



A Message from the Executive Director

As I reflect upon another school year gone by, I cannot help but wonder what the future holds for literacy in Florida. My daughter Emma will start VPK this fall, yet it seems like just yesterday she was born, the same week I embarked on my Just Read, Florida! journey. I can honestly say with great pride that I am excited for her as she begins her own educational journey in the great state of Florida. The strides that we have made as a state in the area of reading, and literacy as a whole, are remarkable. This is a true credit to the students, parents, teachers, reading coaches, principals, and district leaders across Florida. We have been recognized nationally as a leader in literacy reforms and have the data to back up the efficacy of those reforms. The 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) put Florida on the map, one of only two states to make significant progress

in 4th and 8th grade reading. Additionally, the International Reading Association has recognized Florida with its Five Star Policy Award for adopting and implementing policies that support effective literacy instruction for all children. Yet, with all the progress we have made, we cannot for one minute become complacent or celebrate for too long. If we do, we risk not only slipping, but even more frightful, allowing one of the many students who have not found success to continue down a path of literacy failure and diminished life opportunities. Thank you for all you do each and every day to improve the literate lives of Florida's children. May your summer be filled with books and learning, family and friends. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Leadership Conference this summer in Orlando. Please say hello and share your successes from the past year.

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"To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark."

-Victor Hugo

K-12 Reading Plan Update

Congratulations to districts on the completion of district 2008 K-12 Reading Plans and the efforts made to help Florida students become more successful readers. The Just Read, Florida! Office is currently reviewing district K-12 Reading Plans and providing feedback to district reading contacts. In order to receive reading allocation funds through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), district K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plans ensure the provision of:

- highly qualified reading coaches,
- professional development for school district teachers in scientifically based reading instruction, including strategies to teach reading in content areas and with an emphasis on technical and informational text,
- summer reading camps for students who score at Level 1 on FCAT reading,
- supplemental instructional materials that are grounded in scientifically based reading research and,
- intensive interventions for middle and high school students reading below grade level.

All plans must be revised and approved by July 1, 2008 in order for the reading allocation to be released to the district.

Reading Leadership Team Grants Update

The 53 districts that applied and were awarded the Reading Leadership Team grant all did an amazing job of contacting schools and applying for the grant within a short timeline. Our featured district is Bay County under the leadership of Lendy Willis, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instructional Services. It was apparent in the grant application that each of the ten schools awarded gave great thought to their expenditures, and each school made uniquely different purchases based upon their school needs. Purchases ranged from classroom libraries to CD players for books on tape, magazine subscriptions, a multi-cultural professional development DVD, substitute teachers for reading teachers to develop curriculum, reading motivational posters, consumable supplies, white boards, guided reading sets and fluency timers. Mr. Willis thought that the grant awards were an excellent opportunity for his ten allotted schools—so much so, in fact, that he gave each of the nine other schools in the district \$1,000 for their RLT activities. Congratulations to Lendy Willis and his grant writer Vicki Gillmore for a job well-done!

Reading Resources

• K-12 Florida Reading Walk Through

In a continued effort to provide districts with high quality resources, the Just Read, Florida! Office has released the Florida Reading Walk Through (RWT) for grades K-12. Modeled after the generalized classroom walk through, the Florida RWT was created in collaboration with the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) and the Center on Instruction. The Florida RWT provides a structure for principals to document observation of indicators of effective classroom reading instruction through brief classroom visits. The Florida RWT provides a framework for organizing and analyzing data to facilitate reflective, focused dialogue with the goal of improved student learning and achievement. Sessions will be held this summer at the Just Read, Florida! Leadership Conference to provide information to districts regarding the RWT. The RWT tool may be accessed through Teachscape's Classroom Walkthrough version 2.0 in hard copy form, or completed as a PDF form by districts not currently utilizing Teachscape 2.0. Links to these PDF files may be found at: <http://www.justreadflorida.com/readingwalkthrough/>.

• Literacy Essentials and Reading Network (LEaRN)

LEaRN is a technology-based system of support for K-12 Florida teachers, reading coaches, and principals as they implement best practices in reading instruction. Designed to immediately answer questions teacher pose about the best instructional practices in teaching reading, LEaRN provides:

- scientifically-based reading research on the five essential components of reading;
- reading instructional strategies based on research;
- assessment approaches that are aligned with reading research;
- video examples and lesson plans depicting research-based teaching strategies in real classrooms;
- video of experts' commentary on research-based teaching strategies and
- an accessible reference system of research-based practices available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Expansion of the LEaRN site is in progress to include specific sections for K-12 reading coaches and administrators, as well as a section for pre-kindergarten teachers, which will be available in the 2008-09 school year. LEaRN can be accessed at <http://www.justreadflorida.com/LEaRN/>.

• Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading

The Florida Center for Reading Research has been charged with creating a reading assessment system for use in grades K-12 in Florida schools. The Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading will assist teachers, principals, and district leaders in making more effective decisions related to reading instruction at the district, school, classroom, and individual student level on a no-cost basis to Florida's schools. The system will include screening instruments, progress monitoring tools, and diagnostic measures which will predict student success on the FCAT and SAT 10 and also provide a Lexile score for each student in grades 3-12. K-2 assessments will be available on hand-held devices and scores from the grades 3-12 computerized assessments will be directly imported into the Progress Monitoring Reporting Network (PMRN), which will also contain tools for linking assessment results to classroom instruction. The new assessments will be piloted in four districts next year with state-wide implementation available for the 2009-2010 school year.

• Empowering Teachers

Created by the Florida Center for Reading Research, Empowering Teachers is a resource for kindergarten through third grade teachers providing information to assist teachers in making sound instructional decisions to improve reading outcomes. This web resource includes information on:

- the building blocks of reading.
- what reading skills should be taught and mastered in kindergarten through third grade.
- how to measure reading skills.
- how to use reading assessment results to guide reading instruction.
- how to determine the effectiveness of reading instruction.

Empowering Teachers can be accessed at <http://www.fcrr.org>.

Professional Development

• New K-3 Intervention Academies

An exciting professional development opportunity will take place this summer for K-3 reading teachers, K-3 ESE teachers, K-3 ESOL teachers, and reading coaches of *Reading First* schools. Just Read, Florida! will host *Reading First* K-3 Intervention Academies throughout the summer in conjunction with scheduled Summer Reading Academies.

The academies will focus on four main topics: an overview of what research has indicated about interventions, the use of data in planning interventions, the "how" of an intervention lesson (explicit, corrective feedback, modeling, etc.) and the "what" of an intervention lesson (phonics continuum, vocabulary strategies, and comprehension). The K-3 Intervention Academies will serve as tools to assist teachers in providing effective reading intervention instruction meeting student needs.

- **7th Annual Just Read, Florida! K-12 Leadership Conference June 29-July 2, 2008, Orlando**

<http://www.justreadflorida.com/conference>

The 7th Annual Just Read, Florida! K-12 Leadership Conference will take place at the Orlando World Center Marriott. The Just Read, Florida! Office hosts this conference annually for all Florida superintendents, principals and reading/literacy coaches. This year, teacher leaders are invited to attend as well. This summer promises to be the most exciting event ever with over 300 concurrent sessions and over 5,000 anticipated participants. Capacity has been reached for the conference; however, those wishing to attend may still register and will be placed on a waiting list.

- **Just Read, Florida! 2008 Literacy Institute July 20-24, 2008, Orlando**

<http://www.justreadflorida.com/LiteracyInstitute/>

The Just Read, Florida! Literacy Institute will serve over 1000 K-12 teachers and reading coaches attending this professional development opportunity. The Literacy Institute will include the following academies:

- **4-5 Reading Teacher Academy-** designed for teachers in grades 4-5, providing a focus on effective reading instruction for students.
 - **6-8 Reading Intervention Teacher Academy-** designed for teachers who are providers of reading intervention in grades 6-8, this academy will provide training in assessment, instructional decision-making, and differentiation of instruction.
 - **9-12 Reading Intervention Teacher Academy-** designed for teachers who are providers of reading intervention in grades 9-12, this academy will provide training in assessment, instructional decision-making, and differentiation of instruction.
 - **Novice Reading & Literacy Coaches Academy-** designed for new K-12 reading coaches with foundational training in coaching strategies and techniques.
 - **Master Reading & Literacy Coaches Academy-** designed for experienced K-12 coaches, a deeper level of literacy coaching strategies and techniques will be provided.
- **Content Area Professional Development (CAR-PD) and Reading Endorsement for ESOL Teachers (REESOL) Update**
We are pleased to report that the Department, in the interest of providing as much flexibility as possible while maintaining the integrity of teacher professional development, has agreed to allow any state approved Competency 2 within the Reading Endorsement to serve as the prerequisite course for the CAR-PD 60 hour face-to-face academy and the REESOL 100-hour academy. Previously, only Florida Online Reading Professional Development (FOR-PD) or Florida Reading Initiative (FRI) were honored as prerequisites. We urge you to continue to use FOR-PD or FRI, as they both are sponsored by Just Read, Florida! and are quite rigorous in laying the groundwork for the science of teaching reading. However, all Competency 2 courses used by districts, Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs) and teacher preparation programs are thoroughly reviewed and approved by Just Read, Florida!.

