



Read to Succeed Update

Three bills -- S.516, H.3926, H.3994 -- were considered last legislative session which would create a systemic policy for reading, including the retention of 3rd graders scoring at the lowest level (Not Met 1) on the Palmetto Assessment of State Standards in Reading and Research.

In advance of next session, where the bills will very likely be discussed, the EOC is collecting information as well as seeking guidance from school districts and experts in the field. Updates include:

Improved pre-service and in-service training in reading

- Dr. Tony Johnson, recently retired dean of The Citadel's School of Education, is leading this collaborative effort with other post-secondary, teacher-training institutions. While at The Citadel, Dr. Johnson led a collaborative effort with the Charleston County School District providing a Masters of Arts in Literacy for at least 20 teachers of the district's choosing. The Citadel reduced the tuition price by 25% and CCSD paid half of the remaining balance. Dr. Johnson is meeting with key contacts at public and private institutions to achieve broad consensus on how pre-service and in-service offerings can change to help better prepare teachers AND how to achieve buy-in and support from all higher-education institutions.
- Baron Holmes is updating the course offerings at universities by collecting course syllabi.
- The EOC is discussing with CERRA sample surveying classroom teachers about how adequate they feel they are prepared to teach students who struggle. These results will help address the issue of whether teachers are being adequately trained to diagnose and treat students who have reading difficulties.

State Reading Plan and Read to Succeed Office

- Baron Holmes and Dr. Diane Stephens, University of SC Professor, are writing a draft model for the State Reading Plan.

District Reading Plans

- The EOC has surveyed all school districts asking for them to provide their district reading plans to us by July 31 if they have them. A working group, composed of instructional leaders and literacy coordinators from the SCDE, will work with the current district plans to prepare model plans. The group will be looking for how districts currently devote professional development resources to literacy, what instructional practices are used for struggling readers at each grade

level, assessment methods and tools, student retention policies (if any), and triggers for parent involvement.

- The Working Group will meet in mid-August to begin their work.

Public Engagement

In the interim, the EOC is working to organize a process for all key parties to participate in the planning and development of the system, especially districts, teachers, administrators, university reading instructors and administrators, SCDE offices, CHE, school boards, etc. Activities include:

- Melanie Barton serves on a literacy work group led by the SC Baptist Convention.
- Dana Yow spoke to the Executive Board of the SC Association of School Librarians in July about key points of the legislation and she asked for their feedback about how school library media specialists can help accomplish the goals set forth in the legislation.
- Copies of the Reading Brochure are being used by the Boys & Girls Club in Spartanburg, the SC State Library, the SC School Improvement Council, United Way, the SCDE, Cocky's Reading Express, and the SC Baptist Convention
- Twelve reading billboards are located around the state for one year through a partnership with the SC Outdoor Advertising Association. Locations include:
 - o I-95. 7/10 Mile South of TV Road and on the East Side of I-95
 - o Kershaw: I-20. 2.3 miles East of US 521 on the South Side of I-20
 - o Sumter: US 378 E 3/10 mile East of Brewington Rd. on the North Side of 378
 - o Anderson: I-85 5/10 Mile North of Hwy 76 (exit 19)
 - o Gaffney: I-85, west side, 8/10 mile South of Hwy 105
 - o Greenville: I-85, west side, 1 mile North of Roper Mountain Rd.
 - o Charleston: I-26/I-526, I-26 1.1 miles East of Cosgrove Ave, South Side
 - o Columbia: I-26 North of Old Dunbar Rd., Southeast side
 - o SC 9 in Longs area just west of SC 905 @ Pine Needle Dr., South Side
 - o US 501 Just East of Forestbrook Road, South Side.
 - o I-95, North of Walterboro
 - o I-20, .1 miles West of Whatley Pond Rd. at Mile Marker 9 (between Aiken and Augusta)
- In August, the EOC will mail to all principals a copy of the reading brochure, along with correspondence about the other materials we publish to help schools and teachers.

Rock Hill school and church, volunteers partner to host summer reading camp

Published: July 11, 2013 Updated 9 hours ago

By Rachel Southmayd — rsouthmayd@heraldonline.com

Every morning, Monday through Thursday, the fellowship hall at Boyd Hill Baptist Church fills with young children.

They act like children do, darting from friend to friend, unable to sit still or stay quiet.

But then a volunteer ushers the children to the collection of small carpets along one wall, opens a book and begins to read.

The day has begun at the “Summer Safari” reading camp, the brainchild of Jerry Seale and York Road Elementary School.

For two hours each day, a group of 25 to 35 children comes and learns, listening to stories, working on reading and comprehension skills, applying and talking about what they’re reading, and even eating a snack, making crafts and doing exercises.

“They love it and they’re so engaged,” said Patty Domenick, a teacher at York Road Elementary, where most of the camp’s attendees go to school.

Seale, who’s a former teacher and coach, said he wanted to create a program that targeted students in kindergarten through second grade, to help reduce the summer “learning lag” when many students lose what skills they gained during the course of the school year, particularly reading.

“If a child can’t read, he can’t do anything,” Seale said.

After establishing a partnership with York Road Elementary, Seale said Boyd Hill Baptist Church volunteered to let the program use its facility. In addition to promoting the program, York Road Elementary also gave the program books to use that are on the students' grade levels and let the program use a bus so students without transportation wouldn't be hindered from participating.

"Everyone's been very cooperative because they know how important reading is," he said.

Seale said the program tried to target students who were struggling in their reading, so they could try to get them back on track.

"It's such a great opportunity for these children who are struggling readers," Domenick said.

The program is staffed by teachers, such as Domenick, and local middle and high school students. Seale said they all give up their own summer to help the children.

One young volunteer, Raynelle Benson, 13, said she wants to be a kindergarten teacher one day.

"I've always loved being around kids and helping kids," she said.

Another, Maddie Harr, 13, said the best part of volunteering was watching the kids learn every day.

"They all progress really well, and they're all so sweet," she said.

This summer, the city of Rock Hill and the Rock Hill Schools, along with other local organizations, partnered to promote a reading initiative called "Rock Hill Reads." The program's goal was to get every person in Rock Hill reading for at least 20 minutes a day. The volunteers at Summer Safari and Seale said every day the kids in this program are reading for more than an hour.

At the end of each day, the students can select four books to take home with them overnight.

“You can read it to your parents or to yourself,” said Quindarius Thompson, a Summer Safari participant.

He’ll be entering the second grade next month, and his favorite books are about superheroes and adventures.

“I like reading so I can be smart,” he said.

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Read more here: <http://www.heraldonline.com/2013/07/11/5016102/rock-hill-school-church-volunteers.html#storylink=cpy>