

***Florida Department of
Education
State Literacy Plan***



2011-2012

Introduction and Overview

For over a decade, the state of Florida has focused on student reading development as a statewide priority. Comprehensive efforts of Florida stakeholders have supported numerous endeavors with the goal of increasing the reading performance of all students from Pre-K through grade 12. These efforts have ranged from the establishment of the Florida Center for Reading Research for collaboration with the Florida Department of Education to providing a menu of professional development offerings for Reading Endorsement certification to increase high quality teachers at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Since the formation of the Just Read, Florida! Office in 2001, Florida has worked to ensure that classrooms are providing systematic, high quality instruction that focuses on the essential reading components (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary). Just Read, Florida! is directly aligned and consistent with the scientific knowledge base in reading. Florida clearly recognizes that, in order to produce better reading outcomes for children in grades PreK-12, schools must make changes in three areas. First, schools must increase the quality and consistency of instruction in the classroom to reflect the instructional principals derived from scientifically based research in reading. Second, they must improve the use of information obtained from reading assessments so that struggling readers can be identified and provided additional instruction in an appropriate and timely manner. Finally, schools must establish procedures to provide struggling readers with intensive interventions to supplement the instruction they receive in the classroom.

The Department of Education (FDOE) wants to ensure that every classroom in Florida provides systematic, high quality instruction that focuses on the essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. As students learn to read they must be provided high quality instruction that aligns reading with extensive use of written and spoken language. In addition, we are committed to improving the use of three (3) important types of assessment to guide reading instruction (screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring). We believe that Initial Instruction (ii) must be grounded in scientifically-based reading research and aligned with the Sunshine State Standards for reading. Finally, we are committed to the idea that many children will require Immediate Intensive Intervention (iii) to make adequate progress in learning to read. We must assist schools and teachers in the development of expertise in all these areas, and we must have a management plan in place to guide the implementation of these ideas over time.

The state of Florida has established a State Literacy Team to guide implementation of reading instruction. FDOE, in consultation with the State Literacy Team, coordinated the development of this application and will assist in the oversight and evaluation of the state's reading program. This partnership is composed of key education leaders in the state as specified in the Striving Readers grant.

Current Literacy Achievement in Florida

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, Florida established an accountability and technical assistance system to help schools and districts realize achievement targets. Florida's Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) are used to determine the results of the state's efforts to improve literacy achievement.

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)

The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is part of Florida's effort to improve the teaching and learning of higher educational standards. The primary purpose of the FCAT is to assess student achievement of the higher-order cognitive skills represented in the Sunshine State Standards in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. The FCAT is a criterion-referenced test.

All students in Grades 3-10 are assessed using the FCAT in the spring of each year. The achievement standards are the same for all students in all grades. All achievement is based on achieving a Level 3 (proficiency) and above. FDOE data indicates that as students progress through the grades they are unable to continue to demonstrate reading proficiency. For these students, teaching has to become more rigorous and more complex as students progress through the grades. Students that have demonstrated proficiency at a previous grade level, need continued teacher support in increasing their vocabulary knowledge and comprehension of complex texts to ensure deep understanding. The data suggests that Florida needs an emphasis on a differentiated approach for instruction, one that ensures that schools will:

- Continue to focus on early literacy acquisition
- Focus on differentiated teaching across all classrooms to teach students to think as they read
- Emphasize strong accountability to ensure that every student is regularly reading to deepen reading skills
- Teach students to think as they read across all grades and across all content areas
- Teach students to use writing to support text understanding

Literacy Goal #1: Prevent the literacy achievement gap from starting

Without a doubt, it is easier to prevent literacy achievement gaps from starting during the early literacy years than it is to close achievement gaps once they have emerged. Since the late 1990s, the United States has been engaged in a number of early language and literacy initiatives grounded in the findings of scientifically-based reading research that target the prevention of language and literacy achievement gaps,

especially during the PreK-3 years (August & Shanahan, 2006; National Institute for Literacy, 2006; National Reading Panel, 2000; Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). These initiatives have helped to ground the discussion of early literacy in the findings of research that have spanned a forty-year period.

Literacy Goal #2: Close the literacy achievement gap where it exists

Once literacy achievement gaps emerge, they become increasingly difficult to close. Yet, the unfortunate reality is that literacy achievement gaps are apparent even in the readiness for literacy of many kindergarten children. The goal of closing literacy achievement gaps will not be achieved until all students who evidence delays in language and literacy development receive intervention support in addition to daily literacy instruction across the curriculum. A responsive and student-centered approach to intervention instruction recognizes that student success in achieving literacy may well depend upon the extent to which educators recognize the need to intervene and provide the targeted support for individual students that addresses learning difficulties.

During the pre-kindergarten years, it is important that educators intervene early to provide intensive support for children identified with significant language or cognitive delays and to provide targeted support to build skills for success in the kindergarten program including developing vocabulary and background knowledge, phonemic and print awareness, and familiarity with books (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

During the early literacy years, intervention instruction should be provided to students who demonstrate weaknesses in the foundational skills of learning to read. Intervention instruction is provided in addition to effective daily literacy instruction and its intensity varies according to instructional needs based upon formative data. In Florida, the Comprehensive K-12 Reading Plan provides multiple tiers of reading intervention support in addition to the daily core reading instruction. These initiatives rely on formative, as well as outcome data associated with each of the five dimensions of early reading to drive decisions regarding appropriate interventions of sufficient intensity to close the literacy achievement gap before it deepens for K-3 students. Response to Intervention (RtI) in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, also requires not only high quality daily reading instruction for all students, but supplemental classroom intervention with differentiated attention to areas of need for those students who have not acquired foundational reading skills. In addition to this supplemental instruction, RtI also requires intensive individualized or small group intervention instruction specifically targeted to those students who are most at risk for reading difficulties.

During the adolescent literacy years, the urgency to provide intervention support in addition to effective daily literacy instruction integrated with content area instruction intensifies. It is critical that middle and high school students who are reading and writing below grade level participate in intervention instruction to accelerate progress and close literacy gaps especially as related to the use of literacy skills in content areas. Schools

are required to provide middle and high school students who are reading below grade level intervention support in individual or small group settings in addition to daily literacy instruction integrated with content area teaching.

Literacy Goal #3: Challenge all students to proficient and advanced literacy

As compelling as the statistics are regarding the imperative to prevent literacy achievement gaps from starting and close literacy achievement gaps once they emerge, it is also clear that Florida must help many more students achieve proficient and advanced literacy in their use of reading and writing skills. The growing demands of the knowledge-based global economy suggest that many more people must become sophisticated in their use of language and literacy skills in support of content knowledge if they are to be productive and contributing members of the 21st Century Society. Supporting advanced literacy begins early in a PreK-3 curriculum that encourages reading of high quality narrative, expository, and persuasive text integrated with writing and discussion along with projects that showcase advanced literacy skills. Success in achieving advanced literacy during the early years sets many students on pathways toward advanced disciplinary literacy in middle and high school as well as success in post-secondary education. Supporting curricula and instructional approaches for adolescents that encourage the use of reading, writing, and discussion for authentic purposes across disciplines will prepare many more students for success in the college and university curriculum and should result in a decreased need for remedial courses at the college level.

