SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Education Oversight Committee

FROM: Melanie Barton

DATE: July 30, 2012

The following data from national and state assessments document reading performance in South Carolina and from states in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) over time.

1. Based on the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), significant reading deficiencies exist, especially in the early elementary grades in South Carolina. In 2011 at grade 4, the percentage of students performing at or above Basic was 61 percent in South Carolina as compared to 72 percent at grade 8. At grade 8, South Carolina ranked third in the nation in gains made in the percentage of students scoring basic and above in reading in eighth grade between 2009 and 2011.

2. Looking at results from the 2011 administration of the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards (PASS) in reading and research, at the fourth grade level there were 16 schools where over 50% of the students performed at Not Met on PASS reading and research. In 238 schools between 25 and 49% of students in the fourth grade performed at the level of Not Met. At the middle school level, there were 51 schools where over 50% of the students in eighth grade performed at Not Met. In 174 schools between 25 and 49% of students in eighth grade performed at the level of Not Met.

3. Analyzing average ACT scores, average reading scores in South Carolina have steadily increased over time. On the other hand, the average SAT critical reading score for South Carolina students was 494 in 2005 and has since declined to 482 in 2011, a 12 point decline. Over the same period, the nation experienced an 11-point decline in the mean SAT critical reading score.

4. Finally, when looking at NAEP reading scores since 2003, the state of Alabama ranked 4th in the nation in having the largest gains made in the percentage of students scoring basic and above on NAEP. However, Alabama did not see similar gains in 8th grade NAEP scores.

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The Nation's Report Card -- NAEP

4th Grade Reading (South Carolina, 1998-2011)

Year	1998	2002	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011
Avg. Scale Score	209	214	215	213	214	216	215
% Basic and above	53%	58%	59%	57%	59%	62%	61%
Achievement Gaps	*White/AA:* 29 %pts *Pay/FR lunch:* 29 %pts	*White/AA:* 26 %pts *Pay/FR lunch:* 27 %pts	*White/AA:* 27 %pts *Pay/FR lunch:* 26 %pts	*White/AA:* 28 %pts *Pay/FR lunch:* 28 %pts	*White/AA:* 25 %pts *Pay/FR lunch:* 27 %pts	*White/AA:* 26 %pts *Pay/FR lunch:* 26 %pts	*White/AA: 29 %pts Pay/FR lunch: 31 %pts*
Rank among States	28th of 40 states	31st of 43 states	36th*	41st*	42nd*	39th*	39th

*Rank is determined in a comparison of average scale scores for all students among all 50 states and the District of Columbia. NAEP reading scale scores range from 0 to 500.

8th Grade Reading (South Carolina, 1998-2011)

Year	1998	2002	2003	2005	2007	2009	2011
Avg. Scale Score	255	258	258	257	257	257	260
% Basic and Above	66%	68%	69%	67%	69%	68%	72%
Achievement Gaps	*White/AA:* 25 %pts *Pay/FR lunch:* 26 %pts	*White/AA:* 25 %pts *Pay/FR lunch:* 23 %pts	*White/AA:* 25 %pts *Pay/FR lunch:* 21 %pts	*White/AA:* 25 %pts *Pay/FR lunch:* 22 %pts	*White/AA:* 26 %pts *Pay/FR lunch:* 24 %pts	*White/AA:* 24 %pts *Pay/FR lunch:* 23 %pts	*White/AA: 26 % pts Pay/FR Lunch: 22%*
Rank among states	29th of 37 states	32nd of 42 states	37th*	39th*	41st*	42nd *	38th

*Rank is determined in a comparison of average scale scores for all students among all 50 states and the District of Columbia. NAEP reading scale scores range from 0 to 500.

2011 PASS Reading and Research

Number of Schools at Each Grade Level With Percent of Students Scoring Not Met

Grade	0 to 24%	25 to 49%	50 to 74%	75 to 100%	TOTAL Schools
3	**401**	**201**	**9**	**1**	**611**
4	**355**	**238**	**16**	**0**	**609**
5	**354**	**223**	**15**	**1**	**593**
6	**78**	**155**	**29**	**3**	**265**
7	**67**	**184**	**39**	**2**	**292**
8	**62**	**174**	**50**	**1**	**287**

ACT

Year	Average Composite Score SC	Average Composite Score, Nation	Average Reading Score SC	Average Reading Score Nation
2011	20.1	21.1	20.3	21.3
2010	20.0	21.0	20.0	21.3
2009	19.8	21.1	19.9	21.4
2008	19.9	21.1	20.0	21.4
2007	19.6	21.1	19.8	21.5
2006	19.5	21.1	19.7	21.4
2005	19.4	20.9	19.6	21.3
2004	19.3	20.9	19.4	21.3
2003	19.2	20.8	19.4	21.2
2002	19.2	20.8	19.3	21.1
2001	19.3	21.0	19.5	21.3
2000	19.3	21.0		21.4
1999	19.1	21.0		21.4

*The composite score is the average of the performance on four ACT Subject tests: English, Reading, Math, and Science. Includes all ACT-tested high school graduates in SC.

SAT
Average Composite Scores and Rankings among States

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	951 *Verbal : 478 Math: 473*	954 *Verbal : 479 Math: 475*	966 *Verbal : 484 Math: 482*	974 *Verbal : 486 Math: 488*	981 *Verbal : 488 Math: 493*	989 *Verbal : 493 Math: 496*	986 *Verbal : 491 Math: 495*	993 *Verbal : **494** Math: 499*	986 *Crit. Read: 486 Math: 500*	984 *Crit. Read: 488 Math: 496*	985 *Crit. Read: 488 Math: 497*	982 *Crit. Read: 486 Math: 496*	979 *Crit. Read : 484 Math : 495*	*972 Crit. Read: 482 Math* 490
Rank	NA	NA	NA	50th	NA	NA	NA	49th	50th	48th	47th	48th	48th	48th

*The composite score is the sum of the average Verbal and Math Score (1998-2005) and the Critical Reading score average and the Mathematics score average (2006-2011). Includes all SC seniors who took the SAT at any time during their high school years.
NA=not available
2011 SAT scores for the first time reflect summer administration of the test.

SREB States Led the Nation in Education Progress on NAEP

Table 1

SREB State Gains on NAEP for Fourth- and Eighth-Graders
Key Categories of NAEP: Reading and Math, Basic and Proficient, 2003-2011

SREB states ranked first in the nation in gains on NAEP in all key categories.

State	Subject	Level	Percent Scoring At or Above Level		Increase, 2003-2011	
			2003	2011	State	Nation
Fourth Grade						
Alabama	Reading	Basic	52	67	15	4
Kentucky	Math	Basic	72	85	13	6
	Math	Proficient[1]	22	39	17	9
Maryland	Reading	Proficient	32	43	11	2
	Math	Basic	73	86	13	6
	Math	Proficient[1]	31	48	17	9
Eighth Grade						
Arkansas	Math	Basic[2]	58	70	12	5
Maryland	Reading	Basic	71	80	9	3
	Reading	Proficient	31	40	9	2
Texas	Math	Basic[2]	69	81	12	5
	Math	Proficient	25	40	15	7

[1] Indicates state tied with Hawaii and Massachusetts in gains.
[2] Indicates state tied with Hawaii and New Mexico in gains.
Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Compiled by SREB staff for presentation at Annual Meeting, June 25, 2012

SREB States Led the Nation in Education Progress on NAEP

Table 2

SREB States Ranked 1st, 2nd or 3rd in the Nation in Gains on NAEP, 2009-2011

SREB states were in the top 3 in every performance category.

State	Subject	Level	Percent Scoring At or Above		State Increase 2009-2011	Rank in Nation
			2009	2011		
Fourth Grade						
Alabama	Reading	Basic	62	67	5	**1***
	Math	Basic	70	75	5	**2**
Kentucky	Math	Basic	81	85	4	**3***
Louisiana	Reading	Basic	51	55	4	**3***
	Reading	Proficient	18	23	5	**2**
Maryland	Reading	Basic	70	75	5	**1***
	Reading	Proficient	37	43	6	**1**
	Math	Proficient	44	48	4	**2***
Eighth Grade						
Kentucky	Math	Proficient	27	31	4	**3***
Maryland	Reading	Proficient	36	40	4	**3***
Mississippi	Math	Basic	54	58	4	**3***
	Math	Proficient	15	19	4	**3***
Oklahoma	Math	Basic	68	72	4	**3***
South Carolina	Reading	Basic	68	72	4	**3***
Texas	Math	Proficient	36	40	4	**3***
Virginia	Reading	Proficient	32	36	4	**3***
	Math	Proficient	36	40	4	**3***
West Virginia	Math	Basic	61	65	4	**3***

* Indicates SREB state tied with other state(s).

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Compiled by SREB staff for presentation at Annual Meeting, June 25, 2012

Reading Achievement Recommendations

Submitted by the:

South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative

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Appendix 1: Meeting Agendas and Panel Roster
Appendix 2: Panel Presentations and Handouts

- "Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation" (Presented 10/07/2011)
- "Florida's Education Revolution: Reading for Learning" (Presented 10/07/2011)
- "Challenges and Solutions for Early Reading Proficiency" (Presented 10/07/2011)
- "Research on Improving Reading Achievement" (Presented 11/16/2012)
- "Recommendations for A State-wide Approach to Literacy Instruction and Assessment" (Presented 11/16/2012)

Appendix 3: Panel Members' Suggested Action Items

- Compiled Ballot Results by Overall Ranking
- Top Three Ranked Priorities By Policy Area
- SC Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative Policy Priorities – Reading Instruction

Appendix 4: Panel Members' Personal Statements

- Mick Zais, State Superintendent of Education
- D'Etta Brown
- Molly Talbot-Metz
- Audrea Phillips
- Rose Sheheen

Synopsis

The South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative was created by Proviso 1A.46 in the 2011-2012 Appropriations Act to provide recommendations to the General Assembly on how to address the pervasive issue of illiteracy among the youth in the State.

Proviso Text

1A.46. (SDE-EIA: SC Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative) From the funds appropriated or authorized for the Department of Education and the Education Oversight Committee, there is created a policy panel to guide the South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative. The panel will be composed of twenty-five members, which shall be appointed as follows:

The Governor shall appoint to the panel:

(1) one business leader;

(2) one parent;

(3) one representative of the Board of Trustees of the Office of First Steps to School Readiness;

(4) one representative of the State Library Board;

(5) one pediatrician; and

(6) two representatives of community foundations or literacy organizations.

The State Superintendent of Education shall appoint to the panel:

(1) one business leader;

(2) one parent;

(3) one parent educator;

(4) one researcher in reading;

(5) two literacy coaches;

(6) two district early childhood or academic leaders;

(7) two principals, one representing elementary schools and one representing middle schools; and

(8) four teachers of students with needs for interventions to promote reading proficiency to include students with learning disabilities, student in poverty and students not mastering concepts.

The Chairman of the Senate Education Committee shall appoint one member of the Senate Education Committee to the panel.

The Chairman of the House Education and Public Works Committee shall appoint one member of the House Education and Public Works Committee to the panel.

The Chairman of the State Board of Education shall appoint one member of the State Board of Education to the panel.

The Chairman of the Education Oversight Committee shall appoint one member of the Education Oversight Committee to the panel.

The panel is directed to define the focus and priorities for state actions to improve the level of reading achievement among the state's young people including building upon the work of LiteracySC and the state literacy team organized to support the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant. The panel should address factors contributing to or impeding progress including, but not limited to, the physical health, language development and quality of instruction provided in the state's schools. The panel should examine data, follow progress of the LiteracySC academies and pilots, recommend changes in practice and funding and provide for a longitudinal evaluation and establish a statewide policy for the teaching of reading, including particular attention to the lowest achieving students.

The panel is to be staffed through a collaborative among the Department of Education, SC Kids Count and the Education Oversight Committee. Expenses of the panel are to be shared among the collaborating entities.

The panel shall report to the General Assembly through the House Committee on Education and Public Works and the Senate Education Committee and to the State Board of Education and the Education Oversight Committee by January 15, 2012.

Procedure

The South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative met six times between October 2011 and March 2012 to develop its recommendations for the legislature. All meetings were webstreamed live at www.ed.sc.gov/events. For the names of the initiative members and the published meeting agendas, see Appendix 1.

At the first two meetings, initiative members heard presentations from a variety of interested parties. The presenters and their organizations included:

1. Ms. Melanie Barton, South Carolina Education Oversight Committee
2. Mr. Baron Holmes, KidsCount
3. Ms. Charmeka Bosket, South Carolina Department of Education
4. Janice A. Dole, Ph.D., University of Utah

The remaining meetings were spent discussing recommendations to include in the final report and refining the language of the document. Ballots submitted by the panel members can be referenced in Appendix 3. The last meeting of the initiative was held on March 29, 2012. Panel members were invited to submit short personal statements to include with the report submitted to the General Assembly (see Appendix 4).

All meeting agendas were made available to the public before the scheduled meetings at http://ed.sc.gov/agency/lpa/SouthCarolinaReadingAchievementSystemicInitiative.cfm. All the materials distributed by the presenters were also posted after each meeting to the website (see Appendix 2). All video webstreamed was archived and is available for public viewing at http://ed.sc.gov/events.

Recommendations

Goal: Improve Reading Instruction and Reading Achievement in South Carolina

Recommendation #1: Create family-school-community partnerships which focus on increasing the volume of reading, in school and at home, during the year and, at home, over the summer.

Action Plan:

1. Review and disseminate the literature on engaged reading, high progress literacy classrooms (HPLC), and reading achievement. Recommend expectations for the amount of time that students should read and write at school and outside of school.

2. Assist all school districts in:

    a. developing and implementing policies aligned with state standards for reading and writing during the school day in all subject areas and at all grade levels.

    b. educating parents about ways to promote reading at home in order to meet or exceed goals for the amount of time students spend reading outside of school.

    c. implementing family-school-community solutions to summer reading loss, such as:

        - Summer reading opportunities in which each participating student is provided with 5 or more books the student self-selects to read at home over the summer

        - Partnerships with local libraries to take books into targeted neighborhoods and to work with designated students at the library and other sites.

        - Access for students during the summer to school libraries staffed with knowledgeable personnel.

        - Community-based "libraries" consisting of donated books, open one afternoon a week, staffed with volunteers.

3. Continue the professional development on reading volume offered by SCDE. This focused professional development raises awareness and helps teachers plan, implement, and continuously improve quantity and quality of reading and writing time.

4. If funding is available, support the SCDE in providing resources, links, tools, video, and webinars to guide engaged reading and writing in schools. This should include numerous resources on the web for parents, educators, and literacy leaders.

Recommendation # 2: Promote partnerships of families, communities and schools to address literacy development of young children through all early childhood programs.

Action Plan:

1. Develop a Literacy Plan for *all* young children in South Carolina (SC) based on input from representatives from such agencies and organizations as the public schools, First Steps, SC Department of Social Services (DSS) Child Care Division, Early Head Start, Head Start, community-based programs (Reach Out and Read, Imagination Library, Success By Six, local library programs) and home visitation programs (Parents As Teachers, Nurse Family Partnership, and others). Propose policy that will guide enrollment options (e.g. universal pre-school versus pre-school for particular demographic groups) and guide implementation, support and evaluation of their literary plan. The plan should address the following objectives:

    a. Community: Schools must reach out to and enlist community organizations as valued partners in literacy promotion.

    b. Family: Preschools and kindergartens must engage families as full, active partners in the language and literacy learning.

    c. Instruction/Curriculum: Early childhood educators must systematically and consistently provide proven-effective literacy learning experiences for every child.

    d. Assessment: Instruction must be guided by continuous, individualized assessment and progress monitoring of the language and literacy development of each child.

    e. Reading System Support and Management: Schools, school districts, and the state must monitor, support, and guide highly effective language and literacy experiences.

2. Initiate a collaborative effort for training Early Care and Education workers in promoting the language and literacy of young children. The primary partners should include: the SC Center for Child Care Career Development, SC First Steps, the SCDSS ABC Child Care program, Head Start, the SC Department of Education, university early childhood professors, technical college early learning education instructors and school district early childhood leaders. These guidelines should be used in their collaborative effort:

    a. Each collaborating partner will develop a plan for significantly strengthening its current workforce training in effective language and literacy learning methods.

b. Collectively, the collaborating partners will develop a joint plan to coordinate and share training wherever possible.

c. The plan should give first priority to training focused on the needs of 4 year olds as the group of greatest common interest across the three primary service systems; however, the plan should also address the language and literacy needs of all young children as appropriate.

d. The plans should address such critical challenges as: determining and focusing on the pre-reading skills to be cultivated, determining the instructional approaches to be adopted, and selecting curriculum models and components which are supportive of language and literacy learning.

Recommendation #3: Assure that all preschool and kindergarten students are taught by teachers well-trained to create literate environments which develop the understandings that reading and writing are meaning-making, rule-governed processes.

Action Plan:

1. Provide for all teachers of preschool and kindergarten students a series of professional development sessions addressing research-validated early literacy practices such as, but not limited to, literacy-rich and print-rich classrooms, developmentally appropriate and intentional literacy instruction, read-alouds, daily schedules that include literacy learning throughout the day, and ample opportunities to build vocabulary and develop phonological awareness. These practices should take into account students' language development, and their literacy skills relative to stages of early reading and writing.

Recommendation #4: Revise certification requirements to assure that all PreK-12 students are served by classroom teachers, reading teachers, special education teachers, reading coaches, and administrators who have the appropriate level of understanding of reading instruction and assessment.

Action Plan:

1. For all pre-service teachers:

    a. Outline the knowledge, skills and strategies needed to be an effective first-year teacher of readers and writers.

b. Describe the kinds of pre-service experiences which ensure that first year teachers possess and can use their knowledge, skills and strategies to understand and support each and every child as a reader and writer.

c. Review university reading course syllabi in certification programs relative to (a) & (b).

d. Make public a list of those teacher training programs that meet criteria (a) & (b).

