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February 1, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: *Reading First* District School Superintendents

FROM: Evan B. Lefsky, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Just Read, Florida!

RE: *Reading First* Funding for the 2008-2009 School Year

This memorandum is written to notify you of the status of *Reading First* funding for the 2008-2009 school year. On December 26, 2007, the President signed into law the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008, which provides Fiscal Year 2008 appropriations for *Reading First* and other United States Department of Education (USDOE) programs. For Fiscal Year 2008, Congress appropriated \$393,012,000 for *Reading First*, which is a 61% decrease from Fiscal Year 2007. Fortunately, funding for Florida *Reading First* school districts will not decrease by 61%. We are pleased to inform you that we will continue to fund and support all *Reading First* districts as originally scheduled in the declining funding model. For the 2008-2009 school year, *Reading First* districts will receive the following percentages reflected in their original grant award:

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

The intention of the declining funding model was to provide sufficient federal funding in the initial years of the grant, allowing districts to set up an infrastructure to implement scientifically based reading instructional methods and strategies, professional development, and the assessment plans needed to implement the *Reading First* grant with fidelity. Each year funding has been reduced, as school districts established the infrastructure needed to fully implement the grant. In the last years of the grant, the declining funding model requires districts to

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JUST READ, FLORIDA!

institutionalize and sustain *Reading First* implementation through the integration of non-*Reading First* funding sources.

As stated earlier, districts serving Cohort 1 schools will now receive 35% of their original award, so these districts must determine how to sufficiently implement the grant with the funds allocated. For the *Reading First* grant to be implemented fully, the district will need to consider three options for the 2008-2009 school year:

- One district option is to supplement the grant with district funds to sufficiently implement the grant. I strongly encourage you to support the implementation of *Reading First* by continuing to fund high-quality, research-based literacy instruction in grades K-3 to help *Reading First* schools and students in Florida. Please be aware that there are Federal funding sources that districts may use, consistent with statutory requirements, to improve literacy instruction in grades K-3. Please view the attached Question & Answer document which reflects these funding sources along with other possible funding sources.
- A second option is to discontinue schools that are not committed to the grant or schools that have not made progress. We have provided guidance on selecting schools to consider for discontinuation in the Question & Answer document attached.
- The third option is to consider a blend of options one and two.

During the *Reading First* continuation grant process, districts serving Cohort 1 schools will submit a detailed narrative and budget supporting the approach taken to ensure full implementation of the *Reading First* grant in the 2008-2009 school year. If districts choose to discontinue schools in order to implement the grant with fidelity, these districts must include the rationale for selecting schools for discontinuation and provide the data used to determine discontinued schools. The continuation grant will also include a narrative addressing how the district will supplement the grant to sufficiently implement *Reading First* with fidelity.

It's important to note that the Just Read, Florida! staff is committed to the success of all schools, so we will continue to support schools that are discontinued from the *Reading First* grant in the following manner:

- Support offered by the Florida Literacy and Reading Excellence (FLaRE) Center
- Professional development for reading coaches through Quarterly Professional Development and book studies offered by *Reading First* Professional Development (RFPD)
- Full access to the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN)
- Access to all conferences, institutes, and academies hosted by Just Read, Florida! (e.g. K-12 Leadership Conference, Reading Leadership Team Institutes (RLTI), K-12 Literacy Institute, and Summer Academies/Intervention Academies)

Attached you will find the Question & Answer document that was developed to provide guidance to districts on this process. If you have any additional questions or need clarification, please contact Cari Miller at 850-245-0503 or via email at Cari.Miller@fldoe.org.

EBL/cm

Attachment

CC: *Reading First* District Contacts
Reading First Professional Development

K-12 Reading Plan Contacts