A review of literacy research was conducted by the Department, and the research findings all reiterated 15 key instructional and infrastructural elements that have positive effects on literacy achievement. Based on this research, Florida's Literacy Plan describes the seven pillars of success that Florida believes will guide districts, schools, and VPK providers with reaching the three literacy goals and improving student achievement Birth-Grade 12 including:

- 1. Leadership and Sustainability**

Creating school, district, and state level literacy teams and plans for organizing, implementing, and sustaining an effective approach to literacy

- 2. Quality Standards**

Quality standards combined with standards-based curriculum as the foundation of academic literacy instruction in Florida

- 3. Standards-Based Curriculum**

Curriculum provides strong support and guidance to teachers for effective delivery of quality standards

- 4. Assessment System**

Identifying and using valid and reliable measures to screen, progress monitor, and diagnose literacy needs to target instruction

5. Instruction and Intervention

Implementing research-based strategies, promoting active student engagement, and meeting the literacy needs of all students

6. Teacher Preparation, Professional Development and Resources

Developing learning opportunities, Web resources, and coordinated support services that enhance literacy learning for students and educators

7. Accountability

Requiring all stakeholders to be held accountable for student performance

This plan explains the seven pillars of success, as well as actions and scaffolding necessary to improve literacy at the school level, and provides the systemic approach from the state and district level.

Leadership and Sustainability;

Birth –Three

The Agency for Workforce Innovation, Office of Early Learning is the agency authority for birth-four School Readiness programs in Florida. Currently there are thirty-one (31) local early learning coalitions that regionally manage School Readiness programs within their service delivery areas. The Agency for Workforce Innovation strives to improve guidance and communication with early learning coalitions on program and fiscal requirements, as well as expectations for efficient, high-quality early learning programs.

Leadership for high-quality birth-four early learning programs is extended through several early learning programs in Florida. The School Readiness program offers qualified parents financial assistance for child care through a variety of services. Childcare services include extended-day, extended-year, and school age care to support parents in becoming financially self-sufficient. The School Readiness program takes into account the level of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of a child, involves parents as their child's first teacher, prepares children to become ready for school, and provides parents with information on child development and other topics of interest. Each school readiness program provides a developmental screening for children and referrals to specific health and educational specialists. These services work in cooperation with other programs for young children such as Head Start, Early Head Start, and the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program.

Early Head Start is a federally funded program that provides early, continuous, intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income families. The purpose of the Early Head Start Program is to enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; to support parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and to help parents move toward self-sufficiency. Early Head Start programs serve low-income pregnant women and families with children from birth to the age of three who are at or below 100% of the federal poverty guidelines.

The Even Start program is a federally funded family literacy program designed to break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving educational opportunities. Even Start provides an integrated program of adult literacy or adult basic education, early childhood education, parenting education, and interactive literacy components. It is implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to promote achievement of the National Education Goals and assist low-income children and adults to achieve state performance indicators. Even Start provides a broad range of services to the most-in-need families and their children, birth through eight years of age.

Prekindergarten

There are currently 149,000 four-year-old children enrolled in VPK served in approximately 6,000 private and public providers. Local early learning coalitions regionally manage VPK programs within their service delivery areas. The Department of Education Office of Early Learning works in collaboration with the Agency for Workforce Innovation and the Department of Children and Families to implement Florida's VPK Education Program, with specific responsibilities for the Department of Education as follows:

- Administration of accountability requirements at the state-level
- Provision of professional development including emergent literacy and director credential course(s)
- Approval of VPK director credential requirements
- Adoption/administration of a statewide kindergarten screening
Calculation of kindergarten readiness rate
- Review and approval of curricula for providers on probation for failure to meet readiness rate
- Articulation of the Child Development Associate (CDA) or Florida Child Care Professional Certificate (FCCPC)/Early Childhood Professional Certificate (ECPC) credential toward a post secondary degree.

Leadership for high-quality early learning programs for four-year-olds is extended through several programs in addition to VPK. The Agency for Workforce Innovation Office of Early Learning manages the School Readiness program offering qualified parents financial assistance for child care through a variety of services. The School Readiness program takes into account the level of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of a child, involves parents as their child's first teacher, prepares children to become ready for school, and provides parents with information on child development and other topics of interest

Head Start is both the name of a family of federal programs for low-income children and their families and the name given to the original program for children from three to five years of age. The Head Start family of programs in Florida includes: Early Head Start,

Migrant Head Start, and American Indian Head Start. Head Start is designed to facilitate child development and promote school readiness by enhancing social and cognitive development through the provision of health, educational, nutritional, social and other services to meet the comprehensive needs of families.

All early learning programs in Florida support children in developing the skills needed to become strong readers and students at an early age, to ensure success in school. VPK classrooms offer high-quality programs that include high literacy standards, developmentally appropriate curricula, manageable class sizes, and qualified teachers. The Department of Education, Agency for Workforce Innovation, and the Department of Children and Families collaborate in leading Florida's early learning initiatives.

K-12

Creating a plan for organizing, implementing, and sustaining an effective approach to literacy is necessary for optimal student achievement. Many of the school buildings within a district look the same, but the needs of teachers and students within those buildings are diverse. District level administrators must look at schools on an individual basis and distribute resources based on students' and teachers' level of need. District systems for monitoring reading instruction that differentiates school level services include:

- leadership at the district and school level guides and supports the initiative
- the analysis of data driving all decision-making
- systemic professional development throughout the district targeted at individual teacher needs as determined by analysis of student performance data
- measurable student achievement goals are established and clearly described
- appropriate research-based instructional materials and strategies are used to address individual student needs

A key factor in an individual school's success is the building leadership. The principal sets the tone as the school's instructional leader, reinforcing the positive and convincing the students, parents and teachers that all children can learn and improve academically. In essence, the school principal has the potential to have a great impact on student learning through his or her support of teachers and literacy coaches. In order for principals to become instructional leaders, it is imperative that they understand the literacy challenges of the populations of students whom they serve. The literacy coach is vital in the process of providing job embedded professional development at the school level. The process for monitoring and improving reading instruction at the school level includes:

- the principal serving as an instructional leader
- the analysis of data driving all decision-making
- clearly communicated the role of the literacy coach and supporting job embedded professional development
- establishing a Reading Leadership Team to support literacy school wide
- appropriate research-based instructional materials and strategies are used to address individual student needs

Feedback on Instruction: The Florida Department of Education provides the classroom walk through guide as a tool for school and district administrators to monitor and improve the implementation of best practice. The principal's and district staff's ability to influence literacy instruction has become increasingly important. School and district-level leadership are critical to increasing the consistency and quality of classroom instruction. Research has shown that when principals and other school leaders spend more time in classrooms, observing and conferencing with teachers, teacher performance will improve (Fraser, Downey & Canciamilla, 1999). Administrators must be familiar with what literacy instruction should include and how to assess the quality of classroom literacy instruction quickly and effectively. The walk through guides are designed to meet this function. The guides are designed to scaffold principals' understandings of scientifically based reading instruction, serve as a means for gathering information about the quality of literacy and reading instruction in a school, and as a data collection guide for planning targeted professional development and resource allocation.