- **Families Building Better Readers™**

<http://www.familiesandeducators.org/programs/families>

In partnership with Just Read, Florida!, Volunteer Florida Foundation manages the dynamic Families Building Better Readers (FBBR) and Mysteries in the Middle (MnM) programs. FBBR is an engaging reading workshop designed for parents and children in elementary grades. This workshop teaches parents how to set their children up for successful reading practice at home with ten research-based activities they can do with their children to improve reading performance.

Mysteries in the Middle (MnM) was launched in 2005 as an extension of the Families Building Better Readers program. MnM is an interactive reading workshop for middle school students and their parents. This engaging program includes a "Hollywood Sound Stage" theme where parents and students watch and take part in the mock filming of a made-for-TV pre-teen movie thriller entitled "Mysteries in the Middle." By the end of the mystery-movie theme, both parents and students are "clued" in to a set of key reading and mental strategies that successful readers employ.

The high school edition of Families Building Better Readers™ has been developed as a resource tool to provide training on the importance of including families of high school students in reading and high school success. The pilot phase of the high school version for this family literacy workshop was completed in January 2008 along with a statewide train-the-trainer workshop. This workshop has been designed to provide information, strategies, and techniques for addressing the unique concerns of parents of high school students through a fun, but informative, game-show format. Visit <http://www.volunteerfloridafoundation.org/> for upcoming FBBR High School events or contact Anita S. Rodgers at the Volunteer Florida Foundation through the following email addresses: flamentoring@aol.com; anita.rodgers@vfffund.org. Families Building Better Readers Elementary and Mysteries in the Middle workshops are scheduled every week in Florida.

- **Training Opportunity – The New FBBR High School Edition!** Sunday, June 29, 2008 from 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. This workshop is being conducted in collaboration with the 7th Annual Just Read, Florida! Leadership Conference at the Orlando World Center Marriott Resort & Convention Center. The workshop will take place in Training Room – Crystal Ballroom J1.
- **Free Summer Professional Development**
We are pleased to announce that Just Read, Florida! will sponsor free summer registrations for the three online Reading Endorsement courses offered through North East Florida Educational Consortia (NEFEC). The courses include Foundations of Language and Cognition (FOLAC) for Competency 1, Applied Data Analysis for Principals and Teachers (ADAPT) for Competency 3, and Foundations and Application of Differentiated Instruction (FADI) for Competencies 4/5. Please do not delay

in taking advantage of this professional development opportunity, as the courses are filling up quickly. Registration access and all pertinent information can be found on the following websites:

<http://www.nefec.org/folac>

<http://www.nefec.org/adapt>

<http://www.nefec.org/fadi>

If you have questions, please contact Garnette Knapp at (386) 329-3800 or knappg@nefec.org.

Reading First Update

Reading First grants assist Florida school districts and schools to implement proven methods of scientifically based reading instruction in classrooms in order to prevent reading difficulties in grades K-3. On December 26, 2007, the President signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008, which provides Fiscal Year 2008 appropriations for *Reading First* and other United States Department of Education (USDOE) programs. For Fiscal Year 2008, Congress appropriated \$393,012,000 for *Reading First*, which is a 61 percent decrease from Fiscal Year 2007. Fortunately, funding for Florida *Reading First* school districts will not decrease by 61 percent. Florida *Reading First* districts will continue to be funded as originally scheduled in the declining funding model. For the 2008-2009 school year, *Reading First* districts will receive the following percentages reflected in their original grant award:

- Districts serving *Reading First* schools in Cohort 1 - 35%
- Districts serving *Reading First* schools in Cohort 2 - 50%
- Districts serving *Reading First* schools in Cohort 3 - 65%

High Performing *Reading First* Districts

The *Reading First* program has been implemented in the state of Florida since 2003, serving 584 schools within 45 districts. The Florida Department of Education's Just Read, Florida! Office recognized 12 Florida school districts for being in the top 25 percent of all *Reading First* districts in the state. These districts were identified because they 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. The following 12 districts have made significant gains in student achievement as a result of their exemplary *Reading First* implementation, and their efforts are to be highly commended. Congratulations to the top 25 percent of *Reading First* districts in Florida!