2. For certified teachers, require advanced course work in literacy for re-certification.

a. For early childhood (EC) and elementary teachers (EL) (pre-K to 5): Require a South Carolina Literacy Teacher add-on certification. This involves 4 required courses (the fifth is optional), 3 years teaching experience and a passing score on the Praxis. Only institutions whose M.Ed. programs in Reading/ Language and Literacy are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and whose course content is consistent with state standards should offer the course work. These courses could be offered at a PD rate. As part of NCATE, the International Reading Association (IRA) specifies the content, skills and strategies that reading teachers must know about and be able to implement and also sets standards for reading assessment and instruction. Effectively delivered IRA-sanctioned course work provides teachers with a strong understanding of the theory, research, and practices that support the teaching of reading and writing. All EC and EL teachers who have been teaching for 1-5 years would be required to obtain the Literacy Teacher add-on certification within ten years. The time frame for EC and EL teachers with 6+ years of experience would be based on an assessment of the capacity of state-approved IHEs in SC to provide the course work. For teachers newly certified in these areas, the course work could begin the summer after graduation and continue through the first two years of teaching. Ideally, within 20 years all SC teachers would have their add-on certification.

b. For all Middle and High School teachers (grades 6 to 12): Require 6 credit hours of literacy and content-based professional development tied to social studies, science, math and ELA. These courses would be 2 of the 4 courses required for add-on certification as a Literacy Teacher. This course work would delve deeply into cognitive strategies which readers use to create meaning with texts. Middle school teachers would have the option of counting Literacy as one of their two areas of expertise. Only institutions whose M.Ed. programs in Reading/Language and Literacy are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and whose course content is consistent with state standards should offer the course work. These courses could be offered at a PD rate. As

part of NCATE, the International Reading Association (IRA) specifies the content, skills and strategies that reading teachers must know about and be able to implement and also sets standards for reading assessment and instruction. Effectively delivered IRA-sanctioned course work provides teachers with a strong understanding of the theory, research, and practices which support the teaching of reading and writing. ML and HS Teachers who have been teaching for 1-5 years would be required to obtain this add-on certification within ten years. The time frame for ML and HS teachers with 6+ years of experience would be based on an assessment of the capacity of IHEs in SC to provide the course work. For newly certified ML and HS teachers, the course work could begin the summer after graduation and continue through the first two years of teaching. Ideally, within 20 years all SC ML and HS teachers would have these courses.

3. For teachers who provide supplemental support to below-grade- level readers and who are certified pre-K through 5 or Special Education teachers K-12 : Require SC add-on certification as Literacy Teacher. These teachers would have to acquire this certification within 6 years.

4. For teachers who coach other teachers in literacy instruction and assessment: Require SC add-on certification as a Literacy Coach. These teachers would have to acquire this certification within 6 years.

5. For K-8 administrators, including principals, assistant principals, and curriculum coordinators as well as administrators in grades 9-12 and district office administrators with significant policy and practice responsibility for literacy education: Require two foundational courses (reading foundations and reading instruction) and professional development in reading assessment or a state-approved equivalent combination of PD experiences. All current K-8 and relevant HS and district office personnel administrators would be encouraged to complete this course work within 6 years; however only K-5 administrators should be required to complete these courses within 6 years. Electronic access to high quality course instruction should be organized to make participation convenient.

Recommendation #5: Assure that all K-12 students are served by classroom teachers who expertly provide effective, data-driven, whole group, small group or one-on-one reading instruction.

Action Plan:

1. Charge a group of state-department, university and public school professionals with overseeing collaborative, school-based processes for ensuring that all students in all age and grade bands receive the support needed to become engaged, proficient readers and writers. This should include:

    a. revisiting and revising as needed existing guidelines and recommendations for Tier 1 (classroom) and Tier 2 (supplemental settings).

    b. creating implementation rubrics for text-based assessment and instruction.

    c. gathering and making available videos showing effective assessment and engaged reading and writing at all grade bands and levels.

    d. gathering and making available online tools for administrators to use in observing reading and writing in classrooms at all grades and in all content areas.

    e. making on-site visits to ensure that effective systems are in place for assessment and instruction (both in-classroom and supplemental).

2. Charge the SCDE (if funded) and local school districts (using professional development monies) with providing professional development to teachers so that they understand how to do text-based, progress-monitoring assessments well and can use the findings to plan effective whole group, differentiated small group, and one-on-one instruction.

3. Require districts to document consistency of their assessment and instruction plans with state rubrics, submitted with either a district strategic plan, district strategic plan update, or accreditation report.

4. If funded, require certified literacy coaches at every public school. In Pre-K to grade 5, there should be one coach for every 25 teachers. In grades 6 to 12, there should be one coach for math and science teachers and one for social studies and English teachers (with a maximum of 25 teachers per coach). Literacy Coaches should be in classrooms four days a week helping Pre K-12 teachers develop, implement, and sustain effective practices and helping them enhance the trajectory of each and every student as a learner. This includes reading, writing, and content area support. Encourage districts to make progress towards this goal by repurposing monies.

Recommendation #6: Increase the quantity and diversity of texts in classrooms.

Action Plan:

1. Provide schools with suggested titles of informational texts that are written on a variety of difficulty levels (a university/SCDE committee could do this without cost)

2. Repurpose monies to provide funding for those books (perhaps using monies for textbook adoptions).

3. At both the state level (if funded) and the local level (using professional development monies), provide workshops for teachers on how to use informational texts across the curriculum. For middle and high school teachers, this would include information on content area literacy comprehension.

4. Require that K-12 teachers increase the amount of instruction students receive on how to read and write informational text.

Recommendation #7: Create a non-governmental reading partnership council to provide advice and support for the development and implementation of research-based literacy efforts across the state.

Action Plan: The goal of this panel would be to help facilitate the achievement of near-universal reading proficiency in South Carolina through the formulation and dissemination of documents addressing critical content, approaches and evaluation criteria, including but not limited to:

1. Working closely with one or more advisory committees comprised of key representatives from such critical stakeholders as teachers, coaches, interventionists, administrators and professors;

2. Developing synthesis documents, grounded in research, data and practical experience, which describe effective reading policies and practices and the training required for teachers to provide effective reading instruction.

3. Collecting and disseminating information about Literacy Teacher course work offered by SC IHEs whose M.Ed. programs in Reading/Language and Literacy have been endorsed, via NCATE, by the International Reading Association.

4. Proposing content for district reading proficiency plans and criteria for state review and approval of the plans. Gathering and disseminating data about the effectiveness of specific reading programs/packages.

5. Developing a plan for supporting all districts' literacy efforts (assessment, instruction and implementation).

Appendix 1

Meeting Agendas and Roster

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mick Zais
Superintendent

1429 Senate Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

AGENDA

South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative

LOCATION & TIME

October 12, 2011
Rutledge Conference Center, Rutledge Building
1429 Senate Street, Columbia, SC 29201
9:00AM

I. Welcome
II. Introduction of Panel Members
III. Selection of Panel Chair and Vice Chair
IV. Approval of Agenda
V. Public Comment Period
VI. Presentations and Discussion

Ms. Melanie Barton, South Carolina Education Oversight Committee
Mr. Baron Holmes, KidsCount; Office of Research and Statistics
Ms. Charmeka Bosket, South Carolina Department of Education

VII. Other Business
VIII. Adjournment

The South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative is a collaborative between:

South Carolina Department of Education
South Carolina Education Oversight Committee
KidsCount

The collaborative is authorized under the provisions of Proviso 1A.46 of H.3700, the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Appropriations Act.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mick Zais
Superintendent

1429 Senate Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

AGENDA

South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative

LOCATION & TIME

November 16, 2011
Rutledge Conference Center, Rutledge Building
1429 Senate Street, Columbia, SC 29201
9:00AM

I. Welcome
II. Approval of Agenda
III. Approval of Minutes from October 12, 2011 Meeting
IV. Public Comment Period
V. Presentations and Discussion

Janice A. Dole, Ph.D., University of Utah
Mr. Baron Holmes, KidsCount; Office of Research and Statistics – Policy Briefs

VI. Other Business
VII. Adjournment

The South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative is a collaborative between:

South Carolina Department of Education
South Carolina Education Oversight Committee
KidsCount

The collaborative is authorized under the provisions of Proviso 1A.46 of H.3700, the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Appropriations Act.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mick Zais
Superintendent

1429 Senate Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

AGENDA

South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative

LOCATION & TIME

December 14, 2011
Rutledge Conference Center, Rutledge Building
1429 Senate Street, Columbia, SC 29201
9:00AM

I. Welcome
II. Approval of Agenda
III. Public Comment Period
IV. Discussion of Panelist Submitted Recommendations
V. Other Business
VI. Adjournment

NOTE: After the meeting panelists are invited to stay for a research presentation by a group of pediatricians.

The South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative is a collaborative between:

South Carolina Department of Education
South Carolina Education Oversight Committee
KidsCount

The collaborative is authorized under the provisions of Proviso 1A.46 of H.3700, the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Appropriations Act.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mick Zais
Superintendent

1429 Senate Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

AGENDA

South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative

LOCATION & TIME

January 9, 2012
Rutledge Conference Center, Rutledge Building
1429 Senate Street, Columbia, SC 29201
1:00PM

I. Welcome
II. Approval of Agenda
III. Public Comment Period
IV. Discussion of Panelist Submitted Recommendation Ballots
V. Discussion and Approval of Recommendations for Report
VI. Other Business
VII. Adjournment

The South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative is a collaborative between:

South Carolina Department of Education
South Carolina Education Oversight Committee
KidsCount

The collaborative is authorized under the provisions of Proviso 1A.46 of H.3700, the Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Appropriations Act.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mick Zais
Superintendent

1429 Senate Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

AGENDA

South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative

LOCATION & TIME

March 1, 2012
Rutledge Conference Center, Rutledge Building
1429 Senate Street, Columbia, SC 29201
1:00PM

I. Welcome
II. Approval of Agenda
III. Public Comment Period
IV. Discussion and Approval of Panel Report
V. Other Business
VI. Adjournment

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mick Zais
Superintendent

1429 Senate Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

AGENDA

South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative

LOCATION & TIME

March 29, 2012
Rutledge Conference Center, Rutledge Building
1429 Senate Street, Columbia, SC 29201
1:00PM

I. Welcome
II. Approval of Agenda
III. Public Comment Period
IV. Discussion and Approval of Panel Report
V. Other Business
VI. Adjournment

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South Carolina

Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative

MAIL NAME	APPOINTEE	SLOT	School/Org
TBA	Governor	Business Leader	
Mrs. D'Etta P. Broam	Governor	Parent	
Ms. Leigh Bolick	Governor	First Steps Board	
Mr. Earl Mitchell	Governor	State Library Board	
Dr. Charles Guy Castles III	Governor	Pediatrician	
Mr. William Marcus Brasington, Jr.	Governor	Community Foundation/Literacy Organization	
Ms. Molly C. Talbot-Metz	Governor	Community Foundation/Literacy Organization	
Ms. Pamela Lackey	State Superintendent	Business Leader	AT&T
Dr. Mick Zais	State Superintendent	Parent	SCDE
Ms. Amy Sprague	State Superintendent	Parent Educator	Berkeley County School District
Dr. Kathy Headley	State Superintendent	Reading Researcher	Clemson University
Ms. Mary Elizabeth Thomas	State Superintendent	Literacy Coach	Lexington 4 School District
Ms. Mary Annette Parrott	State Superintendent	Literacy Coach	Sumter School District
Ms. Cynthia Downs	State Superintendent	Early Childhood/Academic Leader	Newberry School District
Dr. Lynn Moody	State Superintendent	Early Childhood/Academic Leader	York 3 School District
Dr. Cherry Daniel	State Superintendent	Elementary Principal	SC Virtual Charter School
Ms. Marisa Vickers	State Superintendent	Middle School Principal	Richland 1 School District
Ms. Audrea Phillips	State Superintendent	Teacher	Horry School District
Ms. Kelli Sanders	State Superintendent	Teacher	Bamberg 1 School District
Ms. Debbie Milner	State Superintendent	Teacher	Spartanburg 7 School District
Ms. Angela Hutto	State Superintendent	Teacher	Hampton 1 School District
The Honorable Michael L. Fair	Senate	Senator	Senate
The Honorable Mark N. Willis	House	Representative	House
Ms. Rose Sheheen	State Board	Board Member	State Board
Ms. Ann Marie Taylor	EOC	Board Member	EOC

Appendix 2

Panel Presentations and Handouts

Double Jeopardy

How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation

By Donald J. Hernandez
Professor, Department of Sociology
Hunter College and the Graduate Center,
City University of New York and
Senior Advisor, Foundation for Child Development

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

April 2011

Acknowledgements

The research that forms the basis of this report was supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and by the Center for Demographic Analysis, University at Albany, State University of New York (NICHD, R24 HD044943). The author also appreciates support provided by the Foundation for Child Development, the collaboration of Nancy A. Denton, research assistance provided by Jeff Napierala and Ruby Wang, and assistance provided by staff of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. The author alone is responsible for the content and any error of fact or interpretation.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation

Educators and researchers have long recognized the importance of mastering reading by the end of third grade. Students who fail to reach this critical milestone often falter in the later grades and drop out before earning a high school diploma. Now, researchers have confirmed this link in the first national study to calculate high school graduation rates for children at different reading skill levels and with different poverty rates. Results of a longitudinal study of nearly 4,000 students find that those who don't read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers. For the worst readers, those couldn't master even the basic skills by third grade, the rate is nearly six times greater. While these struggling readers account for about a third of the students, they represent more than three fifths of those who eventually drop out or fail to graduate on time. What's more, the study shows that poverty has a powerful influence on graduation rates. The combined effect of reading poorly and living in poverty puts these children in double jeopardy.

The study relies on a unique national database of 3,975 students born between 1979 and 1989. The children's parents were surveyed every two years to determine the family's economic status and other factors, while the children's reading progress was tracked using the Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) Reading Recognition subtest. The database reports whether students have finished high school by age 19, but does not indicate whether they actually dropped out.

For purposes of this study, the researchers divided the children into three reading groups which correspond roughly to the skill levels used in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): proficient, basic and below basic. The children were also separated into three income categories: those who have never been poor, those who spent some time in poverty and those who have lived more than half the years surveyed in poverty.

The findings include:

- One in six children who are not reading proficiently in third grade do not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers.
- The rates are highest for the low, below-basic readers: 23 percent of these children drop out or fail to finish high school on time, compared to 9 percent of children with basic reading skills and 4 percent of proficient readers.
- Overall, 22 percent of children who have lived in poverty do not graduate from high school, compared to 6 percent of those who have never been poor. This

rises to 32 percent for students spending more than half of their childhood in poverty.

- For children who were poor for at least a year *and* were not reading proficiently in third grade, the proportion that don't finish school rose to 26 percent. That's more than six times the rate for all proficient readers.
- The rate was highest for poor Black and Hispanic students, at 31 and 33 percent respectively—or about eight times the rate for all proficient readers.
- Even among poor children who were proficient readers in third grade, 11 percent still didn't finish high school. That compares to 9 percent of subpar third grade readers who have never been poor.
- Among children who never lived in poverty, all but 2 percent of the best third-grade readers graduated from high school on time.
- Graduation rates for Black and Hispanic students who were not proficient readers in third grade lagged far behind those for White students with the same reading skills.

Background

More than three decades ago research began to suggest that children with low third-grade reading test scores were less likely to graduate from high school than children with higher reading scores.[1] Third grade is an important pivot point in a child's education, the time when students shift from learning to read and begin reading to learn. Interventions for struggling readers after third grade are seldom as effective as those in the early years.[2] Recognizing the importance of early reading skills, the No Child Left Behind Act has, from the outset, required states to test reading skills annually for all students beginning in third grade, and to report these results for children by poverty status and race-ethnicity, as well as for English Language Learners and for children with disabilities.[3] This act asserted "President Bush's unequivocal commitment to ensuring that every child can read by the end of third-grade."[4] More recently, in March 2010, the Obama Administration released its blueprint for revising the act, known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, calling for "Putting Reading First" by significantly increasing the federal investment in scientifically based early reading instruction.[5] President Obama has also called for restoring the United States to its position as No. 1 in percentage of college graduates. (It is now tied for 9th). Accomplishing that goal will mean ensuring that millions more students graduate from high school.[6]

Meanwhile, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the "The Nation's Report Card," shows for 2009 that only 33 percent of fourth graders read at a

"proficient" level, while the remaining 67 percent do not, and instead read at the "basic" level (34 percent), or below the basic level (33 percent).[7] "Fourth grade students performing at the Proficient level should be able to integrate and interpret texts and apply their understanding of the text to draw conclusions and make evaluations."[8] Thus, two thirds of students did not finish third grade with these essential reading skills, and are reading below grade level. This report presents the first-ever analysis of high school graduation rates separately for children with reading test scores that correspond roughly to the proficiency levels set by NAEP, with additional results for children reading below the proficient level, at either the basic or below basic level of reading test scores.

Findings

One in Six Children Who Are Not Reading Proficiently in Third Grade Fail to Graduate from High School On Time, Four Times the Rate for Children with Proficient Third-Grade Reading Skills

Overall, the research analysis shows that 88 percent of children graduate from high school by age 19, while the remaining 12 percent do not. Graduation rates vary enormously for children with different reading skills in third grade. Among proficient readers, only 4 percent fail to graduate, compared to 16 percent of those who are not reading at grade level at that age. Among those not proficient in reading, 9 percent of those with basic reading skills fail to graduate, and this rises to 23 percent of those with below basic skills (Figure 1, a&b).