Administrative walk throughs serve a variety of purposes. The most obvious purpose is the monitoring of the school or district's instructional programs. However additional functions of walk throughs include:

- building relationships with the faculty and staff
- ongoing monitoring of student learning and staff emotions during change
- maintaining clear school-wide targets
- developing school wide or district wide consistency
- identifying variables within grade levels, departments and schools; identifying the need for additional support for higher levels of improvement

During the walk through, administrators must dig deeper into the school's vision, implementation and instructional practices; it is a time to ask the hard questions, monitor the implementation of recent professional development, and gather information to develop a plan for future professional development. The walk through guides include a specific description of effective classroom practice as well as a rubric to assist administrators in their observations.

Quality Standards:

Birth – Three

Florida's Early Learning and Developmental Standards provide age-appropriate information and reflections about how young children explore, create, and think ages birth through 3. The standards are grounded in Florida's conviction that children's early experiences are directly related to later success in school, in the workforce, and in life. Florida's Early Learning and Developmental Standards are organized into five domains, or areas of development. These domains include the following: Physical Development; Approaches to Learning; Social and Emotional Development; Language and Communication; Cognitive Development and General Knowledge.

The Standards can help adults understand what typical children may be able to do, and what to expect as they develop. While the Standards are not designed to be a screening or an assessment tool, they can serve to help adults understand the typical order of development during the early years. The Standards can guide parents, caregivers, and teachers as they plan intentional and appropriate experiences for young children, based on an understanding of each child's developmental accomplishments and anticipated next steps.

The Standards create a common language for parents, caregivers, and teachers. A hallmark of sound early experiences is that the adults who care about young children work together to ensure a seamless and enriching early experience - one that is based on nurturing relationships and active exploration of a changing world. Having a shared language for communication increases the probability that these adult partnerships will be successful.

Prekindergarten

The Florida VPK Education Standards (2008) were formally adopted by the State Board of Education in 2008 and are currently under revision to provide standards for all of Florida's four-year-olds including children enrolled in VPK programs as well as School Readiness programs. The Florida VPK Education Standards describe skills that four-year-old children should know and be able to do by the end of their VPK year. The standards are designed to guide prekindergarten administrators and teachers in designing and implementing appropriate early learning environments. The standards are comprised of eight (8) domains including Physical Health, Approaches to Learning, Social and Emotional Development, Language and Communication, Emergent Literacy, Mathematics and Scientific Thinking, Social Studies and the Arts, and Motor Development.

Working with young children requires knowledge and competence regarding early childhood growth and development, as well as a recognition of the diversity children present (e.g., racial, ethnic, cultural, economic, language, and social background differences). Although families and communities are most influential, quality early

learning environments are associated with improved cognitive, social, and language skills. With a sound understanding of what children should know and are able to do, teachers are able to individualize curriculum and create the kinds of quality environments that move children toward kindergarten ready to learn.

K-12

Presently, the 2007 Next Generation Sunshine State Standards in Reading/ Language Arts are the standards being taught in the classroom and assessed on the FCAT 2.0 Reading Assessment. Quality standards combined with standards-based curriculum are the foundation of academic literacy instruction in Florida.

From July 2009 through March 2010, the Florida Department of Education, along with other selected state departments of education, provided feedback and recommendations to this Common Core Standards writing committee which was convened jointly by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association, in partnership with Act, Inc. and other educational organizations.

The Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts, which includes reading standards, was adopted by the Florida State Board of Education on July 27, 2010.

The Florida Department of Education convened a state committee to ensure that all expectations for Florida students had been addressed in the Florida Common Core State Standards. It was determined that Florida will implement the Common Core State Standards as written. The 2012-2013 school year is the projected timeline for initial implementation of the Common Core State Standards.

Standards Based Curriculum:

Birth – Three

In order to participate in the School Readiness Program, early learning child care providers are required by statute to select a developmentally appropriate curriculum designed to enhance the age-appropriate progress of children in attaining the performance standards adopted by the Agency for Workforce Innovation. Child care providers must also choose a character development program to develop basic values.

The Agency for Workforce Innovation's Office of Early Learning is developing a standardized process for reviewing and approving School Readiness curricula, and creating an initial statewide list of curricula aligned with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards in collaboration with coalitions and other stakeholders. The anticipated date of completion for the curriculum review process is Spring 2011. The selected curricula will include:

- Alignment to the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards-Ages Birth to Five Years Old which may be accessed at www.flbt5.com.
- Developmentally appropriate approaches that address various learning styles
- A detailed scope and sequence

School Readiness providers will have the option of choosing a curriculum from the approved statewide list, or if they have a curriculum they wish to use that has not yet been evaluated, it may be submitted for evaluation at the upcoming annual review.

Prekindergarten

Each VPK provider's curriculum must be developmentally appropriate, designed to prepare a student for early literacy, enhance the age-appropriate progress of students in attaining the state-adopted performance standards, and prepare students to be ready for kindergarten based on the statewide kindergarten screening (Section 1002.67(2)(b), Florida Statutes). VPK providers may select or design the curriculum for their classrooms, unless on probation for continuing failure to meet kindergarten readiness rates.

Legislation implementing the VPK Education Program requires the Department of Education to review and approve curricula for use by private providers and public schools that have been placed on probation as a result of their kindergarten readiness rates falling below the minimum rate adopted by the State Board of Education. The Department must maintain a list of such curricula.

Florida ensures that qualified teachers are providing instruction requiring that each classroom have credentialed teachers. Currently all VPK teachers must hold a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) for the 540 hour school year program. For the 300 hour summer program, a bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate is the minimum requirement.

K-12

Standards and curriculum serve as the foundation of academic literacy instruction. Chapter 1006 of Florida Statutes requires adoption of instructional materials for specific classes. Instructional materials address the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards, stated intended outcomes, and course objectives for the specific classes. The Just Read, Florida! Office is responsible for developing the instructional materials specifications for the reading adoption and providing training to committees reviewing and recommending programs for adoption. To ensure current materials are based on the latest research for schools, every six years there is an instructional materials adoption for reading. The next adoption cycle for reading will include reading specifications aligned to the Common Core State Standards and reading instructional materials will be adopted in 2013.

Assessment System:

Birth – Three

Assessment should be an integral part of a coherent system of early childhood care and education that includes a range of services and resources. Assessments may be used as screening tools, to monitor children’s progress, to inform instruction, and to provide information for program evaluation or accountability, among other purposes.

For Florida’s children ages birth-three, curriculum embedded assessments are utilized in order to monitor children’s progress. Early learning coalitions are required to report the plan for providing age appropriate assessments in their annual School Readiness Provider Agreement with the Agency for Workforce Innovation.