Top 25 percent of *Reading First* districts serving Cohort 1 schools (Schools in their 5th year of *Reading First* implementation)

District Name	Number of <i>Reading First</i> Schools	% Increase at Grade Level	% Reduction at High Risk
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 2 schools (Schools in their 4th year of *Reading First* implementation)

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

Top 25 percent of *Reading First* districts serving Cohort 3 schools (Schools in their 3rd year of *Reading First* implementation)


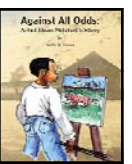

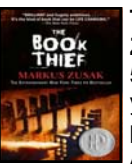
District Name	Number of <i>Reading First</i> Schools	% Increase at Grade Level	% Reduction at High Risk
Collier	2	7.36	4.57
Okeechobee	1	2.34	7.05
Holmes	1	7.81	0.85
Pinellas	11	5.04	1.48

Response to Intervention (RtI)

Response to Intervention (RtI) is the practice of providing high-quality instruction/ intervention matched to student needs and using learning rate over time and level of performance to make important educational decisions (*Batsche, et al., 2005*).

The Response to Intervention (RtI) model is a multi-tiered approach to providing services and interventions to all students at increasing levels of intensity based on progress monitoring and data analysis. Tier 1 is the foundation and consists of scientific, research-based core instructional and behavioral methodologies, practices, and supports designed for all students in the general curriculum. At Tier 2, supplemental instruction and interventions are provided to those students for whom data suggest additional instructional support is warranted. Tier 3 consists of intensive instructional interventions provided with the goal of increasing an individual student's rate of progress. The Department of Education is creating a state RtI plan incorporating input from stakeholders which will provide technical assistance for districts in the implementation of the RtI model. The Florida RtI state plan will be released at the Just Read, Florida! K-12 Leadership Conference in Orlando, June 29-July 2, 2008.

The Bookshelf

 <p>Ready, Set, Skip! by Jane O'Connor (Grades K-3, 32pp) All of the kids on the playground can skip! This little girl can leap and twirl, but she can't skip. Her mother shows her a special trick to help her learn how to "skip" with her friends. Filled with beautiful illustrations, rhymes and rhythm, this clever narrative is sure to delight beginning readers.</p>	 <p>Against All Odds: Artist Dean Mitchell's Story by Betty R. James (Grades 4-5, 64pp) The heart-warming true story of renowned artist Dean Mitchell brings to life the hardships of growing up in a rural southern community. Discover the inspiring, stimulating account of a dedicated young boy that followed his dream to become an artist.</p>
 <p>Hattie Big Sky by Kirby Larson (Grades 6-8, 304pp) Sixteen-year-old Hattie is tired of feeling like she doesn't fit in. Hattie decides to take a chance and leave her home in Iowa to search for a new life by making a homestead claim in rural eastern Montana. Hattie struggles to piece together her new life and make new friends. This novel focuses on the value of morality, patriotism, and loyalty.</p>	 <p>The Book Thief by Markus Zusak (Grades 9-12, 552pp) Liesel Meminger is a young girl living with foster-parents in Nazi Germany. Although she cannot read, Liesel begins to steal books from odd places. Zusak creates an amazing story detailing Liesel's journey in ironic, exquisite prose. This brilliantly crafted narrative mesmerizes the reader as it evolves into a tragic work of art.</p>

Helpful Links

- PMRN: <https://pmrn.fcrr.org/>
- JRF K-12 Plan: http://www.justreadflorida.com/Reading_Plans/
- FCRR: <http://www.fcrr.org/>
- JRF Conference Information: <http://www.justreadflorida.com/conference/>
- FBBR: http://www.familiesandeducators.org/programs_families
- Florida Literacy Coaches Association: <http://www.justreadflorida.com/FLCA/>
- LEARN: <http://www.justreadflorida.com/LEARN/>
- Reading Walk Through Tool: <http://www.justreadflorida.com/readingwalkthrough/>



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"Today a reader,
tomorrow a leader."
-Margaret Fuller