Figure 1a: Children Not Graduating from High School by Age 19, in Total, Proficient, and Not Proficient

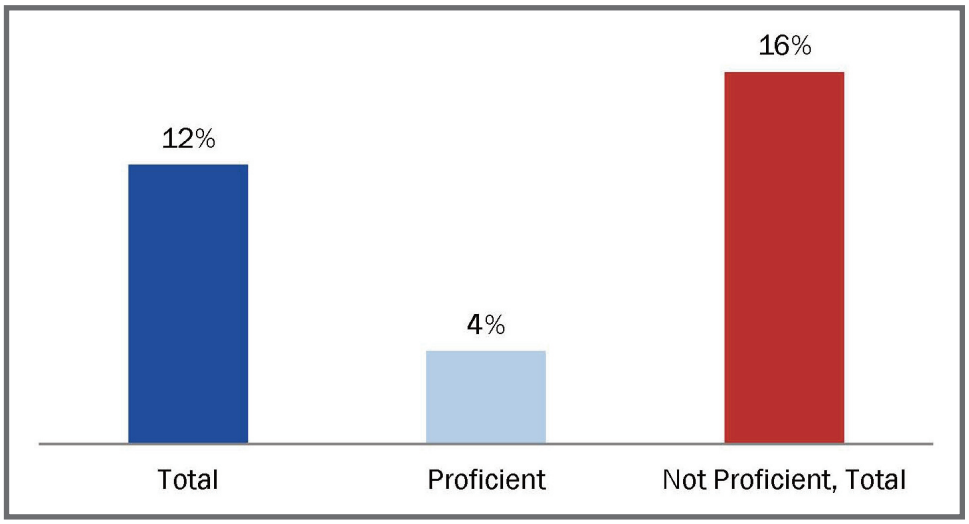
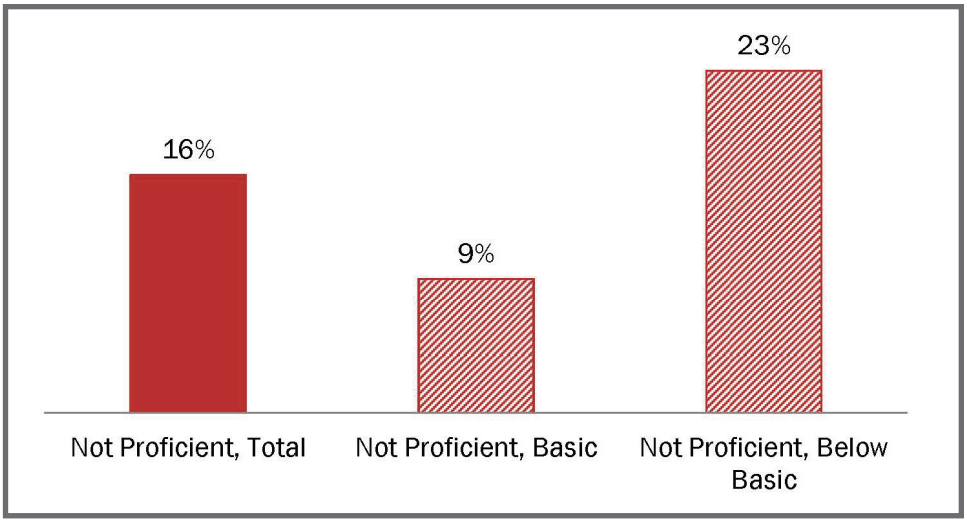
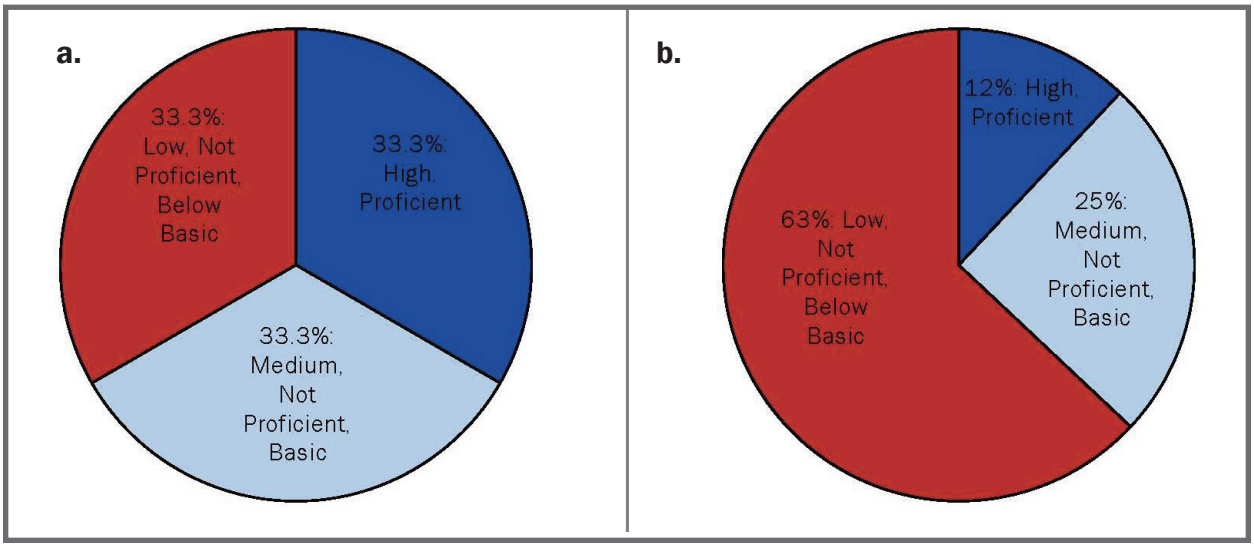


Figure 1b: Further Analysis of Children Not Proficient Who Didn't Graduate from High School By Age 19, Total, Not Proficient Basic and Below Basic



As a result of these enormous differences across groups, children with the lowest reading scores account for a third of students but for more than three-fifths (63 percent) of all children who do not graduate from high school. Third-grade reading matters. (Figure 2, a&b).

Figure 2, a: Third-Grade Reading Test Scores, All Children
b: Children Not Graduating High School by Third-Grade Reading Test Scores, All Children



Children Who Have Lived in Poverty and Are Not Reading Proficiently in Third Grade Are About Three Times More Likely to Dropout or Fail to Graduate From High School Than Those Who Have Never Been Poor

Children whose families live in poverty often lack resources for decent housing, food, clothing, and books, and they often do not have access to high quality child care and early education or to health care. They also are more likely to live in neighborhoods with low-performing schools. Consequently, children in poor families tend to develop weaker academic skills and to achieve less academic success. Many arrive at kindergarten without the language or social skills they need for learning. They miss school frequently because of health or family concerns. They slip behind in the summer with little access to stimulating educational programs or even regular meals.

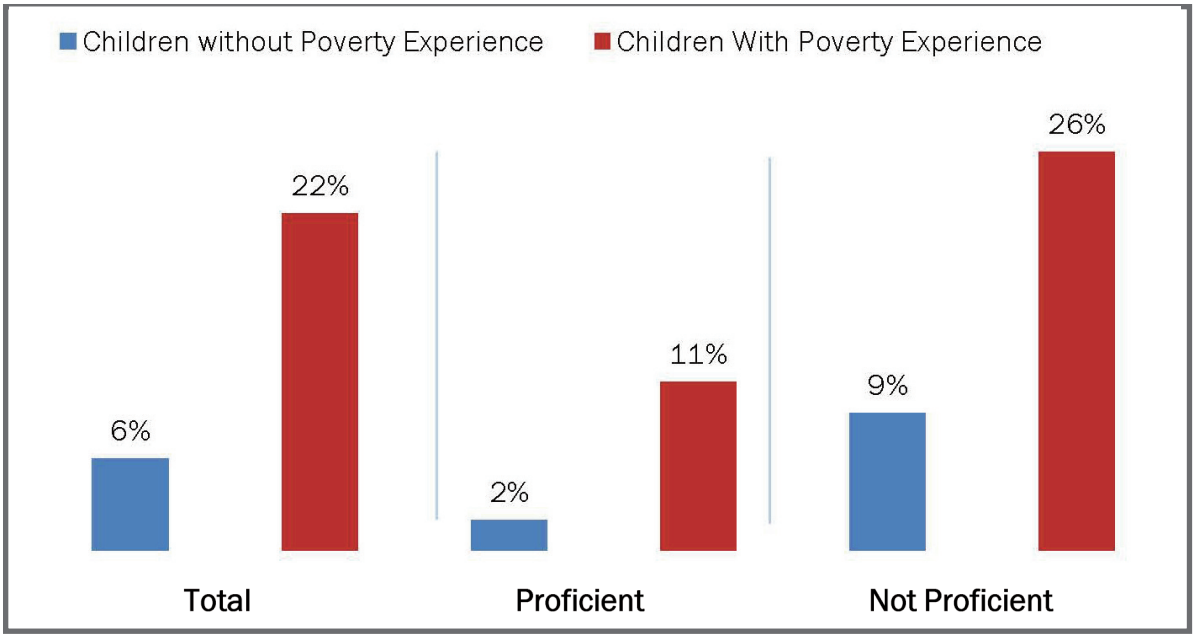
Consequently, the children in poor families are in double jeopardy: They are more likely to have low reading test scores and, at any reading-skill level, they are less likely to graduate from high school.

Using eligibility for the National School Lunch Program to classify children as living in low-income families, results of the NAEP show that nationwide 55 percent of fourth graders in moderate- and high-income families have reading skills below the proficient mark. This jumps to 83 percent for children in low-income families.[9] New results calculated for this study show that children whose families have incomes below the federal poverty threshold are less likely to finish high school, especially if they have low third-grade reading scores. (The federal poverty threshold in 2010 was $22,162 for a family of four with two children).[10]

For the database used in this study, known as the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 or NLSY79, children and mothers are interviewed biennially in even-numbered years. Thus, poverty status is measured for each sample child in five of the years between the second and 11th grades (See Appendix I for additional information). Children are characterized in this report as having experience with poverty if, in at least one of these five years, they lived in a family with an income below the federal poverty threshold, and as spending more than half of their childhood in poverty if they lived in poor families for more than half of these years.

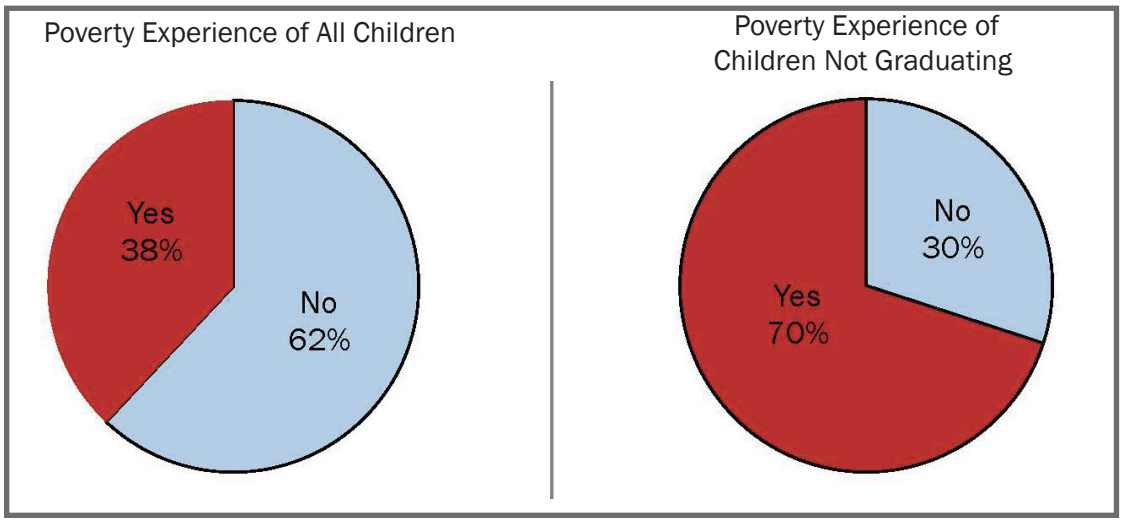
Overall, 22 percent of children with some family poverty experience do not graduate from high school, a figure about three times greater than the 6 percent rate for children with no family poverty experience (Figure 3). This rises to 32 percent for children spending more than half of the survey period in poverty.

Figure 3: Children Not Graduating from High School by Age 19, by Poverty Experience and Reading Proficiency



Among children with two risk factors—poverty and reading skills below the proficient mark—26 percent do not graduate from high school, compared to 9 percent with these subpar reading scores who have never experienced poverty. The graduation rates improve when poor children are reading at a proficient level in third grade. Even so, 11 percent of the top readers who spent at least one year in poverty failed to graduate on time, compared to 2 percent of those who have never been poor. Overall, children who spend a year or more in poverty account for 38 percent of all children, but they account for seven-tenths (70 percent) of all children who do not graduate from high school. Poverty matters (Figure 4).

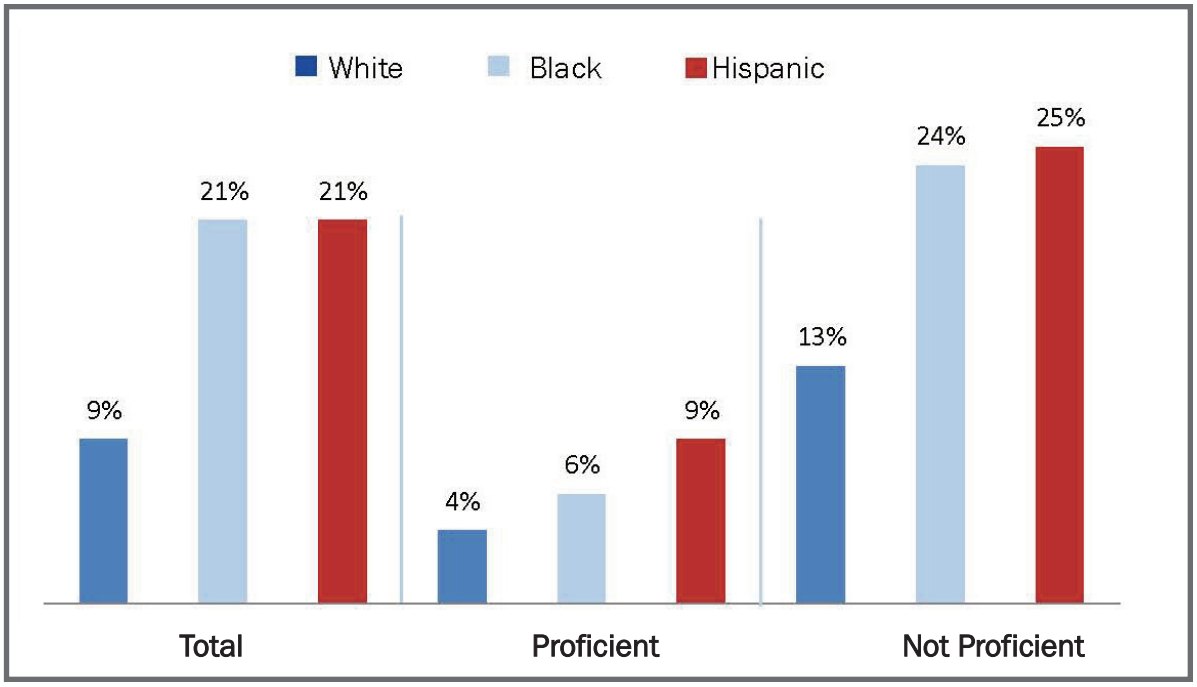
Figure 4: Poverty Experience of Children Not Graduating from High School



Black and Hispanic Children Who Are Not Reading Proficiently in Third Grade Are About Twice as Likely as Similar White Children Not to Graduate from High School

Black and Hispanic children are not only more likely to live in poverty, they also are more likely to live in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty and low-performing schools. Results from NAEP show that only 42 percent of White students read at the proficient level in fourth grade, and this falls to 16 percent for Black students and 17 percent for Hispanics.[11] The NLSY79 database provides racial and ethnic background for students, allowing for a breakdown of test scores on that basis. The study shows that about a quarter of Black and Hispanic students in the survey who are not reading proficiently in third grade don't graduate from high school, compared to 13 percent of other students. (Because there are few Asian families in the longitudinal survey they are combined in a single category largely composed of White students). Thus, Black and Hispanic students who haven't mastered reading in third grade are 11 to 12 percentage points less likely to graduate from high school than White students with similar reading skills. Only about 4 percent of White students who read well in third grade fail to graduate from high school, compared to 6 percent of Black students and 9 percent of Hispanics, differences which are not statistically significant (Figure 5).

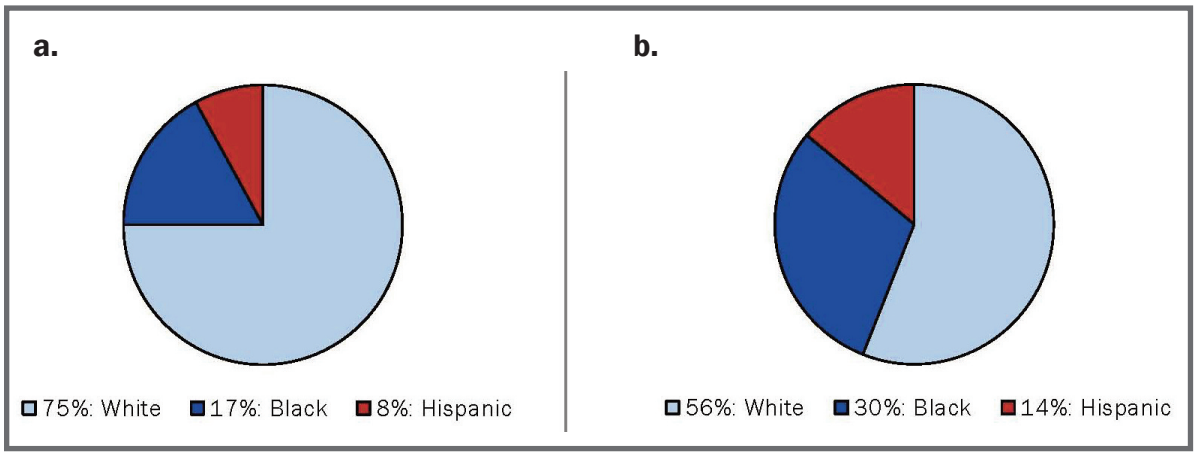
Figure 5: Children Not Graduating by Race-Ethnicity



Among those who spend at least a year in poverty and don't read proficiently, the rates for not graduating from high school rise to 22 percent for White students and to 31 and 33 percent for Black and Hispanic students, respectively (Appendix II Table). Among those who read well and live in poverty a year or more, about 10 to 14 percent of White, Black, and His-

panic students do not graduate from high school; and if they both read well and do not experience poverty, only 2 to 5 percent do not graduate. Although Black and Hispanic students are more likely to be poor readers by third grade and more likely not to graduate from high school, a majority (56 percent) of students in this survey who failed to graduate are White, while 30 percent are Black, and 14 percent are Hispanic (Figure 6).

Figure 6, a: All Children by Race-Ethnicity
b: Children Not Graduating from High School by Race-Ethnicity



Policy and Program Strategies

The findings in this report point toward three distinct environments where new policies and programs could foster children's school success. The first is schools, which have the immediate responsibility for teaching children to read. Second is the family, because poverty and limits on available resources in the home can undermine children's capacity and opportunities to learn. Third is federal, state, and local policy, which can profoundly influence the organization and focus of schools and the extent to which children and families live in poverty.

High-quality early education is a cost-effective investment for improving both early and later school success, particularly for students in low-income families and for Black and Hispanic children.[12] Unfortunately, studies show the effects of good PreK programs can "fade out." But research also shows that gains for students are sustained if high-quality PreK is linked with the elementary grades, to create a common structure and coherent sets of academic and social goals.[13] The integrated PreK-3rd approach to education, if fully developed and effectively implemented, involves six components: (1) aligned curriculum, standards, and assessment from PreK through third grade; (2) consistent instructional approaches and learning environments; (3) availability of PreK for all children ages 3 and 4, as well as full-day kindergarten for older children; (4) classroom teachers who possess at least a bachelor's degree and are certified to teach grades PreK-3rd; (5) small class sizes; and (6) partnership between the school and families.[14] A recent study of an integrated PreK-3rd approach imple-

mented in Chicago found improved educational outcomes leading to a long-term societal return of $8.24 for every $1 invested in the first four to six years of school, including the PreK years.[15]

Of course, both in the early years and later childhood, chronic school absence is associated with lower educational attainments.[16] This is particularly true for low-income children who are more likely to be chronically absent and more likely to lose out on the intensive literacy instruction in the early grades. The negative impact of school absences on literacy learning is 75 percent greater for low-income children than for their more affluent peers.[17] Schools must address this problem, as well as providing effective instruction whenever students are present in the classroom. Similarly, research spanning 100 years has shown that students lose ground during summer, particularly low-income students. They lose an average of more than two months in reading achievement over the summer, slowing their progress toward third-grade reading proficiency.[18] It is also, therefore, important for schools and communities to develop opportunities for summer learning which are aligned with instruction that occurs during the regular school year.