Prekindergarten

For Florida’s four-year-olds, curriculum embedded assessments are used to assist in monitoring children’s progress to guide instruction. In addition, the Department of Education awarded a grant in 2008 to the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR), Florida State University for the purpose of creating the Florida VPK Assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to provide teachers with valid and reliable feedback regarding children’s progress in attaining the skills in the VPK Education Standards, so that teachers may use this information to inform instructional decisions in the VPK classroom.

The Florida VPK Assessment includes progress monitoring measures in the areas of Print Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, Mathematics, and Oral Language/Vocabulary that are aligned with the VPK Education Standards and is optional for use by VPK teachers. The assessment is designed to:

- reflect current research on emergent literacy and numeracy
- align with the VPK Education Standards
- predict student performance on the Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading for Kindergarten and provide teachers with valid and reliable feedback regarding children’s progress

The Department of Education, Office of Early Learning has developed the Florida VPK Assessment Online Reporting System to provide teachers with a user friendly online tool to track children’s progress in attaining the skills in the VPK Education Standards, so that teachers may use this information to guide instructional decisions in the VPK classroom.

K-12

A comprehensive assessment system is a critical element of an effective plan for improving literacy instruction in elementary, middle, and high school. Key to meeting

this goal is accurate, timely assessment that allows the teacher to differentiate instruction according to individual students' needs. A comprehensive assessment system includes screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic, and an outcome measure.

The Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) was developed by the Florida Center for Reading Research in collaboration with Just Read, Florida! This comprehensive assessment system provides teachers screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring information that is essential to guiding instruction. Just Read, Florida! manages the administration of FAIR, develops and delivers professional development for the administration of FAIR and instructional implications, and provides technical assistance to districts and schools across the state.

The Department of Education, Just Read, Florida! Office, in conjunction with the Florida Center for Reading Research provides the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN) to support teachers with a user friendly tool to track student progress and make instructional decisions to meet student needs.

FAIR, in conjunction with the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN), has the capacity to:

- Create individual, classroom, school, district, and state level reports to track progress
- Guide teachers with making instructional decisions based on individual student needs
- Link the assessment data to instructional strategies and resources that are aligned with the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards
- Predict end of year performance on standardized assessments
- Provide a letter for parents about their child's performance on each assessment measure

Florida's K-12 statewide assessment program consisted of two primary outcome measures, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® (FCAT) and the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). More information about both assessments is provided below:

- FCAT: The Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® is administered to students in grades 3 - 11, approximately 200,000 students per grade level. The FCAT measures the Sunshine State Standards in reading and mathematics (grades 3-10), science (grades 5, 8, & 11), and writing (grades 4, 8, & 10)
- NAEP: The National Assessment of Educational Progress is a periodic national assessment of America's students in mathematics, reading, science, writing, the arts, civics, economics, geography, and U.S. history

In the 2010-2011 school year, Florida's statewide assessment programs will begin transitioning to assessing student understanding of the Next Generation Sunshine State

Standards through the implementation of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® 2.0 (FCAT 2.0).

Instruction and Intervention:

Birth – Three

Each education and care program for children from birth through 3 years of age must provide activities to foster brain development in infants and toddlers. A program must provide an environment that helps children attain the performance standards adopted by the Agency for Workforce Innovation Office of Early Learning and must be rich in language and music and filled with objects of various colors, shapes, textures, and sizes to stimulate visual, tactile, auditory, and linguistic senses in the children and must include classical music, reading to children and other age-appropriate emergent literacy activities.

Prekindergarten

VPK instruction must be designed to prepare a student for early literacy, enhance the age-appropriate progress of students in attaining the performance standards adopted by the Department of Education and prepare students to be ready for success in kindergarten.

Options are provided for VPK attendance in a private or public school-year program or summer program:

- school-year prekindergarten program comprised of at least 540 instructional hours
- summer prekindergarten program comprised of at least 300 instructional hours

Instructional strategies and environmental considerations are included within the VPK Education Standards which guide teachers in understanding how the standards might be applied to curriculum and classroom planning and activities. In addition, environmental considerations are included within the standards including suggestions regarding room arrangement and classroom materials and equipment to foster effective instruction.

K-12

Florida's Formula for Success: This formula includes the six essential components of reading: oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; the four types of assessments: screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic and outcome measure; initial instruction (ii) based on scientifically based reading research that is explicit, systematic, scaffolded, differentiated and print rich; and immediate intensive interventions (iii) provided for students based on the area(s) of need through flexible grouping, targeted and intensified instruction, extended time, and more frequent progress monitoring.

At the elementary level, it is the philosophy of the Florida Department of Education to use scientifically-based reading research (SBRR), including that found in the *National Reading Panel Report* (2001) and *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (1998). Research shows that children benefit from reading instruction that includes explicit and systematic instruction in skills and strategies, and opportunities to apply those skills and strategies in text.

Elementary schools in Florida offer daily classroom instruction in reading in a dedicated, uninterrupted block of time of at least 90 minutes duration. Explicit and systematic strategy instruction of the essential components of reading is teacher-led through direct explanation, modeling, guided practice and application.

For initial instruction (ii), a comprehensive reading program is the major tool for instruction. It guides teachers with delivery of explicit and systematic instruction of the essential components of reading, and connects meaningfully to supplemental materials. In-class grouping strategies are in use, including small group instruction as appropriate to meet student needs. Student placement in groups is flexible, with placement and movement based on continuous assessment; different curricula may be in use to instruct different groups. There is active student engagement in a variety of reading-based activities, which connect to the essential components of reading and to overall, clearly articulated academic goals. Effective classroom management and high levels of time on task should be evident.

Teaching All Students to Read: Practices from Reading First Schools with Strong Intervention Outcomes (<http://www.fcrr.org/interventions/Interventions.shtml>) suggests that schools effective with serving students with reading difficulties increase the intensity of instruction by:

- increasing instructional *time*
- decreasing *number* of children in instructional group
- improving *quality* of instruction
- providing many more opportunities for re-teaching, review, and supervised practice
- focusing carefully on the most essential learning needs of the students
- providing instruction that is both explicit and systematic

Based on the findings above, immediate intensive intervention is required to be provided to students identified with a reading difficulty in addition to or an extension of the 90 minute reading block. Students identified as having reading difficulties require extended reading time, more frequent progress monitoring, smaller group size, and more targeted instruction to meet their specific needs. This daily extra time provided in a smaller group setting allows for a strong focus on the area(s) of difficulty as identified

through screening, progress monitoring and informal assessments to intensify instruction to accelerate progress.

At the secondary level, data from recent national assessments indicate that many middle and high school students are failing to comprehend text at a proficient level. Even high school students with average reading ability are unprepared for the literacy demands of the workplace and postsecondary settings. Many of these students lack the skills necessary to read new or unusual words or to figure out their meanings. Most fail to understand much of what they read. Older students who are tackling complex informational text face serious and growing challenges. Even in our modern, multimedia world, most content-area knowledge (science, social studies, history) after third grade is presented through print-based resources (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Perfetti, Landi, & Oakhill, 2005). The ultimate goal of reading is understanding and learning from print; thus, reading instruction must support students in reaching this goal. In addition, creating a classroom environment that supports student interest and motivation to engage in school-based reading tasks is essential to student success.

