading over a long period of time. Educators can take seriously look at the text materials and resources available in the classroom and school library media. To create a print-rich environment, inventory each classroom according to the items listed on the chart below. Consideration for both quantity and quality is important.

Quantity:

- How many of these resources are available in classrooms?
- How many different types of independent reading resources are available for students to read for a variety of purposes?
- How many resources are there for instructional purposes?

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Quality:

- Are the text materials up-to-date and correspond to current issues and contemporary life?
- Are the available text materials appropriate for the interests and needs of students for independent reading practice?
- Do the instructional reading materials align with the current curriculum?

Forms of Informational Text Forms of Literary Text

Informational Text	Literary Text	Text Material Needs	
		Independent	Instructional
Subject-area text (e.g., science, history)	Short stories		
Diaries	Literary essays critiques, personal narratives)		
Editorials	Excerpts		
Informational essays	Poems		
Biographies and autobiographies	Historical fiction		
Primary sources (e.g., Bill of Rights)	Fables and folk tales		
Consumer materials	Plays		
How-to articles			
Advertisements			
Tables and graphical presentations of text (e.g., illustrations, photographs, & captions)			

APPENDIX E – Correlation to Specifications 1.1.; 1.3.; 2.2. and 2.2.1.

The following questions can be considered in analyzing the students’ classroom environment to assist in planning and forming instructional decisions:

This appendix provides a brief description and reference to a new protocol system developed by the Department of Education for professional development. The new *Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol* is based on a set of standards that

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describe the characteristics and components of a quality professional development system that meets the requirements of Florida's laws. These standards have been generated from the statements in Florida's laws as well as the professional development standards generated by the *National Staff Development Council (NSDC)*.

In response to the current Florida law and proviso language in previous legislation, the Department has developed the new *Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol*. Previous proviso language stipulated that for districts to be eligible to receive funds, they must have a professional development system that requires school principals to establish and maintain individual professional development plans for each instructional employee. The purpose for any training activity must clearly be related to specific performance data. Plans must include an evaluation component that includes identification of student performance data used to define training needs.

The new *Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol* is designed for use by the:

- ◆ Department through site visits to districts to form state-wide conclusions on the quality of professional development in the state.
- ◆ District staff through site visits to schools to form district-wide conclusions on the quality of professional development in the district.
- ◆ School staff and School Advisory Councils as a self-check on the quality of professional development in the school.

The standards forming the basis of Florida's new *Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol* incorporate the National Staff Development Council standards within a framework reflecting the requirements of Florida law related to professional development.

(See the National Staff Development Council Standards)

The standards form the basis for a checklist used by reviewers to judge the quality of the professional development system at each level. When fully implemented, sampling of districts and schools will be employed to reduce the cost and time needed to form state-level and district-level conclusions. Recommendations for sampling are contained in later sections of this document.

The standards reflect three levels of the Professional Development System:

- 1.0 Faculty Level
- 2.0 School Level
- 3.0 District Level

The chart below presents a schematic displaying the three levels. Note that the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Educator Recruitment and Professional Development provides support and assistance to professional development activities and

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services in Florida's public school districts and is displayed as a supporting service at the bottom of the figure.

I. Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol Standards

1.0 Faculty Level

**1.1
Planning**

**1.2
Delivery**

**1.3
Follow-up**

**1.4
Evaluat**

2.0 School Level

**2.1
Planning**

**2.2
Delivery**

**2.3
Follow-up**

**2.4
Evaluat**

3.0 District Level

**3.1
Planning**

**3.2
Delivery**

**3.3
Follow-up**

**3.4
Evaluat**

**Florida Department of Education and
Bureau of Educator Recruitment and Professional Development**

The standards form the basis for a checklist used by reviewers to judge the quality of the professional development system for each school district. contains the new *Florida Professional Development System Evaluation* Checklist. The rating scale employed on the checklist is a 4-point rating scale as follows:

1. Unacceptable:	Little or no evidence that the district is implementing the standard
2. Marginal:	Some but inconsistent evidence that the district is implementing the standard (observed in a few faculty or schools, a few components of the standard)

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3. Good:	Considerable evidence that the district is implementing the standard (observed in many faculty and schools, many components of the standard)
4. Excellent:	Pervasive evidence that the district is implementing the standard (almost all faculty and schools, almost all components of the standard)

After reviewing results from all data collection, the team of reviewers assigns one overall rating to each standard for the school. School results are summarized and then averaged to form a district rating. Results from school visits are maintained only as working papers and used only for the purpose of generating the ratings by standard for the district.

II. Reporting

The Department will generate a report for the district that documents the results of the site visit, areas of strength, and any areas in need of improvement. Numerical results will be presented as a district rating for each standard at each level of the system.

Districts will be provided an opportunity to review the report for errors in fact prior to public release. These reports will be summarized across districts each year for a report to the Commissioner and Legislature documenting the quality of the professional development systems across the state.

The Department encourages districts and schools to use the *new Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol* as one method for conducting a self-review of the quality of their professional development systems.

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