In families, parents are the first teachers, preparing their children to read simply by talking and reading to them frequently. They can also be the first to spot health and developmental problems that may lead to reading difficulties. But parents don't always know what to look for or how to help their children, and access to health care is essential. Poverty is strongly associated with lack of health insurance coverage. For example, 10 percent of people in families with incomes of $50,000 or more are not covered by health insurance, but this jumps 19 percent for those with family incomes between $25,000 and $49,999, and to 29 percent for those with family incomes below $25,000.[19] Children in poor families also are more likely than their peers to have parents with limited education, because lower education is associated with earning lower incomes.[20] These finding suggest that policies and programs which would increase access to health insurance for children and to improved education for parents, particularly in low-income families, could play an important role in fostering children's educational success.

Finally, schools and parents cannot, by themselves, bring about these changes. Federal, state, and local governments will be essential in the development and funding of efforts to expand PreK, to develop integrated PreK-3rd initiatives, to reduce chronic absenteeism, to expand summer learning opportunities, to assure that schools provide high-quality instruction, and to provide access to health insurance and to effective opportunities for parents to increase their educational levels and human capital. The links between parent education, family income and children's educational success further suggest the potential value in pursuing two-generation strategies, which seek to improve results for children by focusing simultaneously on school policies and programs, and on strengthening families through increased parental education and improved employment opportunities that reduce family poverty, as well as increased health insurance coverage for all family members.

Future Analyses Will Provide a Deeper Understanding

This brief presents the preliminary results from the first phase of research into the factors that keep students from finishing high school. Additional analysis will look at the effect that neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty have on student graduation rates. Beyond that, the next phase of this research will systematically assess the living conditions of children to identify family, school, and neighborhood resources that can foster resilience among children, that is, resources which can make it possible for at-risk children to achieve third-grade reading success, and resources which can make it possible for children with limited third-grade reading skills to catch-up so that they can graduate from high school on time. This research will focus especially on the impact of increased mother's education and family income, access to health insurance, access to pre-kindergarten and high-quality schools, and improved neighborhood safety. I plan to expand the research to understand the role of specific family processes that link family, school, and neighborhood resources to third-grade reading success and to high school graduation.

APPENDIX I

Technical Notes

The results for on-time high school graduation (by age 19) presented in this report are calculated from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) and the associated data for children of mothers in the sample. The NLSY79 is the only data source capable of providing such estimates, because it is the only nationally representative study that has assessed student reading in third grade, and then subsequently has followed the same children into their young adult years.

More specifically, this study calculates high school graduation rates for children born between 1979 and 1989 to mothers who were in the age range of 22 to 32 years. The mothers in the sample were originally selected to be nationally representative of all women born in the years 1957 to 1964, and who were residents in the U.S. in 1978. They were first interviewed at ages 14 to 22 in 1979.[21] Insofar as the baby-boom generation was born in the years 1946 to 1964, the high school graduation rates reported here are for children who are old enough (age 19 or more) to have graduated from high school on time, and who have mothers born in the last half of the baby boom.

The NLSY79 was conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the U.S. Department of Labor. The sample size for analyses in this report was 3,975 children. Reading assessments were conducted as early as 1986, and data used in this report were collected as recently as 2008. Reading skill is measured in this study using the Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT) Reading Recognition subtest. This survey interviews children and their mothers biennially in even-numbered years. For half the sample, data were collected for children as of

third, fifth, seventh, ninth, and 11th grades. For the other half of the sample, data were collected for children as of the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and 10th grades.

For reading test scores, results were used for third grade if available, otherwise test scores were calculated as the average of second-grade and fourth-grade scores if both were available, otherwise the second-grade assessment was used if available. This study calculates the proportion of years a child experiences family poverty as the number of "interview years" the child lived in a poor family divided by the number of interview years available for the child between second grade and eleventh grade.

This study calculates high school graduation rates for children in the top, middle, and bottom thirds of the PIAT reading score distribution. These subpopulations were selected to correspond roughly to children classified in NAEP as reading at a proficient, basic, or below basic level. In the years between 1992 and 2009, the proportion scoring at or above proficient on NAEP was in the narrow range of 29 to 33 percent, while the remaining 67 to 71 percent scored below proficient at either the basic or below basic level. The proportion scoring in the middle (basic) category, was 18 to 26 percent in the years up to 2000, and in the higher range of 26 to 34 percent through 2009, while the proportion with test scores in the lowest (below basic) category was 38 to 41 percent up to 2000, and in the range of 33 to 27 percent in the years that followed.[22]

APPENDIX II

Percent Failing to Graduate from High School by Age 19, for Children by Third-Grade Reading Test Scores, by Race-Ethnicity, and by Poverty Experience

			Reading Scores Below Proficiency		
	All Children	Proficient	Total	Basic	Below Basic
Total	12	4	16	9	23
White	9	4	13	7	19
Black	21	6	24	15	30
Hispanic	21	9	25	12	33
	Have Not Experienced Poverty				
Total	6	2	9	5	14
White	5	2	7	4	12
Black	10	3	12	6	18
Hispanic	12	5	15	5	24
	Have Experienced Poverty				
Total	22	11	26	18	31
White	19	11	22	15	27
Black	28	10	31	22	35
Hispanic	30	14	33	20	40

ENDNOTES

[1] Lloyd, D.N. (1978). Prediction of School Failure from Third-Grade Data. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 38, 1193-2000.

[2] Reported in Annie E. Casey Foundation (2010), "EARLY WARNING! Why Reading by the End of Third-grade Matters" A KIDS COUNT Special Report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Baltimore, MD. Annie E. Casey Foundation.

[3] Archived: Executive Summary of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, retrieved March 15, 2011, from http://www2.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/execsumm.html

[4] Archived: Executive Summary of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, retrieved March 15, 2011, from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/index.html

[5] Archived: Executive Summary of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, retrieved March 15, 2011, from http://www2.ed.gov/nclb/overview/intro/execsumm.html

[6] Reported in America's Promise Alliance (2010), Building a Grad Nation: Progress and Challenge in Ending the High School Dropout Epidemic, Washington D.C. America's Promise Alliance.

[7] Reported in Annie E. Casey Foundation (2010), "EARLY WARNING! Why Reading by the End of Third-grade Matters" A KIDS COUNT Special Report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Baltimore, MD. Annie E. Casey Foundation.

[8] The NAEP Reading Achievement Levels by Grade. Retrieved March 15, 2011 from http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/reading/achieveall.asp#2009ald

[9] Reported in Annie E. Casey Foundation (2010), "EARLY WARNING! Why Reading by the End of Third-grade Matters" A KIDS COUNT Special Report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Baltimore, MD. Annie E. Casey Foundation.

[10] U.S. Census Bureau, 2011, Retrieved March 26, 2011 from http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/index.html

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[13] Reynolds, J.J., Temple, J.A., Robertson, D.L. & Mann, E.A., (2001) Long-term Effects of an Early Childhood Intervention on Educational Achievement and Juvenile Arrest: A 15-year Follow Up of Low-income Children in Public Schools. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 285(18), 2339-2346; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Dec. 2003). *State-funded Prekindergarten Programs: What the Evidence Shows*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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Florida's Education Revolution

Reading for Learning

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What challenges did Florida face implementing the third grade promotion policy?

A major challenge when implementing the third grade promotion policy was clear communication on the specifics of the policy and effectively communicating that the policy was an opportunity for a struggling reader to get the assistance he or she needed to become proficient reader.

Providing and defining good cause exemption options to the policy was also challenging. Providing an open hearing and laying out the good cause exemptions clearly is critical to the acceptance of the policy. In addition, having clear expectations on the student portfolio of work option is critical.

Establishing a strong professional development program and reading coaches to mentor teachers to teach reading was also important to the policy's success. Florida provided resources, such as parent workshops, that included student activities and support to parents about how they can support reading at home in the evenings. The strategy of working with parents showed that the state was committed to do something for their children to help them become successful, not just working with teachers and relying on the education system, but also the parents themselves, to change the culture to ensure student success.

Is retention "cruel to children"?

The status-quo is cruel to children. Educators who retain children and teach them how to read are doing them an enormous favor. The RAND Corporation's study of the New York City retention policy found positive psychological benefits for retained students.

How does Florida measure early reading proficiency?

Florida provides several options to measure early reading proficiency. The Early Reading Diagnostic Assessment K-3 (ERDA) and the Diagnostic Assessments of Reading K-12 (DAR) are available through the Florida Department of Education's Office of Assessment and School Performance free of charge for the school district's lowest-performing 15 percent of all K-12 students. Developmental screeners, like Early Childhood Observation (ECHO) (colors and shapes), Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and now the Florida Assessment of Instruction in Reading (FAIR) provide schools' options for assessing early

literacy. These assessments focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and identify areas in which the student is struggling. For a comprehensive list of reviewed assessments that meet psychometric standards, visit www.fcrr.org.

How much does a literacy-based promotion policy in third grade cost?

Implementing a literacy-based promotion policy in third grade will not incur additional costs on the state. The federal government requires all states to have a statewide standards-based assessment in third grade. Educators use this assessment to determine if students have acquired the necessary reading skills to advance to 4th grade. However, states should consider investing or leveraging existing resources to provide reading coaches who can assist teachers to learn the new science of teaching reading.

How do elementary schools deal with the extra students from a facility standpoint?

There are no extra students. The retention policy results in greater numbers of 3rd graders, but smaller numbers of 4th graders. Policy implementation sometimes involved changing a teacher assignment from 4th grade to 3rd grade.

What was the fiscal impact of this policy in Florida?

The amount of funding spent on ensuring kids know how to read, even if it takes them an extra year, is by far made up for in less costs remediating them for the next nine years in the K-12 system, if we are lucky, or as dropouts. Primary grades are the least expensive options to remediate students and the most realistic time to make it happen. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Any cost incurred with a test-based promotion policy should be regarded as an investment in child literacy, not a by-product of retention. Retention has been tried in other states before as a policy to address illiteracy and failed, as have efforts to fund literacy efforts without test-based assurance of its effectiveness. It was the unique combination of retention coupled with effective interventions that define Florida's policy and ensured its success. The key to the financial viability of this policy is making better use of existing local, state and federal funds. With a national average level of spending of $10,000 per child per year, a typical American student has had $40,000 invested by taxpayers by the time they reach the end of the 3rd grade. Taxpayers provide that money to *educate* rather than merely babysit the child. A child's future hangs precariously in the balance during the early grades, and we must fiercely pursue the maximum bang for every buck invested whether or not you decide to dedicate additional state funds for literacy interventions.

What about studies that show in other states that retention "does not work"?

Florida's model is very different. Researchers have subjected the Florida policy to three rigorous statistical evaluations and found both times that the policy helped retained students to gain literacy skills. As noted, educators and lawmakers have tried and failed with retention policies around the country previously. Florida's was different in that it targeted K-3, and that it only

used objective data as the basis for retention. The Sunshine state also had an appropriate balance of good cause exemptions only students who could benefit found themselves included in the policy.

Retention itself is not the goal here, it's remediation and intervention coupled with the test-based promotion that makes it a successful combination. In addition to Florida data demonstrating increases in proficiency on the statewide-standardized assessment and the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), several research studies (listed in detail in the following question's answer) provide evidence that Florida's policy is working.

A third grade promotion policy may help temporarily, but where is the long-term evidence? Does retention cause students to drop out?

The first class of retained students in Florida has not yet graduated high school. Evidence of the policy's impact on high school graduation and dropout rates will first be available in 2013 for third graders retained for the first time under the policy in 2003.

Reading proficiency in Florida, at every grade level and all subgroups (white, black, Hispanic, students with disabilities, etc.) has steadily been increasing over the last decade. Florida's graduation rates have been consistently increasing and they are at the highest rate ever. Likewise, Florida's dropout rates have been consistently decreasing and are at the lowest rate ever.

Research conducted on Florida's retention policy by the Manhattan Institute in three separate studies has shown there are statistically significant positive effects of the policy over time. Their currently published findings studied the program for the first three years of implementation and the Manhattan Institute has already secured data and begun work on a longer-term study of the policy with results anticipated next year.

Why can't we just fund literacy efforts without a retention policy?

A literacy program or policy is not enough because it does not provide the necessary pressure for the adults in the system to help kids that are not proficient. A literacy policy needs to be student-focused with specific help for students that are not proficient, like non-promotion to the next higher grade, coupled with literacy strategies. Florida did not just retain students for the sake of retention -- the state implemented improved professional development for teachers and principals in the research on reading and put reading coaches in place, among a number of other interventions to truly change what was happening in the public schools. Policymakers need a test-based promotion policy like Florida has to ensure teachers and students have the accountability for learning and mastery that children need to succeed.

Could a third grade progression policy jeopardize federal funds?

Not if districts observe the strict rules around supplanting (where the state is currently funding an initiative then federal funding comes into the state). For example, Florida's policy requires that students retained at 3rd grade receive supplementary learning experiences such as a summer

reading camp. Districts will have to think creatively about their funding sources for some activities, but it is not an insurmountable dilemma and has not resulted in Florida losing any federal funds.

Does the Florida policy retain students for demonstrating deficiencies in all of the subjects or only in reading?

The Florida policy bases promotion and retention decisions solely on reading. In Florida, as is typical in most states, performance on the reading statewide assessment is highly correlated with performance on the math assessment. Also, reading is the foundational skill students need to be able to learn.

Do the interventions associated with this policy require new funding sources or can we provide them with reallocations of existing dollars?

Both. A large portion of funding in Florida, previous to this policy, was typically used for summer school and post-failure remediation. Lawmakers reallocated these funds and allowed them to be used for "preventative care." Florida lawmakers also focused the federal Title I and Title II funds on ensuring students can read. In addition, the timing of the implementation coincided relatively well with the infusion of Reading First funds from USDE, which was used to hire reading coaches to mentor teachers.

Does the state mandate which instructional and support services are to be utilized as interventions?

No, the state does not mandate specific services, but, the services selected by the district must be consistent with scientifically based reading research. The Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) www.fcrr.org has extraordinary information about the materials that educators use to provide these services. Additionally, Florida has a statewide textbook adoption cycle that requires districts to select scientifically-based reading research (SBRR) materials consistent with research and Florida's literacy-based promotion policy.

What is the timeline for notifying students of retention?

The statewide assessment is administered in April; results are back to the school and parents before the end of the school year in May. Students cannot retake the statewide assessment to meet the third grade promotion policy. Instead, students may demonstrate proficiency on an approved alternate measure like SAT10, through a student portfolio or, the following year as a third grader if retained.

If a student moves into the school district from out-of-state at the beginning of 4th grade (or any grade after 3rd), must that student meet the third grade promotion requirements?

No. In addition, the third grade promotion policy does not apply to students not enrolled in public school for third grade.

How does the state ensure consistency in student portfolios to demonstrate a consistent standard across districts?

The state has a framework for what needs to be included in a student portfolio and it is comprehensive, as outlined below. Having a consistent policy statewide has alleviated the concern about students leaving one district for another because the portfolio is rumored to be easier.

Portfolio requirements:

- Be selected by the student's teacher;
- Be an accurate picture of the student's ability and only include student work that has been independently produced in the classroom;
- Be inclusive of evidence that demonstrates the grade 3 Reading FCAT have been met. This includes multiple choice items and passages that are approximately 60 percent literary text and 40 percent information text that are between 100-700 words with an average of 350 words; Such evidence could include chapter or unit tests from the district's/school's adopted core reading curriculum that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards or teacher-prepared assessments that are aligned with the Sunshine State Standards;
- Be an organized collection of evidence of the student's mastery of the Sunshine State Standard Benchmarks for Language Arts that are assessed by the grade 3 Reading FCAT. For each benchmark, there must be at least five examples of mastery as demonstrated by a grade of "C" or above; and
- Be signed by the teacher and the principal as an accurate assessment of the required reading skills.

In small, rural schools where there may only be one third grade teacher, what happens to retained students?

In cases where there is only one third-grade classroom, it is imperative that teachers collaborate and use school support to provide a strategy to ensure these students receive intensive interventions and appropriate remediation. The state also makes online options available to students.

Is there a specific curriculum for the retained students?

Retention alone will not solve the problem of teaching students to read; these students will require differentiated curriculum and instruction. Florida knows that doing the same thing for another year will not produce different results. This is why Florida and the U.S. Department of Education provided funding for Scientifically-Based Reading Research (SBRR), so we know what is effective to help struggling readers. Educators must provide retained students with additional intensive instructional time using SBRR, materials and strategies, please visit www.fcrr.org for all the information. Districts are required to use SBRR materials with retained third grade students.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR EARLY READING PROFICIENCY

1. **According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, reading proficiency hasn't improved much nationwide over the past 20 years. But in South Carolina evidence of improvement has been somewhat more encouraging over the past decade:**

Years	1992	1994	1998	2000	2002	2003	2005	2007	2009
4th grade % Below Basic									
SC	47	52	47	na	42	41	43	41	38
US	38	40	40	41	36	37	36	33	33
4th Grade % Proficiency									
SC	22	20	22	na	21	26	26	26	28
US	29	30	29	29	31	31	31	33	33
4th Grade Scale Scores									
SC	210	203	209	na	214	215	213	214	216
US	217	214	215	213	219	218	219	221	221

2. **SC has ranked in the bottom 10 states on 4th grade reading: On the NAEP reading test in 2009, SC was tied for 39th with Alabama and Arkansas in the 4th grade and was 42nd in the 8th grade.** The lowest scoring states are Louisiana, Mississippi, California, New Mexico, and Nevada. These states are similar to South Carolina in their high rates of poverty, low literacy, and minority populations.

3. **Data from state tests for the percent deficient and for not proficient vary but generally show too many deficient readers and too few proficient:** State test data over the past 30 years provide an ambiguous picture. Test scores in the first year of testing have always been discouraging but then become much better after several years of instructional alignment and practice in taking the test.