In the last decade, much attention has been given to preventing early reading difficulties (e.g., National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000), while the reading difficulties experienced by older students have been less of a priority (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004). This is starting to change as adolescent reading instruction becomes an increasingly “hot topic” in education (see Cassidy & Cassidy, 2007). Already, a body of research based practices is emerging and program developers are focusing more on the instructional needs of older students. Research-based materials and professional development opportunities are increasingly available to teachers and other instructional personnel working with struggling readers in secondary schools and classrooms. Although preliminary and not widely disseminated, these efforts represent a promising start.

To improve adolescent literacy, *Doing What Works* recommends the following practices:

- **Vocabulary Instruction**
Provide explicit vocabulary instruction and strategies to help students become independent vocabulary learners.
- **Comprehension Strategies**
Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction.
- **Engaging Text Discussion**
Provide opportunities for extended text discussion and student engagement. One important way to improve students' reading comprehension is to engage them in high-quality text discussions in pairs or groups. Discussions in English and content area classes that encourage students to unpack the information in the text, make inferences, or consider different points of view are particularly effective in promoting their understanding of complex material.
- **Intensive Intervention**
Provide intensive intervention for students having reading difficulties and monitor all students' reading progress.

The Institute of Education Sciences Practice Guide, *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices* (2008), suggests that writing activities are essential learning experiences and should be part of every teacher's routine instructional practice. Research shows that combined instruction in reading and writing leads to improvements in content retention and creation of meaning.

In Florida, secondary students identified with a substantial deficiency in reading based upon student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Text (FCAT) are required to receive reading intervention services. A substantial deficiency in reading is defined by scoring Level 1 or Level 2 on the FCAT in Reading. Students who have difficulty with decoding or reading text efficiently must be served in an intensive reading course with extended time. Students without decoding or text reading efficiency issues may be served in an intensive reading course or a content area course with a teacher who has completed Content Area Reading Professional Development (CAR-PD) or Next Generation Content Area Reading Professional Development (NGCAR-PD.)

Florida is currently expanding efforts to provide professional development to both content area and reading intervention teachers. This series is based on the practices presented through the US Department of Education's *Doing What Works Adolescent Literacy* strand detailed earlier in this document. The goal is to ensure that all students receive reading support in every class every day.

Response to Intervention/Instruction (RtI)

Since 2004, Florida has engaged in continuous efforts to make sense of how systematic problem-solving and the RtI framework integrate the various elements of Florida's system of education. Florida's students have experienced significant growth in reading as a result of efforts using the key components of RtI through the Reading First Grant, as evidenced by a decrease in special education placement rates of approximately 40 percent (Torgesen, 2007). These successes give educators a common ground to build upon.

The RtI model is a multi-tiered approach to providing high quality instruction and intervention matched to student needs, using learning rate over time and level of performance to inform instructional decisions. RtI involves the systematic use of assessment data to most efficiently allocate resources in order to improve learning for all students.

Teacher Preparation, Professional Development & Resources:

Birth-Three

Statewide Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards training is provided by the Agency for Workforce Innovation for child care teachers and directors. These trainings are typically facilitated by coalition and contracted service provider staff members. Participants may register for professional development opportunities through the early learning coalition.

Additionally, the Agency for Workforce Innovation provides four professional networks to address the ages of the children we serve. The networks are the Infant & Toddler Network, Preschool Services Network, School Age Network, and the Inclusion Network. Agency for Workforce Innovation staff coordinate the networks at the coalition level and provide monthly training and technical assistance on a variety of topics including appropriate guidance and discipline, curriculum, and other topics requested by coalition staff.

Prekindergarten

Since the passage of the legislation to implement Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program, the Department of Education (DOE) has created high quality professional development courses and materials for VPK instructors that are aligned with the VPK Education Standards. Both online and instructor-led opportunities provided for teachers and center directors include:

- **Florida Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Standards**
This training provides an overview of the VPK Standards (guidelines that describe skills four-year-old children should know and be able to do by the end of the VPK year) and examples of developmentally appropriate instructional techniques for four-year-old children. The overview addresses specific changes from the 2005 Standards through video clips, a PowerPoint presentation, and hands-on activities to illustrate the VPK Standards and changes.
- **Emergent Literacy in the VPK Classroom**
This training is appropriate for teachers, assistants, and directors, and it is open to anyone, free of charge. An overview of emergent reading, emergent writing, oral language and communication, and environments is provided through hands-on activities to assist in understanding the concepts. Participants also receive creative activities to be used in the classroom.
- **What Parents Should Know - It's Okay to Play in VPK! Parent Train-the-Trainer Workshop**
This training is appropriate and strongly recommended for **all** Directors who operate a VPK program. Participants are provided with helpful training management tips on how to properly prepare for the training and an overview on how to properly present the VPK Standards to parents/guardians of four-year-old children participating in the VPK program.
- **What Parents Should Know - It's Okay to Play in VPK! Parent Workshop**
This workshop provides parents with an awareness of realistic and appropriate expectations for four-year-old children that will assist families in understanding the VPK Education Standards. Participants are provided information and hands-on activities regarding the VPK Standards. Examples of developmentally appropriate activities that support children's development at home, in the community, and in the classroom are also included.

- **Integrating the VPK Standards: Phonological Awareness**

This training is appropriate for teachers, assistants, and directors, and it is open to anyone, free of charge. Participants have an opportunity to create a developmentally appropriate activity, related to a benchmark in phonological awareness, to be implemented in the classroom. Emphasis is on planning, implementation, teacher self-reflection, and documentation of the activity.

Online Training Opportunities

Training opportunities for directors, teachers, assistants and parents offered online by the Florida Department of Education, Office of Early Learning and the Florida Department of Children and Families include:

- **Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors**

This course is recommended for all VPK instructors, directors, and other interested parties. It is required for all VPK instructors with a Child Development Associate (CDA) or CDA Equivalency (CDAE), consistent with section 1002.55, (3)(c)2, Florida Statutes. The goal of the five-hour Emergent Literacy Course for VPK Instructors is to provide participants with background information on emergent literacy and demonstrate instructional practices that can be used in VPK classrooms.

- **English Language Learners in the VPK Classroom**

This course is for VPK teachers, directors, and staff to use as they develop culturally sensitive learning environments for children and build relationships with families who are English language learners. Although this course is designed with English language learners in mind, there are numerous best practices that can be used with all young children.

- **VPK Director Credential**

All directors of private VPK programs are **required** to complete this course as one of the components of the DOE VPK Director Credential. The importance of maintaining a balance between management and leadership in a VPK setting and how to establish a high quality VPK education program by creating and sustaining an effective learning environment is emphasized. Participants gain knowledge of effective research-based prekindergarten practices, understanding the importance of integrating the Florida VPK Education Standards into instructional practices and exploring how an ongoing assessment directs instructional practices.