   - **First year state testing results have generally shown over 30% of students below standards:** in grade 3 for BSAP 33% and PACT 35%; for SCRA 30% in kindergarten and 33% in 1st grade; 22% on 3rd grade PASS were below standards (Not Met) in ELA and 31% in Writing. **Overall it seems reasonable to conclude: at least 25% of students and more likely over 30% are seriously deficient in reading by the end of grade 3. These state test results for early reading deficiency are significantly lower than the 38% Below Basic on 4th grade NAEP in 2009 and the 41-43% Below Basic in the 4 NAEP testing administrations from 2002 to 2008.**

   - **It appears that approximately 60-70% of students in SC are not proficient in reading by grade 4.** State tests have shown 72% not proficient in the 1st year of PACT testing and 43% in its last year. On PASS ELA in its first year, 54% were below Exemplary on ELA and 60% on Writing. NAEP data found 74% not proficient in 4 testing administrations for 2002-2008 and 72% in 2009.

- **If state testing results are used to adjust the findings of NAEP (38% Below Basic, 34% Basic, and 28% Proficient), then a plausible though generous interpretation would be one-third of SC students at each level: Below Basic, Basic, and Proficient. Since the national goal is for all students to achieve proficiency, one-third of students in SC have attained this standard; one-third are close enough with significant support to reach the standard; and one-third have little prospect of ever becoming proficient, unless they are given substantial effective help starting no later than their initial enrolment in school and preferably earlier.**

4. **Five achievement gaps reveal troubling disparities in reading proficiency among students in SC: race (minority vs. white), income (poor vs. non-poor), gender (boys vs girls), English language proficiency (non-English vs. English speakers), and state reading competitiveness (SC vs US).**

    - **Achievement gaps for race and income are a persistent dilemma in SC. Twice as many African American and poor children score below basic than do whites and children who are not poor. Adding to the challenge is the fact that SC has a much higher proportion of African American and poor children than the national average.** The differences are large: for example, on NAEP 56% of African American children were Below Basic in 2009 as compared with 26% for whites; 51% of poor children were Below Basic as compared with 23% of children who were not poor. A smaller gender gap shows lower reading proficiency of boys than girls on all tests (e.g., 40% vs 36% Below Basic on NAEP Reading). Data is not available specifically for the previously small but rapidly growing number of immigrant English language learners in SC, but the gap for Hispanics on the 4th grade NAEP in 2009 was 47% Below Basic for Hispanic children as compared with 26% for non-Hispanic white children.

5. **While some students come to school already reading or with knowledge and skills enabling them to become proficient readers quickly, many other children are quite unexposed to and unskilled in foundational literacy knowledge, skills, and interest.** On the SC Readiness Assessment, teachers rated as not consistently ready one-quarter of kindergarten and 1st grade students in reading and writing and one-third in their communication skills. The Stanford Reading First test in the fall of 1st grade determined that in high-poverty schools only 20% of students have reading skills at grade level while 54% need substantial intervention.

SCRA 2008	Reading (% not consistently ready)	Writing (% not consistently ready)	Communication (% not consistently ready)
Kindergarten	24%	20%	32%
1st grade	25%	28%	33%

Stanford Reading First 2004-2008	At Grade Level	Needs Substantial Intervention
1st grade	20%	54%
2nd grade	36%	31%
3rd grade	26%	47%

6. Children who are slow in becoming capable readers either or both:

- **reached school far behind in language and literacy skills (family literacy deficits)**. High-risk children constituting one-quarter of all 4-year-olds were found by the DIAL screening assessment to have low language skills as compared with national norms: 19% below 95% of all students nationally; 30% below 90% nationally; and 50% below 75% nationally.
- The Stanford Reading First test found that the Speaking Vocabulary of 41% of students entering 1st grade in high poverty schools needs substantial intervention, while only 37% have Speaking Vocabulary at grade level of national norms.

DIAL Language at entry to 4K preschool (SC children scored at national percentiles):	
At or below 5th percentile	19%
At or below 10th percentile	30%
At or below 25th percentile	50%

Stanford Reading First Speaking Vocabulary in Fall of 1st grade (at risk schools 2004-2008):	
At grade level	37%
Needs additional intervention	22%
Needs substantial intervention	41%

- **exhibited serious phonological or other reading difficulties: The Stanford Reading First test found that one-third of children entering 1st grade in high poverty schools need substantial intervention for phonemic awareness and phonics.**

Stanford Reading First Phonemic Awareness (at risk schools in Fall of 2004-2008):			
	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade
At grade level	56%	65%	78%
Needs additional intervention	11%	21%	15%
Needs substantial intervention	33%	14%	6%

Stanford Reading First Phonics (at risk schools in Fall of 2004-2008):			
	1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade
At grade level	28%	9%	8%
Needs additional intervention	42%	35%	26%
Needs substantial intervention	30%	56%	66%

7. **Effectiveness of reading and literacy instruction varies widely across school districts, schools, and classrooms but could be improved substantially.** In an evaluation of schools participating in South Carolina Reading First (SCRF), schools with high levels of implementation of the effective reading practices promoted in SCRF had significantly higher standardized test scores on Stanford Reading First than schools with lower levels of implementation of these reading practices.

8. **Progress has been constrained by lack of a formal plan and funding for a statewide reading initiative that reaches all schools. Although South Carolina has never adopted a formal plan, the SC Reading Initiative has developed processes and practices for enhancing reading instruction in classrooms across the state, though far from universally. Using funding averaging $15 million per year, SCRI has worked with more than 5,200 teachers and many other educators to build their knowledge and skills for effective reading instruction.**

Solutions

- **Formulation of state policy for early reading proficiency, including but not limited to the components listed below.**
    - **Policy Prescribes, Practices Produce (If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there):** Over three decades of activist state education policy, reading has never been a major and consistent focus. Despite the Basic Skills Act of 1979 and the SC Reading Initiative of 1999, reading has not been promoted through high profile policy and practice guidance from elected officials backed by evaluation and oversight. **Solution:** SC educators and elected officials must create a comprehensive plan for reading instruction. The plan should be enacted though legislation and supported by funding sufficient to promote universal early reading proficiency.

- **Literacy development though Early Care and Education programs:**
    - **Early Care and Too Little Education:** Many children attend child care while their parents are at work. Across South Carolina and the nation, most young children in child care attend programs with rather large group size and high child to teacher ratios. These programs are unable to do much to stimulate oral language and print awareness skills. Many child care workers lack training in early literacy and too quickly take any training with them to better-paying jobs outside child care. **Solutions:** Child care workers must receive high quality literacy training starting soon after being hired and continuing throughout their employment.

- **Family literacy: both parenting education and cultural promotion (comparable to health promotion of exercise and nutrition).**
    - **Families Grow Language (Literacy Begins at Home):** Children in literate families acquire from their parents strong oral language and motivation for reading. Children growing up in homes not providing daily experiences of rich, interactive dialogue and exposure to print reach school considerably behind classmates entering with critical language skills and print awareness. **Solution**: Family literacy programs are needed to encourage and instruct low literacy families to adopt effective practices of interactive dialogue and shared reading, starting as soon after birth as possible. All of the families whose children are anticipated to perform below reading standards in grades K-3 (approximately

30%) need family literacy services, with half of them requiring intensive guidance and support.

- **Schools Grow Readers:** Building upon the oral language and print awareness which children bring from home, schools must provide learning experiences that produce proficient readers. Since too many young learners are not achieving proficiency in reading and writing, schools must transform their literacy instruction starting in preschool and kindergarten to increase early reading proficiency dramatically. **School solutions are presented below:**

- **Pre-school and kindergarten: building the foundation for reading through oral language and print-literacy skills.**
  Little Learners Love Literacy: For too many years, preschool and kindergarten too narrowly followed the mantra: ***"play is a child's work."*** Though this mantra is correct about process, it was sometimes interpreted to exclude pre-academic content critical to later success. Children ages 4 & 5 must build their oral language, awareness of print, love of literature, and facility with the sounds in words. **Solution**: Preschool and kindergarten must fill each day with rich experiences in language and literature. Teachers must be trained to infuse language and literature into developmentally appropriate individual and group activities throughout the school day.

- **Grades 1-3: quality reading instruction differentiated for each learner's needs:**
  Struggling Readers Take It Personally. Reading difficulties begin early, so children's perceptions of themselves as readers and learners can be damaged if they fail to experience success in learning to read. Each child is different and requires personalized kinds and amounts of support at different points in the journey to reading proficiency. **Solution**: In order for each child to attain reading proficiency, all of our schools must deliver consistently effective, customized instruction differentiated to meet the needs of individual children. Differentiated instruction should be organized through a tiered delivery model based on principles and practices of Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI is tiered instructional model with increasingly more intensive and more customized instruction in each successive tier. Tier 1 focuses on instructional improvement for all students; Tier 2 provides small group and individualized intervention services for struggling readers; and Tier 3 offers the most intensive services for the severely struggling readers, often through individualized assistance. Special Education services are provided only when students do not respond to these intensive interventions.

  - **Quality classroom instruction** assures small group and individualized attention for readers who need additional help, delivered by teachers well-trained in reading and literacy. For reading instruction and for every content area, teachers provide all students with books they can read. They employ effective instructional practices such as: (a) determining the strengths and instructional needs of each child; (b) utilizing flexible grouping based on ongoing assessment of learning; (c) continually monitoring progress and adjusting instruction appropriately; (d) expecting large amounts of reading and writing, especially in the content areas; (e) ensuring that all children have ample time for independent reading of books they can easily manage; and (f) providing direct instruction in reading strategies emphasizing problem-solving, understanding, and organizing information.

- **Effective intervention programs for struggling readers delivered by highly qualified reading teachers** provide additional, more intensive help for children in small group and one-on-one settings. Intervention models such as Reading Recovery using effective practices validated by research should serve struggling readers in grade 1 with extended service in the summers before and after grade 1. All intervention services should be taught by the most knowledgeable reading professional available and should be customized to the needs of the reader.

- **Strengthened Special Education, Title I and Act 135 funding for literacy interventions.** For decades Title I, Special Education (now IDEA), and Act 135 (previously the EIA Remedial and Compensatory Program) have provided the largest funding and instructional support for poor and disabled children, many of whom are struggling readers. The effectiveness of these efforts to promote reading proficiency is hindered by the limited reading expertise of many teachers employed with these funds as well as by a lack of cooperation and coordination with the classroom and with other interventions across the school. **Solution**: Title I, Act 135, and IDEA literacy efforts must become central partners in supporting evidence-based literacy interventions delivered by highly-trained teachers. Priority in using the 15% of IDEA funding set aside for Early Intervention Services must be given to support provided by our most effective literacy teachers. When children require long-term assistance, special education services must assure high quality reading instruction for students with disabilities, especially those with speech and language impairment and learning disabilities.

- **Teacher training and coaching through professional literacy learning communities:**
  Teaching Struggling Readers is Brain Surgery (Teachers Must be Taught Too): Reading and writing instruction is very complicated work requiring extensive knowledge and skills. Most new teachers with a BA enter the classroom with only two courses in reading. Much more preparation is essential. **Solution:** Adequate preparation in reading and writing requires training equivalent to a MA in reading with at least half of the training received through practicum coaching while teaching. Substantial improvement is needed in:

  - the quality and number of required university reading courses
  - practicum experience in pre-service training
  - coaching for teachers in the schools
  - collaborative literacy learning among teachers of reading

- **Evaluation-driven accountability monitoring for early reading proficiency and for content-area reading proficiency:**
  Fixing What's Broken (If you don't know what's broken, you can't fix it): While the majority of children progress steadily to reading proficiency with little or no intervention assistance, roughly one-third test below basic in grade 3 and half of these students are severely below grade level. Because there is no statewide plan for monitoring the literacy progress of young children, too many struggling readers are not identified for

early intervention in pre-school and kindergarten as intended by the General Assembly in funding pre-school and full-day kindergarten. **Solution**: The legislature should require universal screening and literacy progress monitoring for all students in grades Pre K through three. These assessments should determine what children already know about written language and what they have not yet learned. The screening and progress monitoring will provide to the state, districts, and schools the information required to identify the students needing additional support and to improve and intensify literacy instruction to ensure reading proficiency by the end of third grade.

- **Assessment of literacy skills at entry to 4K and 5K.** The SCDE should develop or adopt statewide a universal screening instrument and more specialized diagnostic instruments to identify children at risk of reading failure.
- **Monitor children's progress and difficulties in reading through grade 3 or until attainment of proficiency.** The SCDE should adopt and use a battery of validated formative and diagnostic assessments in reading, writing, and oral language. These assessments should be used to diagnose individual child needs, prescribe services, and monitor the effectiveness of interventions in order to adjust instruction for individual children until attainment of proficiency.
- **Adopt a collaborative, team problem-solving approach to accelerate literacy learning for students below grade level.** Individual reading proficiency plans designed to accelerate reading progress should be developed collaboratively by school teams together with students' families for every student below grade level. These plans should be actively supported and reviewed until reading proficiency is attained.

- **Legislative oversight through its Education Committees and the EOC:**
  Trust but Verify (Out of Sight is Out of Mind): Oversight by elected officials for reading and literacy has been quite limited in the past. Because no major initiatives for reading have been enacted, legislative oversight has been minimal. Other states such as Alabama have created high profile reading initiatives which are monitored for effectiveness by the Legislature, Governor, and Board of Education. **Solution:** The General Assembly through its Education Committees and the Education Oversight Committee should provide strong and persistent monitoring for early proficiency in reading and literacy. Annual reading proficiency reports from the State Department of Education should be published and then reviewed by the EOC to recommend improvements so that educators and elected officials can respond with needed remedies.

Conclusion: there are at least 10 solutions that should receive policy and practice attention for increasing early reading proficiency:

1. Development of a state plan and an oversight process for assuring reading proficiency
2. Parenting education and family literacy services targeted to the lowest literacy families
3. Training for child care teachers in practical ways to promote literacy development
4. Substantially enhanced teacher training for effective reading instruction
5. Strengthened classroom reading instruction in 4K preschool through grade 3
6. Assessment of individual children's reading proficiency in 4K through grade 3
7. Individual reading proficiency plans for all struggling readers
8. Effective intervention provided to each seriously struggling reader
9. Improved reading instruction through Special Education, Title 1, and Students at Risk funding and programs
10. Funding sufficient to support a statewide system achieving universal reading proficiency

For access to data and information on the reading tests cited in this report, see:

- **NAEP: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard**
- **Stanford Reading First: http://www.ed.sc.edu/scepc/Projects.asp**
- **PACT and PASS: http://ed.sc.gov/topics/assessment/scores**

Contact Us with Your Comments:

This report on early reading proficiency has been prepared with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. **It is the first of a series of reports on the critical Challenges and Solutions for early reading proficiency. This report attempts to summarize data on reading proficiency in SC and to offer a framework of Challenges and Solutions for discussion by all persons sharing the conviction that early reading proficiency is critical for academic achievement. Reading is such a complex phenomenon that neither this present document nor the others that follow will ever capture all the perspectives needed for guiding reading proficiency policy and practice. We strongly urge you to send your comments, criticisms, and suggestions to us at:** baron.holmes@ors.sc.gov **Your involvement will enable us to incorporate your knowledge and advice into the consensus-building that the Early Reading Proficiency Project is seeking to nurture. Please become an active partner in our efforts.**

Research on Improving Reading Achievement

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Overview

- 1) The Research—WWC Practice Guides
  - *Preschool language and literacy*
  - *Improving Reading Comprehension in the Kindergarten through Third-Grade*
  - *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classrooms and Intervention Practices*
- 2) The Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
  - What is in the WWC and what to add

What Can Research Tell Us?

- **"Research can prove anything!"**
- THAT IS TRUE!!!
- BUT:
- **A body of research usually tells the right story.**
  - 1 study vs. many studies together

The What Works Clearinghouse

- The WWC
  - a branch of the United States Department of Education (USDE) and the Institute of Education Sciences (IES)
  - think the **Food and Drug Administration**
  - think the **large-scale medical studies**
  - Examines all the research available and picks out the best research evidence we have
  - Uses gold-standard criteria to rule out less than rigorous studies

The WWC Practice Guides

- The WWC writes Practice Guides for teachers, administrators
  - Reviews sometimes over 800 studies on a specific topic
  - Screens the studies based on scientific criteria
  - Accepts only the most rigorous studies
  - Reviews those studies to come up with recommendations for schools and teachers

Practice Guides for Reading, K-12

- *Preschool Language and Literacy*
  - *3-5 year olds*
- *Improving Reading Comprehension in the Kindergarten through Third-Grade*
  - *Grades K-3*
- *Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classrooms and Intervention Practices*
  - *Grades 4-12*

WWC Recommendations

- Recommendations are rated based on the strength of the research evidence
  - **Strong**—substantially strong scientific evidence
  - **Moderate**—moderate amount of scientific evidence
  - **Minimal or Low**—expert opinion is strong, but insufficient scientific evidence (not enough research has been done)

Preschool Language and Literacy

- **Recommendation 1: Teach phonological awareness—**Strong
  - Sentences are made up of words
  - Words are made up of syllables
  - Syllables are made up of individual sounds
  - Example: "Canyourun?"
- This is taught orally, without letters
- Use games to teach

Preschool Language and Literacy

- **Recommendation 2: Use interactive reading alouds**—Strong
  - Read-alouds should be an experience where children **talk** about what they are listening to and teachers ask questions throughout the reading and children talk and respond. (CCSS)
  - Adults help children with oral language as they read through a story. (CCSS)

Improving K-3 Reading

- **Recommendation 1: Teach Comprehension Strategies**—Strong
- Comprehension strategies are routines and procedures you use to understand what you read.
  - EXAMPLES: summarizing, visualizing, rereading, predicting

Improving K-3 Reading

- **Recommendation 2: Engage students with text—**Moderate
  - Motivate students to read a text
    - Discuss background knowledge
    - Have them predict what the text will be about
  - Engage students in interesting discussions about the text. (CCSS)
    - Prepare good questions for discussions.
    - Ask higher-level thinking questions.