- **Language and Vocabulary in the VPK Classroom**

The Language and Vocabulary in the VPK Classroom course is available for all VPK teachers, assistants and directors. The Language and Vocabulary folder provides instructional strategies for increasing language and vocabulary with young children. These strategies include Book Embedded Vocabulary Instruction, Dialogic Reading, Think, Show, Tell, Talk and Language Scaffolding with young children. There are videos of VPK teachers implementing the strategies with children as well as; activities, and resources to support teachers

as they begin to use the language and vocabulary strategies in their own classrooms.

VPK instructors and administrators may enroll in professional development opportunities through the Department of Children and Families Online Childcare Training website. Inservice house and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available and awarded to participants who successfully complete the professional development.

Online professional development resources include:

- **VPK Teacher Toolkit: Language and Vocabulary Folder:** This online resource is appropriate for all VPK teachers/instructors, assistants and directors. The Language and Vocabulary folder provides instructional strategies for increasing language and vocabulary with young children. These strategies include Book Embedded Vocabulary Instruction, Dialogic Reading, Think, Show, Tell, Talk and Language Scaffolding with young children. There are videos of VPK teachers implementing the strategies with children, in addition to, activities, and resources to support teachers as they begin to use the language and vocabulary strategies in their own classrooms.
- **Sample lesson plans**
- **Bright Beginnings:** a site providing teachers and parents with resources to help children in VPK-third grade succeed in reading, language, vocabulary, and math. Research shows clearly that children are more likely to succeed in learning when their families actively support them. Recognizing parents as their child's first teacher the Florida Department of Education, Office of Early Learning is pleased to provide parents with the resources to help children in Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) through third grade, succeed in reading and mathematics.

K-12

For substantial change to occur, effective professional development is essential. Effective professional development is described as learning opportunities that result in improvements in teachers' and school leaders' knowledge and practices, and, most importantly, in improved student achievement.

Research highlights the importance of both formal professional development and other opportunities for professional learning – such as common planning time, shared opportunities to examine student work, and tools for self-reflection – that may occur outside the bounds of formal professional development (Wei, et al., 2009). Easton (2008) asserts that the most powerful learning opportunities are active learning opportunities embedded in teachers' work, which begins with teachers' assessments of what their students need and, subsequently, what teachers identify as areas for their own learning. Professional development, therefore, is a broad term that includes formal professional development and job-embedded activities.

National Staff Development Council's (NSDC) Standards for Staff Development are based on research findings confirming that well-designed professional development can influence teacher practice and student performance. It is important to consider context (the "learning environment"), process (the "how"), and content (the "what") dimensions for designing professional development that improves student learning.

Coordinating and providing professional development requires strong leadership. School leaders who are dedicated to the goal of improving literacy advocate for resources from the district, the state, and the local business community and ensure that regularly recurring district, state, and federal funds are optimized to support literacy efforts. According to Irvin, et al. (2007), important literacy support resources include:

- Time for literacy learning, assessment, planning, and instruction
- Use of support personnel, such as literacy coaches, library media specialists, speech-language pathologists, district appraisal staff, and paraprofessionals to work with teachers and students
- Professional development for all teachers in literacy instruction
- Instructional materials and technologies to support differentiated literacy instruction; and
- Adequate funding to support ongoing literacy initiatives

Literacy coaches have been an integral part of the success of the statewide reading initiatives during the last seven years. The literacy coach serves as a stable resource for job-embedded professional development throughout a school to generate improvement in reading and literacy instruction and student learning. The role of the reading coach has been defined in Rule 6A-6.053, FAC. District leadership allocates resources to hire literacy coaches for the schools determined to have the greatest need based on:

- student performance data
- experience and expertise of the administration and faculty in reading assessment, instruction, and intervention
- receptiveness of administration and faculty to the coaching model

All schools utilizing literacy coaches implement the Just Read, Florida! literacy coach model delineated below:

Coaches support and provide initial and ongoing professional development to teachers in:

- each of the major reading components, as needed, based on an analysis of student performance data
- administration and analysis of instructional assessments
- providing differentiated instruction and intensive intervention based on assessments

Coaches:

- model effective instructional strategies for teachers
- co-teach in classrooms facilitate study groups
- train teachers in data analysis and using data to differentiate instruction
- coach and mentor colleagues
- provide daily support to classroom teachers
- work with teachers to ensure that research-based reading programs and strategies are implemented and adjusted to meet the needs of all students
- help to increase instructional density to meet the needs of all students.
- help lead and support reading leadership teams at their school(s)
- continue to increase their knowledge base in best practices in reading instruction, intervention, and instructional reading strategies
- report their time bi-weekly using the coach's log on the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN)

Literacy coaches work with students in whole and small group instruction in the context of modeling, co-teaching, and coaching in other teachers' classrooms. This should be the primary function of the coach and occur as frequently as possible, given the relative impact on teacher knowledge and practice compared to other roles and duties of the coach.

The literacy coach is responsible for working with all teachers (including ESE, content area, and elective areas) in the school they serve; however, they must prioritize their time to those teachers, activities, and roles that will have the greatest impact on student learning, namely coaching and mentoring in classrooms.

To meet state qualifications for a coach position in Florida, coach candidates must have experience as a classroom teacher. Coaches are expected to exhibit knowledge of scientifically based reading research, special expertise in quality Reading instruction, and ability to infuse reading strategies into content area instruction, and data management skills. They should have a strong knowledge base in working with adult learners. Coaches should be excellent communicators with outstanding presentation, interpersonal, and time management skills. The coach must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and advanced coursework in reading is highly recommended. It is required that the coach become Reading endorsed or K-12 certified in the area of reading or be working toward Reading Endorsement or K-12 Reading certification at the pace of 6 semester hours or 120 inservice points per year. Districts may add to these basic qualifications.

Lesson study is a form of professional development used in Florida to assist schools in developing capacity. The goal of lesson study is the continuous improvement of teaching so that students will learn more. Its primary focus is on how students think and learn. Groups of teachers come together to formulate lessons that are taught,

observed, discussed and refined. The complete lesson study cycle includes the following:

- examining data, selecting a focus
- planning the study lesson
- rehearsing the research lesson
- public teaching of the lesson
- focused observation of the lesson based on the group's goals
- evidence-based debriefing
- revision based on the group's reflection
- teaching of a revised lesson
- evidence-based debriefing

A team may call upon an expert in the field to help think through the content. Along with this, great attention is given to:

- what you want students to know at the end of the lesson
- how to engage or motivate students
- the question to be posed and how best to word it to make students think
- how students are likely to think and how to respond to anticipated errors
- how to arrange the work produced so it tells the story of the lesson, and
- how to end the lesson to help students make sense of it

Lesson study is a powerful and intense professional development approach. It is job embedded and brings together job-alike teams of three to seven teachers who teach the same grade level, course or subject, work together. This team chooses a learning problem and works jointly for a solution. Supports available for schools include published protocols that guide, but do not prescribe, the teacher team's improvement efforts and facilitators to guide the teacher teams as needed.

State level professional development is provided for many different audiences, with the same content focus: literacy. Currently the state provides professional development in the area of literacy through the following professional development opportunities:

- **District Literacy Coach Guidance Workshop**
The state of Florida has embraced the model of placing reading coaches in schools to provide job embedded professional development for nearly a decade. Much has been learned about how best to use coaches to impact student achievement. The purpose of this workshop is to provide school districts in Florida with guidance regarding the role of the reading coach, recruiting and hiring high quality reading coaches, the professional development from which coaches benefit, and appropriate monitoring and evaluation of coach services.