Improving K-3 Reading

- **Recommendation 3: Focus on Text Structure**—Moderate (CCSS)
  - Teach students the difference between **narrative texts** (stories) and **informational texts** (nonfiction newspaper articles, magazine articles, schedules, directions, etc.)
  - Read both kinds of texts

Improving Adolescent Literacy

- **Recommendation 1: Vocabulary Instruction** (CCSS)—Strong
  - Vocabulary instruction is NOT looking words up in the dictionary and writing sentences with the words
  - Vocabulary instruction is engaging students in getting excited about and learning the meanings of new words

Improving Adolescent Literacy

- **Recommendation 2: Teach Comprehension Strategies**—Strong
  - Same recommendation as for K-3
  - Comprehension strategies are routines and procedures we use to understand what we read
    - EXAMPLES: summarizing, reading across two texts and synthesizing information (CCSS)

Improving Adolescent Literacy

- **Recommendation 3: Engaging Text Discussions**—Moderate (CCSS)
  - Discussions are NOT the same as lectures
  - Discussions are student-centered and not teacher-centered
  - Discussions as students to think about higher-level reasoning questions

Improving Adolescent Literacy

- **Recommendation 4: Interventions for Struggling Readers**—Strong
  - 1-1 or 1-3 tutoring with struggling readers with a qualified specialist—reading specialist, special education teacher
  - Increase intensity—from 1-8 to 1-3
  - Increase amount of time—2-3 times per week vs. 4-5 times per week

Improving Adolescent Literacy

- **Recommendation 5: Engagement and Motivation to Read**—Low
  - Connect to students' interests and lives, pop culture, current events in the world
  - Encourage students to evaluate their level of effort and reflect on how well they did
  - Encourage students to set their own learning goals

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

- The CCSS focus on:

1) **KEY DETAILS**—use details and information to support answers from the text
2) **CENTRAL IDEAS**—Summarize central ideas
3) **WORD MEANINGS**—Determine connotations, denotations, multiple meanings, word structure
4) **REASONING and EVIDENCE**—Apply reasoning and textual evidence to justify points

Recommendations

- Change happens at the school level
- Importance of principals cannot be overestimated
- For all policymakers, tension between **pressure** and **support** to schools
- Professional development is critical for change to happen
- Improved coordinations with preservice institutions is critical

Recommendations

School Leaders:

- Establish a reading/language arts block of time
- Use a core reading program in low-performing schools
- Conduct "walk-throughs" to observe how teachers teach and spend their time
- Conduct professional development to ensure that teachers know about and use WWC recommendations

Recommendations

- Establish a literacy leader in the school
- Establish a collaborative, collegial group of teachers who hold a school-level view as well as a class-level view
- Use data to inform decision-making and instruction
  - Hold meetings specifically to discuss struggling readers

Recommendations

- **Policy Makers**
  - Hold all accountable for student performance
    - Examine data to make decisions
  - Encourage re-allocation of resources to improve reading achievement
  - Focus on the goal of reading achievement
  - Do not change focus every year
  - Discuss with principals barriers to reform and plan how to remediate these barriers

Recommendations

- **State Education Agencies**
  - Use of regional labs for support and assistance and guidance to the research-base
  - Sustained professional development for districts, schools
  - Allocate resources to remove barriers to change
  - Use of experts to assist districts and schools

THANK YOU!

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South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative Panel Meeting

November 16, 2011

Recommendations for A State-wide Approach to Literacy Instruction and Assessment

Presenter Contact Information

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Problems

- Many students do not learn to read and write proficiently
- Each year they fall farther and farther behind
- Too many fall so far behind they qualify for special education
- A high percentage of students who drop out do so because they cannot read grade level texts

State Data

- 20% below grade level at 3rd grade
- 22% below grade level at 4th grade
- 32% below grade level at 8th grade
- 7 - 8 % of all students are labeled Learning Disabled because they are struggling readers

Challenges for Students

- Reading with understanding
- Reading for pleasure
- Efficacy (believing they can succeed and so being willing to try)
- Access to books at home, in community and at school
- Time to read in school
- Problem-solving skills and strategies for words, sentences, passages
- Adequate background knowledge and vocabulary (oral and/or sight)
- Home language vs. academic language

Challenges for Teachers

- Understanding reading and writing processes
- Understanding the critical importance of reading and writing volume at school
- Understanding the critical importance of making certain that all students are reading books they can read and want to read
- Knowing how to accelerate the progress of struggling readers and writers
- Knowing how to teach different readers and writers differently
- Knowing how to diagnose and address specific needs of students

Challenges for School and District Leaders

- Understanding reading and writing processes
- Understanding the critical importance of reading and writing volume at school
- Need to focus on reading proficiency to raise test scores
- Need for effective, ***text-based*** interventions for struggling readers at all levels taught by teachers with special skill in teaching reading
- Flexibility without accountability:
  - Money spent on no-yield, low-yield solutions and negative-yield "silver bullet" solutions
  - Mandated programs and initiatives
  - Emphasis on raising test scores rather than increasing reading proficiency

Challenges District and State Leaders

Need for

- Effective, comprehensive, ***text-based*** **assessment systems** that
  - Identify struggling readers
  - Inform instruction to increase effectiveness
  - Track the progress of students
- Effective comprehensive **system of interventions** for students at all levels
- **Knowledgeable teachers and interventionists** who know how to accelerate progress so that students can read at grade level

Challenges for State Leaders

- Extensive and **high quality education** for teachers of reading
- **Reading policy** based on research and best practice
- Support for **every teacher as a teacher of reading**
- Emphasis on increasing reading proficiency (which will raise test scores)

Research and Evidence-based Recommendations for South Carolina Schools

Local Needs, Local Solutions

Research- and Evidence-based Recommendations

- Improve classroom and supplemental reading and writing instruction and assessment.
- Expand the knowledge base of pre- and in-service teachers.
- Expand the knowledge base of principals about how to support readers and writers and teachers of readers and writers.
- Increase the time students read and write in school and outside of school

Research- and Evidence-based Recommendations

- Increase number of appropriate texts in classrooms.
- Create community partnerships to promote a culture of literacy in South Carolina.
- Develop state-wide system to monitor and ensure effective implementation of research-based solutions including evaluations of outcomes.

Recommendation 1: Improve Classroom and Supplemental Reading and Writing Instruction through Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework

What is RTI?

- Comprehensive
- On-going
- **Tiered***
- Assessment & support system
- Designed to accelerate students to grade level performance and beyond

Tiers of Support

Tier One: Enhanced classroom instruction, support, and intervention

Tiers Two, Three and Beyond: Supplemental Instruction

Highest Tier: Other support services

Improving Instruction

- Fully utilize RTI guidelines developed by the International Reading Association (IRA)
- Fully implement state guidelines for identifying students in need of extra assistance
- Develop comprehensive state assessment system to guide and monitor progress
- Continue to expand understandings about tiered instruction and supplemental support for readers/writers below grade level

Part 1: Utilize IRA Guidelines for RTI in Literacy

1. Optimize instruction for every student at all levels.
2. Differentiate instruction based on instructionally relevant data, unconstrained by packaged programs.

"No single approach. . . . can address the broad and varied goals and needs of all students."

Guidelines (con't)

3. Use assessment tools which can inform instruction meaningfully.
4. Ensure that reading/literacy specialists provide the needed leadership.
5. Implement a comprehensive, systematic approach to assessment and instruction

Guidelines (con't)

6. Ensure that "all students have . . .instruction from well-prepared teachers who keep up to date and supplemental instruction from professionals specifically prepared to teach language and literacy."

Part 2: State Guidelines to Identify Struggling and Reluctant Readers/Writers

- Continue to provide support for districts to understand measures and processes for identifying students at risk
- Continue to provide support for use of these
- Continue to provide ongoing training and support

Part 3: Develop Comprehensive State-wide Dual- Purpose Assessment System

- To guide instruction and progress of individual students
- To monitor instruction and progress of individual students

Panel of literacy and intervention experts to review and select formative and diagnostic assessments and processes

- Develop guidelines and support documents for use of these materials
- Provide training and support: train the trainer
- Enhance training and support via workshops, web, video

Part 4: Develop Coherent System of Tiered Instruction and Support to Ensure That Students Reading Below Grade Level Get the Help They Need

Coherent System of Tiered Instruction and Support (con't)

- Provide ongoing support in how to teach struggling and reluctant readers/writers.
- Develop proficiency standards for literacy interventionists.
- Establish standards for service.
- Develop phase-in plan.
- Ensure service to all students.
- Expand RTI Demonstration Sites

"A Rising Tide Lifts all Boats."

Recommendation 2: Expand the Knowledge Base of Teachers

Goal: Increase knowledge and ability of SC teachers to teach reading and writing to all students

- In-service teachers
- Newly certified teachers
- Pre-service teachers

Pre-service Teachers

- Outline knowledge, skills and strategies
- Develop description of experiences to provide pre-service teachers with the knowledge needed to provide effective literacy instruction in their first year of teaching
- Review syllabi in certification programs statewide
- Offer state-endorsement of and support for programs that meet heightened criteria

Newly Certified Teachers

- Offer Literacy Teacher courses ("boot-camp") beginning the summer after graduation and continuing through first 2 years of teaching
- Provide on-site mentoring by a Literacy Coach

In-Service Teachers

- Expand continuing education through professional development and workshops
- Require Literacy Teacher courses
- Require that all pre-K through 3rd grade teachers have Literacy Teacher endorsement for recertification
- Provide state certified Literacy Coaches to support teachers in schools

Recommendation 3: Expand the Knowledge Base of Principals and Instructional Leaders: Increase Understanding of How to Support Readers and Writers

- Provide mandatory state-wide series of workshops
- Provide on-site visits to audit literacy practices and offer suggestions for moving classrooms toward High Progress Literacy Classrooms (HPLC).
- Provide virtual support via website, seminars, workshops, and webinars

Recommendation 4: Increase the Time Students Read and Write **At School**

Promote the importance of engaged reading and writing at school

- Expand current on-site High Progress Literacy Classrooms (HPLC) workshops
- Develop interactive online workshops and seminars
- Develop state literacy website to feature transformative practices characteristic of HPLC's
- Establish public information campaign

Set state expectations for reading and writing text at school

- Set statewide expectations based on the HPLC research
- Provide professional development
- Provide tools to help teachers meet standards
- Reconvene panel to review progress and recommend improvements

Increase knowledge about how to accelerate reading progress for struggling and reluctant readers/writers

- Provide on-site workshops
- Develop interactive online workshops and seminars
- Develop state literacy website which features transformative practices characteristic of HPLC

Recommendation 4: Increase the Time Students Read and Write

Outside School

Promote the importance of increasing amount of reading and writing

- Raise awareness among parents, caregivers and community members

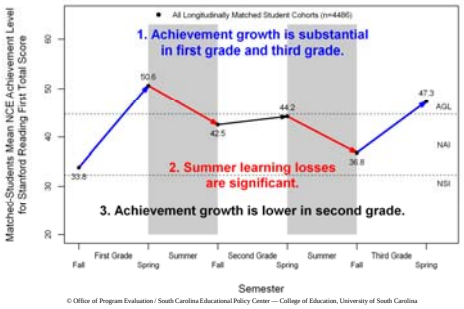
Educate parents, care-givers, and the community to engage students productively in reading and writing outside of school

- Offer workshop on how to read and write with students
- Develop online, interactive workshops
- Develop state website on supporting engaged reading and writing outside school
- Implement public information campaign

Increase out-of-school reading and alleviate summer reading loss

- Set clear time and volume goals for out-of-school reading
  - During academic year
  - During the summer
- Implement evidence-based programs to develop the habit of reading out of school
  - During academic year
  - During the summer

SC Reading First Summer Reading Loss 1st – 3rd Grades



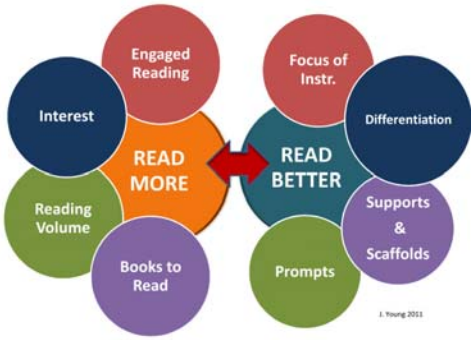
Increase access to books and reading materials outside of school

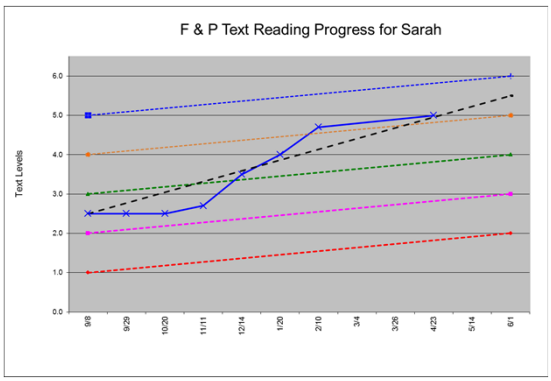
- Provide funding for books to take home to read
- Open school libraries in summer
- Promote book exchanges and school bookstores
- Partner with community libraries to bring books into high-need areas
- Foster local and state-wide partnerships to underwrite the cost of providing reading materials for out-of-school reading

Recommendation 5
Increase Texts in Classrooms: Appropriate levels, genres, and content areas

- Set state expectations for classroom libraries
- Develop book lists by grade and content for basic classroom libraries
- Provide funding based on need and awarded after teachers attend HPLC workshops
- Establish community and business partnerships to help build classroom libraries

Mutual causation demands that we focus on both teaching kids how to read more and read better





Recommendation 6: Develop Community Partnerships to Create a Culture of Literacy in South Carolina

- Convene a Literacy Summit to establish a consortium to coordinate literacy efforts in SC
- Develop a state-wide plan for activities of consortium
- Develop state partnerships to support efforts to transform literacy in South Carolina

Recommendation 7: Develop a State-wide System to Monitor and Ensure Effective Implementation of Research-based Solutions

Part 1: Ensure valid and reliable processes are being used to improve instruction

Valid and reliable processes

- Identify students needing supplemental instruction
- Monitor individual student progress rates
- Facilitate data-based decision making
- Ensure accommodations for <u>all</u> students are appropriately assessed

Part 2: Monitor implementation

- Step 1: Provide statewide monitoring of implementation of key elements
- Step 2: Present yearly report to the public
- Step 3: Use data to guide revisions of SC Engage! and of ongoing monitoring system

Appendix 3

Panel Members' Suggested Action Items

SC Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative
Rank Order by Ranking Number – All Policy Areas

1. Develop a statewide comprehensive plan for how to address reading achievement in South Carolina. The plan must include a variety of different sectors, including the public schools, First Steps, SC DSS Child Care Division, Early Head Start, Head Start, community-based programs (Reach Out and Read, Imagination Library, Success By Six, local library programs, after-school tutoring and homework assistance programs, and others), and home visitation programs (Parents As Teachers, Nurse Family Partnership, and others). The Panel received excellent information from the What Works Clearinghouse about effective strategies that must be implemented in a coordinated and consistent way across all entities serving children. This is not an issue that can be solved by our K-12 school system alone. **Policy Area: Family and Community Engagement**

   Rating (1-10): 1.15 Ranking (1-5): 1.64

2. Develop a statewide text-based assessment system to monitor student progress trajectories, facilitate data-based decision-making, and to inform changes to instruction to get better results. **Policy Area: State Education Agency Operations**

   Rating (1-10): 2.07 Ranking (1-7): 2.06

3. On a big picture scale, we need to effect change on the culture. Reading needs to be important to families and communities. Partnerships with businesses to promote reading, provide more reading material, establish volunteers who read with children to reinforce the importance of reading. Books need to be birthday presents, and trips to the bookstore and library desired with great anticipation. Parents should model the process daily. It is not so important what you read as much as you are reading, regularly and often. Set goals for reading at home and in the community. **Policy Area: Family and Community Engagement**

   Rating (1-10): 1.25 Ranking (1-5): 2.47

4. Literacy Coaches be placed at every public school. In Pre-K to grade 5, there should be one coach for every 25 teachers. In grades 6 to 12, there should be one coach for every math and science and one for social studies and English teacher (with a maximum of 25 teacher per coach). Literacy Coaches be in classrooms four days a week helping Pre K-12 teachers develop implement, and sustain effective practices and help them enhance the trajectory of each and every student as a learner. This includes reading, writing and content area support. **Policy Area: Professional Development**

   Rating (1-10): 2.50 Ranking (1-7): 2.93

5. Endorsement requirements for literacy coaches (information/expectations from South Carolina Reading Initiative already exist) ensuring that knowledgeable, trained people are available to provide individualized professional development for teachers. **Policy Area: Teacher and Other Educator Preparation**

   Rating (1-10): 2.78 Ranking (1-7): 2.93

6. Instruction must be guided by continuing, individualized assessment and progress monitoring of the language and literacy development of each child in preschool and kindergarten. **Policy Area: School District Operations**

   Rating (1-10): 1.84 Ranking (1-10): 3.00

7. Schools, school districts, and the state must develop monitoring, support, and explicit guidance for highly effective language and literacy programming in the classrooms of young children in preschool and kindergarten. **Policy Area: State Education Agency Operations**

   Rating (1-10): 2.15 Ranking (1-7): 3.06

8. Recruit community partners to provide books for children and to sponsor language and literacy celebrations at school or in the community during which the books will be given to the children and their parents. **Policy Area: Family and Community Engagement**

   Rating (1-10): 2.08 Ranking (1-5): 3.11

9. Literacy Coaches provide professional development to sustain and support teachers and administrators. That PD will be cohesive and coherent and reflect the school's/district's comprehensive literacy plan. The coach provides engagements which vary in the degree of time and effort required by teachers (multiple days of professional development on a given topic; after school book clubs, year-long study groups; graduate level course work; on-going action research projects). Literacy Coaches, via professional development and in-classroom support, help teachers learn and use effective tools for assessing reader strengths and needs and help teachers use that knowledge both to inform practice and to document student growth. **Policy Area: Professional Development**

   Rating (1-10): 2.40 Ranking (1-7): 3.11

10. Engage preschool programs in the statewide plan. The Panel recognizes that the issue of reading achievement does not begin when a child begins kindergarten. To adequately address reading achievement in SC, preschool programs must be seen as part of the solution. Once again, the What Works Clearinghouse provided information to the Panel about the proven-effective strategies to improve literacy skills among children in preschool. These should be incorporated into existing professional development opportunities, such as teacher training days for public preschool programs and the SC Child Care Career Development for private child care providers. **Policy Area: Birth to Five Policy**

    Rating (1-10): 2.15 Ranking (1-8): 3.12

11. For certified teachers, require graduate course work for re-certification. For all early childhood and elementary teachers (pre-K to 5), K-12 reading specialists and special education teachers who work with students labeled Learning Disabled require participation in on-site courses that lead to South Carolina Literacy Teacher certification. This course work – in reading, reading assessment and content area literacy - provides teachers with strong understanding of the theory, research, and practices that support the teaching of reading and writing. (For newly certified teachers, these courses would begin the summer after graduation and continue through the first two years of teaching). **Policy Area: Teacher and Other Educator Preparation**

    Rating (1-10): 2.35 Ranking (1-7): 3.17

12. For pre-service teachers, authorize a panel to outline the knowledge, skills and strategies needed to be an effective first-year teacher of readers and writers. Describe the kinds of pre-service experiences which support the acquisition and effective use of this information. Review syllabi in certification programs. Offer state-endorsement of and support for programs that meet criteria. **Policy Area: Teacher and Other Educator Preparation**