This workshop also includes templates that can be modified to guide districts and schools in the monitoring and evaluation of reading coaches.

- **Literacy Coach Professional Development**

This professional development targets grades K-12 reading coaches and provides training in the use of data, the Response to Intervention process, and incorporating Lesson Study in the role of the coach. This practical training provides coaches with the tools they need to work more effectively with administrators and teachers in their schools to improve teacher practice and student achievement.

- **K-5 Foundations of Reading Research**

This professional development is designed for K-5 teachers and reading coaches. The goal is to increase the quality and consistency of instruction in K-5 classrooms to reflect the instructional principles derived from scientifically based research in reading. The objectives include:

- Enhance knowledge base of the five areas of reading including phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension
- Enhance knowledge base of differentiated instruction and strategies for providing differentiated instruction according to student needs
- Understand types of assessments and analyze progress monitoring data to guide effective instruction
- Expand knowledge of research-based instructional strategies for effective literacy instruction including immediate intensive intervention to meet student needs

- **Program Specific Professional Development (PSPD)**

The K-5 PSPD is designed for teachers and reading coaches to promote teaching that effectively combines curriculum fidelity and needs-based instruction. Participants will leave with an understanding of the overall design, content and instructional procedures of the core reading program in use in order to promote classroom teaching that effectively combines curriculum fidelity and needs-based instruction. The objectives of the PSPD are to:

- Provide view of overall design of curriculum
- Foster more effective use of reading program
- Link to additional resources from the Florida Center for Reading Research
- Link program to Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR)
- Promote fidelity of instruction
- Provide supports for needs-based instruction

- **K-5 Reading Intervention**

This professional development is designed for grades K-5 teachers and reading coaches. This professional development focuses on four main topics: a brief overview of what research tells us about interventions, the use of data in planning interventions, the “how” of an intervention lesson, and the “what” of an

intervention lesson. It provides teachers with practical, hands-on knowledge that they can take back to their classes for immediate implementation. The use of data and planning interventions components of the training are driven by the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR).

- **6-12 Reading Intervention**

This professional development is designed for reading intervention teachers, content area teachers who provide reading intervention, and reading coaches who are K-12 reading certified, reading endorsed, or who have completed CAR-PD. The professional development is practical and hands-on, providing training on the use of data to plan intervention driven by the Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR), instructional decision-making, and differentiated instruction.

- **9-12 Reading/Literacy Coaches and Course Specific Teachers Professional Development**

The targeted audience for this academy includes grades 9-12 reading coaches who will be paired with teachers of specific content courses. Course specific dialogue for integrating literacy strategies applicable to the course is presented and shared by master teachers, content specialists, coaches and participating teachers. Teachers and coaches plan lessons and units using these strategies, and others, through the coaching process.

- **Reading Endorsement**

The Reading Endorsement established in State Board Rule 6A-4.0163 consists of six competencies which include Competency 1: Foundations in Language & Cognition, Competency 2: Foundations of Research-Based Practices, Competency 3: Foundations of Assessment, Competency 4: Foundation of Differentiation, Competency 5: Application of Differentiated Instruction, and Competency 6: Demonstration of Accomplishment. The endorsement or K-12 Certification in Reading is required for secondary teachers who teach reading and for K-12 reading coaches. It may be earned through either district in-service points/hours or college credit. The options for obtaining the Reading Endorsement are described in each district's Add-On Endorsement Plan. This plan is submitted to the Florida Department of Education for approval every five years. In-service points or college credit may be earned either via face-to-face courses or on-line.

- **Content Area Reading-Professional Development (CAR-PD)**

Content Area Reading-Professional Development (CAR-PD) is a professional development package designed to provide information that grades 6-12 content area teachers need to become proficient in applying scientifically based reading strategies through their content areas. CAR-PD is designed to prepare content area teachers to effectively deliver reading intervention to students who are fluent readers in English and who score at Level 2 in reading on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Districts may elect whether to offer CAR-PD as an option within a school or school district.

- **Career and Technical Education Reading (CATER)**

CATER is a pilot reading intervention program for middle and high school career and technical educators to provide reading intervention in their courses using their course content for Level 1 and Level 2 students who do not have decoding and text reading efficiency difficulties. It is a partnership between Just Read, Florida!, the Division of Career and Adult Education, the Florida Center for Reading Research, and Florida School Districts. It is based on Reading Instruction through Strategy Enhancement, which assists reading teachers in providing intervention through sets of content materials. Teachers involved in CATER must have completed CAR-PD (or NGCAR-PD) and complete the reading endorsement, with initial training over the summer prior to implementation and the rest of the endorsement earned during implementation.

Professional development starting in 2011:

- **Next Generation Content Area Reading Professional Development (NGCAR-PD)**

NGCAR-PD is designed to prepare content area teachers to effectively deliver reading instruction. NGCAR-PD focuses on academic vocabulary knowledge and comprehension through the use of a Comprehension Instructional Sequence. The Comprehension Instructional Sequence was developed in an effort to increase student access to texts requiring implementation of a variety of quality text interactions between the teacher and students regarding the ideas, vocabulary, concepts, conclusions, and opinions garnered within and across texts. The ultimate goal is to empower students to think critically about text and walk away with a deep understanding. Students need a set of interactive approaches that facilitate conceptual learning from content area texts. Four strategic approaches facilitate student content area text reading:

- Eyes on text
- Daily text discussions:
 - Text-reading discussion
 - Extended text discussion
- Question generation strategies
- Extended writing

A Comprehension Instructional Sequence Flowchart is provided in *Appendix B*. Content area teachers who complete NGCAR-PD may provide instruction to students who score at Level 2 on FCAT Reading, and who do not have decoding and text reading efficiency difficulties.

- **Comprehension Instructional Sequence Professional Development**

The Comprehension Instructional Sequence was developed in an effort to increase student access to texts requiring implementation of a variety of quality text interactions between the teacher and students regarding the ideas, vocabulary, concepts, conclusions, and opinions garnered within and across texts. The ultimate goal is to empower students to think critically about text and

walk away with a deep understanding. Students need a set of interactive approaches that facilitate conceptual learning from all texts. Four strategic approaches facilitate student text reading:

- Eyes on text
 - Daily text discussions:
 - Text-reading discussion
 - Extended text discussion
 - Question generation strategies
 - Extended writing
-
- **Text Complexity Professional Development**

High school textbooks have declined in complexity in all subject areas over several decades; however, the complexity of college and career texts has remained steady or increased. Furthermore, students in college are expected to read complex texts with substantially greater independence than are students in typical K–12 programs. College students are typically held more accountable for what they read on their own as well. These discrepancies may help explain why some high school students graduate unprepared to face college and career texts and task demands. Being able to read complex text independently and proficiently is essential for high achievement in college and the workplace and important in numerous life tasks. The ultimate goal of the Text Complexity professional development is to familiarize educators with the Common Core State Standards as it relates to text complexity, and provide an opportunity to explore text used in classrooms to determine the text complexity levels to ensure students are being provided the opportunity to regularly read complex text and to empower students to think critically about that text and walk away with a deep understanding.

Online professional development resources include:

- **FAIR Student Center Activities Search**

Just Read, Florida! in collaboration with the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) created student center activities for use in kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms. These materials are accessible through the FAIR Student Center Activities Search Tool which can be found at www.fcrr.org or accessible via the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN). In 2010, grades 6-12 grade activities and videos were added to provide support for secondary teachers.
- **Literacy Essentials and Reading Network (LEaRN)**

LEaRN is a website for principals, reading coaches, and classroom teachers to access scientifically based reading instruction being implemented in a classroom through video clippings. Educators will also have the opportunity to view actual live commentary by reading experts. LEaRN focuses on the practice of teaching reading, on information and visible teaching examples that are directly applicable to classroom activities. The objective of LEaRN is to provide users with a

comprehensive, applied tool that provides scientifically research-based information and best practices on reading instruction.

- **The Progress Monitoring & Reporting Network (PMRN)** is Florida's Web-based data management system for the reporting of student progress in reading. The PMRN produces data reports at the class, school, district, and state levels to support all stakeholders with data-based decision making.

Accountability:

Birth – Three

Early learning coalitions are required to submit a School Readiness Provider Agreement for approval by the Agency for Workforce Innovation Office of Early Learning annually. Coalitions must submit documentation on how the coalition will assess programs to meet approved plan goals. The Agency for Workforce Innovation Office of Early Learning provides technical assistance as needed to support coalitions as they in turn support their providers.

Prekindergarten

Florida statute requires that a statewide kindergarten screening be administered within the first 30 days of kindergarten in all public schools. Children who participated in VPK and attend kindergarten in a non-public school are also provided opportunities to participate in the screening.

The purpose of the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) is to gather information on a child's overall development and to specifically address the readiness of each student for kindergarten based on the VPK Education Standards. The FLKRS is also used to calculate the VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate, which measures how well a VPK provider prepares four-year-olds to be ready for kindergarten based upon Florida's VPK Education Standards.

VPK Provider Kindergarten Readiness Rate is based on the scores of children who attended and completed VPK and who are screened upon entry into kindergarten. The screening is administered by the district public schools for all public school kindergarten students.

VPK providers not meeting the Kindergarten Readiness Rate are required to do the following:

- Year 1 - submit an improvement plan for approval by the coalition or school district and implement the plan
- Year 2 - use a DOE-approved curriculum, along with other corrective actions, as conditions of probation

- Year 3 - remain on probation and continue to use DOE-approved curriculum through second year
- Year 4 - be removed from the VPK program after two consecutive years on probation unless granted a good cause exemption based on criteria established in state board rule for providers serving at least twice the state average of English language learners or students with disabilities.

K-12

Districts and schools should be held accountable for student performance. Standards-based accountability focuses on administration and practice directly on teaching and learning through the following interconnected processes: defining goals, allocating authority, providing incentives, building capacity, measuring progress, reporting results and enforcing consequences.

School districts are held accountable for effective literacy instruction through the K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan. Florida Legislature ensures that an allocation for reading is provided through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) to support reading instruction K-12. This action makes reading a permanent priority and will ensure that reading is funded annually as a part of the public school funding formula. The authority for this provision was established in 2006 within Section 1011.62, Florida Statutes.

In order for districts to receive this reading funding, they are required to write a K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan on a yearly basis. The plan must 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 students reading below grade level

The Department provides a guidance document to support each district with the completion of the K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan pursuant to Section 1011.62, Florida Statutes and State Board Rule 6A-6.053, Florida Administrative Code (FAC).

The on-line K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan accurately depicts and details the role of administration (both district and school level), professional development, assessment, curriculum, and instruction in the improvement of student

learning. The plan reflects all schools and grade levels, including charter schools, alternative schools, and juvenile justice facilities within each district.

The guidelines provided for districts, schools, principals, and teachers for the K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan are aligned with the most important goals of the Response to Intervention (RtI) approach. Key elements of RtI involve: 1) providing strong classroom instruction for all students; 2) administering high quality assessments to monitor progress and identify students in need of more powerful instruction; and, 3) designing and delivering interventions that are responsive to student needs. Through the implementation of the K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan, Florida schools are on their way toward quality implementation of RtI for reading.

All District K-12 Reading Plans are reviewed on-line by Just Read, Florida! staff and districts receive feedback on their plans through an on-line comment process, as well as an “approved” or “revise” status. Funds are not released until the plan is fully approved. The timeline for the review process is provided on page 48 in this document.

District, School, and Classroom Self Reflection Tools were developed and provided to districts for evaluation of the implementation of the K-12 Comprehensive Research-Based Reading Plan at the district, school, and classroom levels. The purpose of the tools is to promote reflection regarding current strengths and challenges in the implementation of the plan, spark conversations among staff, and facilitate identification of areas for improvement year to year.

In addition, schools identified as low performing are held accountable for delivery of effective literacy instruction and increased student achievement through Differentiated Accountability. Florida's Differentiated Accountability (DA) Plan streamlines the federal and state accountability systems and directs increasing school wide interventions and school and district accountability based on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and school grade. This program allows the Department to operate a new tiered approach to working directly with schools to increase student achievement. The support and assistance provided to each school is individualized depending on the needs of that school. Through DA, schools fall into a matrix of categories based on the level of the school's achievement. The lowest performing schools receive the most support, and under DA, these schools are required to implement the most robust interventions that will help lead to successful school improvement.

State Implementation and Evaluation

Both the implementation process and outcomes from activities funded by Florida's State Literacy Plan grant will be rigorously evaluated using both quantitative and qualitative measures. The evaluation will occur at two levels. The Florida Department of Education will provide a comprehensive evaluation of outcomes and changes occurring at the school and district level for Prekindergarten – grade 10. This evaluation will focus primarily on an examination of changes in student reading outcomes. The second level evaluation will focus on state level processes such as the effectiveness of the State

Literacy Team, the reliability and utility of data provided by the screening and progress monitoring measures in Prekindergarten - grade 10 from the tools developed by the Florida Center for Reading research and the quality and impact of professional development provided by Differentiated Accountability to improve the reading outcomes of the persistently lowest performing schools in the state.

Specific questions to be addressed at the school and district level:

1. To what extent do the staff development activities supported by *the State Literacy Plan* improve reading outcomes in schools and districts?

a. Does average performance on the major outcome measures of reading skill in each grade from Prekindergarten through tenth grade improve across each year of implementation?

b. Does the proportion of children performing below grade level and at “serious risk” for reading failure diminish across each year of program implementation?

c. What is the specific effect on the achievement of low income, racial/ethnic minority, English language learners and students with disabilities. Particularly for the first three categories of students, we will be interested in the extent to which activities are successful in “closing the gap” in reading achievement between these students and students from other demographic categories.

d. Do children’s attitudes toward reading change during the implementation of the grant?