    Rating (1-10): 3.46 Ranking (1-7): 3.18

13. Provide a series of professional development sessions for all teachers of 4K and 5K students to include topics on research-validated early literacy practices; such as, but not limited to the following: Literacy-rich and print-rich classrooms and how to assess with the Early Literacy and Language, Classroom Observation (ELLCO) tool, Intentional teaching of literacy that is developmentally appropriate, Selections of children's books, Read-alouds, Daily schedules that include literacy learning throughout the day, Building vocabulary, Phonological awareness, Teacher interactions, Stages of early writing and other related topics, Assessment of language and literacy skills. **Policy Area: Professional Development**

    Rating (1-10): 2.46 Ranking (1-7): 3.27

14. Children need small group instruction to address individual needs. The differentiation piece is critical as "one size does not fit all." **Policy Area: Reading Instruction**

    Rating (1-10): 1.31 Ranking (1-17): 3.70

15. Implementing reading coaches and interventionists for the lowest learners in the early years (1st, 2nd grade) is critical. **Policy Area: School District Operations**

    Rating (1-10): 2.15 Ranking (1-10): 3.87

16. Literacy proficiency assessment, monitoring, and evaluation system (for assessment of readers below proficiency; monitoring of progress for individual children, classes, schools/centers, districts, and the state). **Policy Area: State Education Agency Operations**

    Rating (1-10): 2.53 Ranking (1-7): 4.06

17. Too many students entering 5K in SC fall far behind the readiness mark. Literacy instruction must be heightened in 4K to include oral language development, concepts about print, letter knowledge, and the exploration of a variety of reading materials. Similar accountability measures should be created statewide for all 4K programs. **Policy Area: Birth to Five Policy**

    Rating (1-10): 2.38 Ranking (1-8): 4.18

18. State funded universal pre-kindergarten half-day program for all four year olds. **Policy Area: Birth to Five Policy**

    Rating (1-10): 3.69 Ranking (1-8): 4.18

19. Assessment to identify students with the most serious reading proficiency deficits requiring individual language and literacy plans (in 4K) and individual reading plans (5K) for those students predicted to be below 3rd grade reading proficiency and especially far below proficiency. **Policy Area: School District Operations**

    Rating (1-10): 1.69 Ranking (1-10): 4.25

20. Increase the amount of text reading and writing South Carolina students engage in at school and at home. To accomplish this, we must raise awareness, set goals, audit present policies and practices, increase the amount of time for reading and writing, instruction, increase the number of texts in classrooms and provide on-going professional development and support. **Policy Area: Reading Instruction**

    Rating (1-10): 2.31 Ranking (1-17): 5.11

21. Significantly increase the amount and diversity of texts (reading levels and genres) within classroom libraries in all disciplines. Funds to replenish reading materials should be considered as well. **Policy Area: Reading Instruction**

    Rating (1-10): 2.56 Ranking (1-17): 6.05

SC Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative
Top Three Ranked Priorities – Grouped by Policy Area

Policy Priorities - State Education Agency Operations

1. Develop a statewide text-based assessment system to monitor student progress trajectories, facilitate data-based decision-making, and to inform changes to instruction to get better results.

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1. Develop a statewide comprehensive plan for how to address reading achievement in South Carolina. The plan must include a variety of different sectors, including the public schools, First Steps, SC DSS Child Care Division, Early Head Start, Head Start, community-based programs (Reach Out and Read, Imagination Library, Success By Six, local library programs, after-school tutoring and homework assistance programs, and others), and home visitation programs (Parents As Teachers, Nurse Family Partnership, and others). The Panel received excellent information from the What Works Clearinghouse about effective strategies that must be implemented in a coordinated and consistent way across all entities serving children. This is not an issue that can be solved by our K-12 school system alone.

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   Rating (1-10): 2.38 Ranking (1-8): 4.18

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   Rating (1-10): 2.46 Ranking (1-7): 3.27

Policy Priorities - Teacher and Other Educator Preparation

1. Endorsement requirements for literacy coaches (information/expectations from South Carolina Reading Initiative already exist) ensuring that knowledgeable, trained people are available to provide individualized professional development for teachers.

   Rating (1-10): 2.78 Ranking (1-7): 2.93

2. For certified teachers, require graduate course work for re-certification. For all early childhood and elementary teachers (pre-K to 5), K-12 reading specialists and special education teachers who work with students labeled Learning Disabled require participation in on-site courses that lead to South Carolina Literacy Teacher certification. This course work – in reading, reading assessment and content area literacy - provides teachers with strong understanding of the theory, research, and practices that support the teaching of reading and writing. (For newly certified teachers, these courses would begin the summer after graduation and continue through the first two years of teaching).

   Rating (1-10): 2.35 Ranking (1-7): 3.17

3. For pre-service teachers, authorize a panel to outline the knowledge, skills and strategies needed to be an effective first-year teacher of readers and writers. Describe the kinds of pre-service experiences which support the acquisition and effective use of this information. Review syllabi in certification programs. Offer state-endorsement of and support for programs that meet criteria.

   Rating (1-10): 3.46 Ranking (1-7): 3.18

Policy Priorities – Reading Instruction

1. Children need small group instruction to address individual needs. The differentiation piece is critical as "one size does not fit all."

   Rating (1-10): 1.31 Ranking (1-17): 3.70

2. Increase the amount of text reading and writing South Carolina students engage in at school and at home. To accomplish this, we must raise awareness, set goals, audit present policies and practices, increase the amount of time for reading and writing, instruction, increase the number of texts in classrooms and provide on-going professional development and support.

   Rating (1-10): 2.31 Ranking (1-17): 5.11

3. Significantly increase the amount and diversity of texts (reading levels and genres) within classroom libraries in all disciplines. Funds to replenish reading materials should be considered as well.

   Rating (1-10): 2.56 Ranking (1-17): 6.05

SC Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative
Policy Priorities – Reading Instruction

Directions: "1" is the highest priority rating or priority ranking

1. *****SECOND***Increase the amount of text reading and writing South Carolina students engage in at school and at home. To accomplish this, we must raise awareness, set goals, audit present policies and practices, increase the amount of time for reading and writing, instruction, increase the number of texts in classrooms and provide on-going professional development and support.**

   Rating (1-10): 2.31 **Ranking (1-17): 5.11**

2. Alleviate summer reading loss by increasing the amount of reading and writing of text outside of school. To accomplish this, students need books in their hands that they can read and want to read over the summer and summer reading must become a state-wide concern and expectation.

   Rating (1-10): 2.12 **Ranking (1-17): 6.64**

3. Provide longer blocks of uninterrupted instructional time.

   Rating (1-10): 3.06 **Ranking (1-17): 7.73**

4. Increase the amount of time for engaged reading and writing within the time allocated to reading and writing instruction.

   Rating (1-10): 2.06 **Ranking (1-17): 7.00**

5. *****THIRD***Significantly increase the amount and diversity of texts (reading levels and genres) within classroom libraries in all disciplines. Funds to replenish reading materials should be considered as well.**

   Rating (1-10): 2.56 **Ranking (1-17): 6.05**

6. *****FIRST***Children need small group instruction to address individual needs. The differentiation piece is critical as "one size does not fit all."**

   Rating (1-10): 1.31 **Ranking (1-17): 3.70**

7. Implementation of Common Core Standards to focus on literacy instruction across all content areas (science and social studies have to become an extension of ELA class).

   Rating (1-10): 4.18 **Ranking (1-17): 10.82**

8. Middle and high schools should be provided with the specialized personnel, time, and resources to conduct efficient screening to identify students' reading needs.
   Rating (1-10): 2.87 **Ranking (1-17): 8.82**

9. Improve classroom and supplemental literacy instruction, assessment and support by implementing statewide the federal Response to Intervention (RTI) initiative.

   Rating (1-10): 3.60 **Ranking (1-17): 8.52**

(TURN PAGE OVER)

10. Review and select model curricula, instructional strategies, assessment methods, and model CIA plans by engaging reading experts (university professors, reading coaches and specialists, classroom teachers, school and district literacy leaders, and national experts available to provide guidance and consultation).

Rating (1-10): 3.93 **Ranking (1-17): 11.50**

11. Organize a process for submission of effective-practice CIA Literacy Plans by each school and district for review and approval by state reading/literacy experts under the supervision of the SCDE.

Rating (1-10): 4.20 **Ranking (1-17): 12.62**

12. Implement a monitoring and evaluation system for oversight and guidance of the literacy instructional process to promote implementation of effective literacy strategies.

Rating (1-10): 3.21 **Ranking (1-17): 9.12**

13. Determine and focus on the pre-reading skills to be cultivated. (NELP list a good start)

Rating (1-10): 2.86 **Ranking (1-17): 10.37**

14. Plan ways to address each pre-reading competency/skill. (NELP list a good start. Align grades 1-3 and to MS/HS)

Rating (1-10): 3.14 **Ranking (1-17): 11.29**

15. Select curriculum models and their components supportive of priority language and literacy approaches. Determine the instructional approaches to be emphasized: examples include read-aloud, adult-child dialogue, daily message, singing, rhymes, letter writing, etc.

Rating (1-10): 3.26 **Ranking (1-17): 11.37**

16. Enlist older students to serve as reading buddies to read and write with 4&5K students.

Rating (1-10): 4.53 **Ranking (1-17): 13.18**

17. Plan how to implement strong literacy instruction in the all settings serving 4K students: Head Start, public schools, and child care centers. Plan to implement intentional literacy programs to meet the needs of all levels of 4K and 5K students, both those from low income and low literacy homes and also from higher literacy backgrounds.

Rating (1-10): 2.33 **Ranking (1-17): 7.58**

SC Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative
Policy Priorities - Teacher and Other Educator Preparation

Directions: "1" is the highest priority rating or priority ranking

1. Increase the number of reading courses required to become a certified teacher in South Carolina.

   Rating (1-10): 4.50 **Ranking (1-7): 4.93**

2. *****THIRD***For pre-service teachers, authorize a panel to outline the knowledge, skills and strategies needed to be an effective first-year teacher of readers and writers. Describe the kinds of pre-service experiences which support the acquisition and effective use of this information. Review syllabi in certification programs. Offer state-endorsement of and support for programs that meet criteria.**

   Rating (1-10): 3.46 **Ranking (1-7): 3.18**

3. All K-12 principals and superintendents complete the graduate courses in literacy taken by their teachers. Principals and coaches develop a collaborative plan for assessing and meeting needs of teachers.

   Rating (1-10): 2.57 **Ranking (1-7): 3.35**

4. *****FIRST***Endorsement requirements for literacy coaches (information/expectations from South Carolina Reading Initiative already exist) ensuring that knowledgeable, trained people are available to provide individualized professional development for teachers.**

   Rating (1-10): 2.78 **Ranking (1-7): 2.93**

5. *****SECOND***For certified teachers, require graduate course work for re-certification. For all early childhood and elementary teachers (pre-K to 5), K-12 reading specialists and special education teachers who work with students labeled Learning Disabled require participation in on-site courses that lead to South Carolina Literacy Teacher certification. This course work – in reading, reading assessment and content area literacy – provides teachers with strong understanding of the theory, research, and practices that support the teaching of reading and writing. (For newly certified teachers, these courses would begin the summer after graduation and continue through the first two years of teaching).**

   Rating (1-10): 2.35 **Ranking (1-7): 3.17**

6. Convene a working group from local universities and technical colleges which provide pre-service courses for early childhood teachers to review and strengthen the coursework requirements for teaching early literacy.

   Rating (1-10): 4.21 **Ranking (1-7): 4.47**

(TURN OVER)

7. Increase admission standards to teacher preparation programs (GPA, SAT, ACT, Praxis).

Rating (1-10): 5.76 **Ranking (1-7): 6.23**

SC Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative
Policy Priorities - Professional Development

Directions: "1" is the highest priority rating or priority ranking

1. Professional development in direct and explicit instruction of comprehension strategies will assist all teachers, including ELA and content area teachers in learning how to teach reading and writing strategies.

   Rating (1-10): 2.06 Ranking (1-7): 3.94

2. Pass legislation to calculate professional development in hours, not days.

   Rating (1-10): 4.80 Ranking (1-7): 5.47

3. *****FIRST***Literacy Coaches be placed at every public school. In Pre-K to grade 5, there should be one coach for every 25 teachers. In grades 6 to 12, there should be one coach for every math and science and one for social studies and English teacher (with a maximum of 25 teacher per coach). Literacy Coaches be in classrooms four days a week helping Pre K-12 teachers develop implement, and sustain effective practices and help them enhance the trajectory of each and every student as a learner. This includes reading, writing and content area support.**

   Rating (1-10): 2.50 Ranking (1-7): 2.93

4. *****SECOND***Literacy Coaches provide professional development to sustain and support teachers and administrators. That PD will be cohesive and coherent and reflect the school's/district's comprehensive literacy plan. The coach provides engagements which vary in the degree of time and effort required by teachers (multiple days of professional development on a given topic; after school book clubs, year-long study groups; graduate level course work; on-going action research projects). Literacy Coaches, via professional development and in-classroom support, help teachers learn and use effective tools for assessing reader strengths and needs and help teachers use that knowledge both to inform practice and to document student growth.**

   Rating (1-10): 2.40 Ranking (1-7): 3.11

5. The state of South Carolina and its schools must organize research-validated and practice-based language and literacy training for teachers and other staff working with young children, starting with pre-service preparation and continuing through careers of practice.

   Rating (1-10): 2.33 Ranking (1-7): 3.94

6. *****THIRD***Provide a series of professional development sessions for all teachers of 4K and 5K students to include topics on research-validated early literacy practices; such as, but not limited to the following: Literacy-rich and print-rich classrooms and how to assess with the Early Literacy and Language, Classroom Observation (ELLCO) tool, Intentional teaching of literacy that is developmentally appropriate, Selections of children's books, Read-alouds, Daily schedules that include literacy learning throughout the day, Building vocabulary, Phonological awareness, Teacher interactions, Stages of early writing and other related topics, Assessment of language and literacy skills.**

   Rating (1-10): 2.46 Ranking (1-7): 3.27

7. Convene partner agencies to recruit a cohort of professional development trainers and pool resources to have them trained by national and state experts. (Start with the Center for Child Care Career Development list of Certified Trainers many who would be qualified to become one of the Early Literacy Trainers).

   Rating (1-10): 3.86 Ranking (1-7): 4.94

SC Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative
Policy Priorities - Family and Community Engagement

Directions: "1" is the highest priority rating or priority ranking

1. ***SECOND*On a big picture scale, we need to effect change on the culture. Reading needs to be important to families and communities. Partnerships with businesses to promote reading, provide more reading material, establish volunteers who read with children to reinforce the importance of reading. Books need to be birthday presents, and trips to the bookstore and library desired with great anticipation. Parents should model the process daily. It is not so important what you read as much as you are reading, regularly and often. Set goals for reading at home and in the community.**

Rating (1-10): 1.25 **Ranking (1-5): 2.47**

2. Recruit family and community literacy volunteers to read with individual children, engage them in enriched dialogue, and exchange writing. (letters, cards, art with writing, etc)

Rating (1-10): 2.50 Ranking (1-5): 4.17

3. ***FIRST*Develop a statewide comprehensive plan for how to address reading achievement in South Carolina. The plan must include a variety of different sectors, including the public schools, First Steps, SC DSS Child Care Division, Early Head Start, Head Start, community-based programs (Reach Out and Read, Imagination Library, Success By Six, local library programs, after-school tutoring and homework assistance programs, and others), and home visitation programs (Parents As Teachers, Nurse Family Partnership, and others). The Panel received excellent information from the What Works Clearinghouse about effective strategies that must be implemented in a coordinated and consistent way across all entities serving children. This is not an issue that can be solved by our K-12 school system alone.**

Rating (1-10): 1.15 **Ranking (1-5): 1.64**

4. ***THIRD*Recruit community partners to provide books for children and to sponsor language and literacy celebrations at school or in the community during which the books will be given to the children and their parents.**

Rating (1-10): 2.08 **Ranking (1-5): 3.11**

5. Develop summer community reading programs with reading buddies (including email) and monthly summer literacy events at school or in community centers as shared reading and writing experiences.

Rating (1-10): 2.00 Ranking (1-5): 3.58

SC Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative
Policy Priorities - Birth to Five Policy

Directions: "1" is the highest priority rating or priority ranking

1. Something needs to be done to train childcare workers and parents of children ages birth to three.

   Rating (1-10): 1.92 **Ranking (1-8): 5.31**

2. Establish recommendations for early childhood which focus on readiness based on the research gathered for this panel (Holmes presentation from 11/16/11). Share these recommendations with pediatricians and childcare facilities.

   Rating (1-10): 3.08 **Ranking (1-8): 4.43**

3. ABC program require and support assessment/screening of the language and literacy of ABC voucher recipients who are identified by childcare staff as being deficient in language.

   Rating (1-10): 1.91 **Ranking (1-8): 5.50**

4. Prioritize home visitation and family literacy services (including group meetings) to work with families of children assessed for 4K enrollment with the poorest language scores, starting in the summer before 4K entry and lasting through the summer before 5K (varying the number of visits according to the severity of language deficits).

   Rating (1-10): 2.15 **Ranking (1-8): 4.56**

5. Develop a plan with partners, (First Steps, Head Start, Child Care Licensing, SCDE and others) to provide onsite technical support and resources (fidelity checklists) for administrators and teachers of 4K and 5K for guidance as teachers implement intentional literacy practices of exemplary or high-progress classrooms.

   Rating (1-10): 2.23 **Ranking (1-8): 4.50**

6. *****THIRD***State funded universal pre-kindergarten half-day program for all four year olds.**

   Rating (1-10): 3.69 **Ranking (1-8): 4.18**

7. *****FIRST***Engage preschool programs in the statewide plan. The Panel recognizes that the issue of reading achievement does not begin when a child begins kindergarten. To adequately address reading achievement in SC, preschool programs must be seen as part of the solution. Once again, the What Works Clearinghouse provided information to the Panel about the proven-effective strategies to improve literacy skills among children in preschool. These should be incorporated into existing professional development opportunities, such as teacher training days for public preschool programs and the SC Child Care Career Development for private child care providers.**

   Rating (1-10): 2.15 **Ranking (1-8): 3.12**

8. *****SECOND***Too many students entering 5K in SC fall far behind the readiness mark. Literacy instruction must be heightened in 4K to include oral language development, concepts about print, letter knowledge, and the exploration of a variety of reading materials. Similar accountability measures should be created statewide for all 4K programs.**

   Rating (1-10): 2.38 **Ranking (1-8): 4.18**

SC Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative
Policy Priorities - State Education Agency Operations

Directions: "1" is the highest priority rating or priority ranking

1. Develop a Dual-Purpose Statewide System to Monitor Student Progress and Ensure Effective Implementation of Research-based Solutions.

   Rating (1-10): 2.07 Ranking (1-7): 4.18

2. *****THIRD***Literacy proficiency assessment, monitoring, and evaluation system (for assessment of readers below proficiency; monitoring of progress for individual children, classes, schools/centers, districts, and the state).**

   Rating (1-10): 2.53 Ranking (1-7): 4.06

3. *****FIRST***Develop a statewide text-based assessment system to monitor student progress trajectories, facilitate data-based decision-making, and to inform changes to instruction to get better results.**

   Rating (1-10): 2.07 Ranking (1-7): 2.06

4. Pass legislation, similar to Florida's law, that no student shall be promoted to fourth grade unless they demonstrate the "Met" proficiency level on PASS.

   Rating (1-10): 5.69 Ranking (1-7): 5.25

5. *****SECOND***Schools, school districts, and the state must develop monitoring, support, and explicit guidance for highly effective language and literacy programming in the classrooms of young children in preschool and kindergarten.**

   Rating (1-10): 2.15 Ranking (1-7): 3.06

6. Approval of effective practice CIA Literacy Plans for each school and district by state reading/literacy experts under supervision by the SCDE.

   Rating (1-10): 3.23 Ranking (1-7): 5.18

7. Funding for PD, books, coaches, etc. in schools and districts with approved CIA Literacy Plans.

   Rating (1-10): 3.53 Ranking (1-7): 4.25

SC Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative
Policy Priorities – School District Operations

Directions: "1" is the highest priority rating or priority ranking

1. Establish recommendations for schools based on the High Progress Literacy Classrooms (number of books in classroom library- including variety of levels, time spent on actual reading and writing, etc).

   Rating (1-10): 2.61 Ranking (1-10): 4.37

2. Reallocate funds in order to support the purchase of diverse texts, including print, electronic and visual media in all content areas.

   Rating (1-10): 3.15 Ranking (1-10): 4.81

3. *****FIRST***Instruction must be guided by continuing, individualized assessment and progress monitoring of the language and literacy development of each child in preschool and kindergarten.**

   Rating (1-10): 1.84 Ranking (1-10): 3.00

4. *****THIRD***Assessment to identify students with the most serious reading proficiency deficits requiring individual language and literacy plans (in 4K) and individual reading plans (5K) for those students predicted to be below 3rd grade reading proficiency and especially far below proficiency.**

   Rating (1-10): 1.69 Ranking (1-10): 4.25

5. Individual Language and Literacy Reading Plan for each child not on track to reading proficiency, emphasizing family language and literacy activities. Inform parents/family that they are expected to participate in developing the individual literacy/reading plans and commit as part of the plan to engage in reading, writing, and other literacy experiences with their young children. Periodic (perhaps quarterly) language and literacy progress reports with suggestions for what parents can do.

   Rating (1-10): 2.07 Ranking (1-10): 4.75

6. *****SECOND***Implementing reading coaches and interventionists for the lowest learners in the early years (1st, 2nd grade) is critical.**

   Rating (1-10): 2.15 Ranking (1-10): 3.87

7. Encourage parents to select an alternate language and literacy sponsor for their child if the parents cannot fulfill the role sufficiently.

   Rating (1-10): 5.50 Ranking (1-10): 8.66

8. Permit school districts to apply for a waiver for extended learning time for reading instruction.

   Rating (1-10): 3.15 Ranking (1-10): 5.73

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9. Permit school district reading interventionists to practice in any grade level by removing the certification distinction between early childhood, elementary, middle grades, and high school.

Rating (1-10): 6.69 Ranking (1-10): 7.13

10. Permit school districts to apply for a waiver to design a school day in elementary schools without mandatory seat time or instructional requirements. Waiver proposal must include benchmarks for all students in the area of reading.

Rating (1-10): 6.61 Ranking (1-10): 7.92

Appendix 4

Panel Members' Personal Statements

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mick Zais
Superintendent

1429 Senate Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

April 2, 2012

Subject: South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative

The purpose of this letter to express my personal thoughts on the issue of reading proficiency and the discussions that were held during the meetings of the South Carolina Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative.

I appreciated the time and effort put forth by the panel members. Some of the recommendations put forth in the report I support, such as initiatives to reduce summer reading loss. However, I believe some of the recommendations became a wish-list with significant financial requirements the state budget is unlikely to fund given other competing demands for revenue, such as health care, higher education, and social services.

There are some policy initiatives that could be implemented without necessitating new revenues. Institutions of higher education must take dramatic steps to transform their teacher preparation programs. Colleges and universities should incorporate reading coursework and practicums as degree requirement substitutes for other required courses. If to ensure every teacher is prepared to teach reading there must be courses removed from the degree program because they are less important than reading, so be it. Higher education must be a willing partner in this effort to transform their programs; only time will tell if they will come to the table.

In conclusion, the underlying premise of many of the recommendations is a top-down approach from the state level. My approach is the opposite: I want state government to remove as many barriers to innovation as possible. Flexibility and decentralization have proven to yield better outcomes at less expense in the private sector economy. If education is the state's top priority, and it should be, policy makers shouldn't be asking themselves, "If we only had one more program we could fix education." The question we should ask ourselves is, "What laws and regulations stifle innovation and how quickly can repeal them?"

Sincerely,

Mick Zais

Mick Zais, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education

phone: 803-734-8492 • fax: 803-734-3389 • ed.sc.gov

To improve reading achievement, we need to create a LOVE OF READING in the hearts of our children. In my experience as a parent of four children and an educator for 20 years, I feel the answer begins with reading with youngsters at a very young age. In her book *Read to Your Bunny* , Rosemary Wells shares, "Read to your bunny and your bunny will read to you!"

The most impact we can effect inexpensively is to encourage every family to read together every day. It is not so important what you read as much as you are reading, regularly and often. Books, magazines, comics need to be in every room of the house. Books need to be birthday presents, and trips to the bookstore and library desired with great anticipation. Children need access to books they choose and books that are of interest to them. Adults need to model reading. Children need to know they value reading. Children need time to enjoy, learn and practice reading. The more opportunities we can provide for younger readers, the better.

So we need to effect change on the culture . . . not only does reading need to be important to families but an emphasis in communities as well. Partnerships with businesses to promote reading, provide more reading material, establish volunteers who read with children to reinforce the importance of reading. Babies need to come home from the hospital with books and take them home during regularly scheduled wellness visits too.

While the above seems dreamy, the idea to collaborate with existing programs, like "Literacy 2030," is realistic and achievable. Reading builds relationships and relationships to build reading seem the perfect place to start. Let's take these small steps to begin the journey to create more South Carolina READERS!

D'Etta Broam
3/29/12

MARY BLACK FOUNDATION

MOLLY TALBOT-METZ
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS

March 5, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I enjoyed serving on the SC Reading Achievement Systemic Initiative Panel, and I appreciate the opportunity to submit the following statement to be included in the Appendix to the Final Report.

Data shared with the Panel was compelling: only **26% of SC 3rd graders scored "At Grade Level"** on the Stanford Reading First test and **47% were in "Need of Substantial Intervention"** and **20% of 1st graders scored "At Grade Level,"** while **54% were in "Need of Substantial Intervention."**

The need for a systemic approach to reading achievement is clear. The key word is systemic – reading achievement is not an issue that can be solved by our K-12 school system alone. The challenge of reading achievement does not begin when a child enterss kindergarten; therefore, programs that reach children before they begin school are critical to the solution.

Furthermore, the **best solution** to our challenge **is to invest in high quality early childhood programs that build literacy skills among children birth to age 5**. While some interventions targeting struggling readers in elementary and middle school will be necessary, the State's investment in building literacy skills **BEFORE** a child is struggling will have the greatest returns. The social, emotional, and functional competencies that develop in the first years of life affect a child's later success in school and in life.

The Mary Black Foundation, a private grantmaking organization, is committed to improving early childhood development, and early literacy, in Spartanburg County. The Foundation invests in efforts that will create positive learning environments and foster early literacy skills, such as **home visitation** for adolescent mothers, evidence-based **parenting** programs, a **quality** rating and improvement system for **child development programs, full-day 4K** targeting at-risk children, and more.

Respectfully Submitted,

Molly Talbot-Metz

Molly Talbot-Metz

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Audrea Phillips

Professional Development/Professional Contexts

Classroom teachers need contexts in which they can use their knowledge gained from professional developments. Within our state, there are very knowledgeable teachers working in districts which mandate a scripted basal reading program informed by a daily pacing calendar. There is no research base for these programs - nothing to suggest that their use helps students progress as readers. Teachers need to be positioned to be able to use their knowledge to help the child, unconstrained by a scripted program.

State-wide, we need to think about **who each of us would want teaching our struggling reader, help every teacher develop the knowledge needed to help each and every child and provide contexts in which knowledgeable teachers are empowered to make appropriate instructional decisions.**

Text-based Assessments

Districts use a wide variety of reading programs, including scripted basal series, and purchase assessments that correlate with these programs. There are shortcomings of these assessments. Far too often, state standards get set aside and the focus is on raising test scores.

Many of the progress monitoring assessments currently being used, for example, time children on how fast they can read word lists in one minute and read lists of nonsense words. This does not help them learn to be strategic readers who think deeply about text. When these types of non-text based assessments are being used to drive our reading instruction, then it is no wonder the children in South Carolina are not performing as proficient readers should.

Districts need to use the best assessments possible to provide teachers with comprehensive knowledge about students as readers. Assessments that require us to teach ineffective practices such as having children read lists of nonsense words increases the number of nonproficient readers. We need text-based assessments aligned with our ELA standards.

The human brain is a wonderful creation! It is designed to change and adapt to experience. The youngest children learn the most complex intellectual activities. Try learning Chinese or Arabic as an adult! The majority of evidence shared with the South Carolina Reading Systemic Initiative emphasized the critical ages of birth to five for academic success. By kindergarten, 18 months separates the readiness to read skills between lowest socioeconomic status (SES) children and their more affluent peers. Letter recognition between the two groups is 39% to 51%. The difference between the groups in accumulated experiences with words is 13 million vs. 45 million. That is more than a 30 million word gap. Investment in the earliest years rather than interventions in later years, is just good sense. All children deserve access to a quality pre-school four year old program as part of the public school system. Yearly, thousands of children troop into their local public school to be tested to see if they can qualify for pre-K. The lucky few, who are sometimes coached not to remember critical information in order to gain placement, are admitted to an enriching readiness experience. The rest are left to find something or nothing else. South Carolina needs to make the investment in universal pre-K, allowing all of its youngest citizens access!

Sincerely,

/s/ Rose S. Sheheen

Rose S. Sheheen

Member, State School Board

Fifth Judicial Circuit

System Components for Promoting Reading Proficiency
(with varying applications for EC, K-3, 4-5, MS, HS, CATE)

1. **Desired outcomes (reading proficiency skills)**
2. **Educator training and PD**
3. **Administrator training and PD**
4. **Reading instruction**
5. **Assessment**
6. **Volume of reading**
7. **Writing**
8. **Early childhood literacy development**
9. **Content area reading**
10. **Support for struggling learners**
11. **Family support of reading**
12. **District leadership/promotion of reading proficiency**
13. **State level planning, support, monitoring, facilitation**
14. **Political support and statutory guidance**
15. **Catalysts and consequences**

Graduation in the United States

GRADUATION RATES RISING

Nationwide, 73.4 percent of all public school students graduated from high school with a regular diploma in the class of 2009, marking the second straight year of gains following a period of modest declines. The national graduation rate rose by 1.7 percentage points above the rate for the class of 2008, with rates also increasing in three-quarters of the states. This continued climb in the graduation rate is driven largely by strong gains among Latinos and moderate improvements for African-American and white students, which offset small decreases for other groups.

Over the past decade, graduation rates improved by 7.3 percentage points, with all racial and ethnic groups posting solid improvements since the late 1990s. The largest increases were found among African-American and Latino students, whose graduation rates have risen by nearly 10 points over this period. Although all groups are improving, significant racial disparities persist nationwide, with a 27-percentage-point gap dividing Asian-American and Native American students, the groups with the highest and lowest graduation rates, respectively.

10-YEAR GRADUATION TREND
(ALL STUDENTS)

GRADUATION RATES
FOR STUDENT SUBGROUPS, CLASS OF 2009

	CLASS OF 2009	CLASS OF 1999	CHANGE 1999 to 2009 (PERCENTAGE POINT)	MALE	FEMALE	AMERICAN INDIAN	ASIAN	HISPANIC	BLACK	WHITE
ALABAMA	69.2%	56.7%	+12.5	64.6%	73.8%	77.0%	76.1%	56.8%	59.8%	74.7%
ALASKA	69.3	63.7	+5.6	67.7	72.8	53.0	‡	63.9	64.0	73.7
ARIZONA	72.3	48.2	+24.1	68.8	75.5	59.9	84.1	64.0	70.6	78.3
ARKANSAS	70.6	70.5	+0.1	67.8	73.7	36.0	‡	65.4	59.7	72.7
CALIFORNIA	71.3	68.7	+2.5	67.2	75.0	40.3	77.4	63.0	50.8	75.4
COLORADO	76.4	67.5	+8.9	72.3	79.6	52.1	87.1	58.7	62.5	82.0
CONNECTICUT	76.0	75.1	+0.9	70.4	75.6	55.7	78.8	54.3	61.5	78.8
DELAWARE	67.9	57.7	+10.2	61.6	74.5	44.4	76.4	59.3	58.7	73.9
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	52.4	65.7	-13.3	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡	‡
FLORIDA	70.4	52.5	+17.9	66.8	75.9	‡	86.6	72.6	62.0	73.1
GEORGIA	62.7	51.5	+11.2	61.2	72.2	‡	86.6	57.1	55.3	72.6
HAWAII	69.2	59.5	+9.6	66.6	72.0	55.5	70.5	61.5	62.8	66.7
IDAHO	72.1	76.5	-4.4	73.0	75.6	44.3	73.7	63.5	44.2	75.7
ILLINOIS	71.2	72.4	-1.2	64.1	63.1	62.0	84.2	61.5	51.3	78.7
INDIANA	75.8	71.1	+4.7	71.7	78.8	32.3	79.1	62.0	59.5	77.9
IOWA	80.5	78.9	+1.7	77.8	81.2	22.6	62.2	53.4	45.9	81.8
KANSAS	78.4	73.5	+5.0	76.1	81.8	‡	69.8	60.3	60.1	80.5
KENTUCKY	70.5	62.3	+8.2	66.3	74.0	21.9	75.5	58.5	53.6	72.5
LOUISIANA	64.0	59.1	+4.9	57.9	70.2	56.9	85.5	68.0	56.0	69.7
MAINE	72.3	68.9	+3.4	68.5	74.8	‡	‡	‡	‡	72.3
MARYLAND	77.9	71.8	+6.1	73.6	82.5	‡	95.0	70.3	67.0	85.5
MASSACHUSETTS	79.1	73.9	+5.3	75.3	82.2	‡	86.3	55.5	64.0	84.9
MICHIGAN	74.1	68.7	+5.4	70.4	79.4	48.1	75.7	43.6	‡	79.8
MINNESOTA	82.6	79.4	+3.1	80.1	82.4	‡	75.5	‡	‡	85.4
MISSISSIPPI	62.2	58.4	+3.8	57.1	68.3	35.8	73.6	51.6	58.1	67.1
MISSOURI	79.3	72.1	+7.3	76.5	81.4	67.5	84.4	68.7	61.0	82.6
MONTANA	77.4	75.7	+1.7	74.2	78.6	53.0	56.9	49.2	57.3	79.8
NEBRASKA	76.6	77.6	-1.0	72.3	79.1	31.4	‡	57.4	42.3	81.7
NEVADA	59.2	69.0	-9.8	55.7	62.2	44.6	74.9	53.3	48.9	60.4
NEW HAMPSHIRE	79.1	72.7	+6.5	75.7	81.2	‡	‡	‡	‡	79.2
NEW JERSEY	87.4	76.3	+11.0	85.3	87.2	33.2	88.3	74.1	74.4	90.1
NEW MEXICO	59.4	58.1	+1.3	55.3	64.2	48.0	72.2	62.3	35.8	55.9
NEW YORK	78.4	58.5	+19.9	71.9	82.8	52.5	82.0	57.9	57.6	84.7
NORTH CAROLINA	68.0	58.7	+9.3	61.9	72.0	56.8	79.5	54.1	56.0	74.9
NORTH DAKOTA	85.9	82.9	+3.1	82.3	87.7	57.5	‡	‡	‡	87.9
OHIO	76.4	69.0	+7.4	76.1	80.6	‡	‡	50.5	51.3	83.2
OKLAHOMA	73.6	70.4	+3.2	71.4	76.5	65.8	85.1	67.8	62.4	75.7
OREGON	73.1	64.0	+9.1	69.9	76.0	‡	72.0	‡	54.4	73.7
PENNSYLVANIA	80.5	75.3	+5.1	78.2	82.5	43.8	88.1	58.7	59.0	85.2
RHODE ISLAND	75.3	70.8	+4.5	70.8	78.6	‡	69.1	59.4	61.9	79.6
SOUTH CAROLINA	61.7	47.1	+14.6	55.9	67.9	33.3	77.0	53.8	53.6	67.3
SOUTH DAKOTA	69.5	74.6	-5.0	65.5	70.9	26.6	66.8	43.8	65.9	75.6
TENNESSEE	75.8	62.1	+13.7	71.7	79.6	53.3	85.9	64.3	68.0	78.6
TEXAS	71.5	60.2	+11.3	68.9	74.3	‡	90.1	64.4	64.4	79.6
UTAH	78.4	75.7	+2.7	64.3	70.2	59.0	65.4	51.7	54.2	69.2
VERMONT	77.4	76.9	+0.5	78.2	82.3	†	†	†	†	†
VIRGINIA	76.0	73.9	+2.1	71.9	80.5	‡	89.0	65.5	64.8	81.5
WASHINGTON	68.1	68.6	-0.5	65.2	72.4	39.7	78.4	56.0	49.4	71.4
WEST VIRGINIA	71.5	71.2	+0.4	67.8	75.1	50.7	72.3	47.3	65.2	71.4
WISCONSIN	83.8	76.4	+7.4	80.8	85.2	54.2	82.3	64.2	50.4	88.3
WYOMING	73.9	73.4	+0.5	69.9	76.5	30.9	50.2	‡	33.2	75.1
U.S.	**73.4%**	**66.0%**	**+7.3**	**69.6%**	**76.4%**	**53.1%**	**80.5%**	**63.0%**	**58.7%**	**78.8%**

† Value not calculated because necessary data field(s) not reported in the U.S. Department of Education's Common Core of Data and not available from state education agency.
‡ Value not reported because of insufficient data for reliable estimate.

SOURCE: EPE Research Center, 2012. See Page 32 of the full report for more information about the methodology used to calculate graduation rates for this report.