

From: Colle, Hope
Sent time: Thursday, November 03, 2011 4:39:07 PM
To: Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) <Cari@excelined.org>
Subject: RE: FL Times Union: Florida legislators skeptical of spending more for reading coaches

Not looking good- huh?

How are things there?

Kindly,

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From: Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) [mailto:Cari@excelined.org]
Sent: Thursday, November 03, 2011 4:27 PM
To: Smith, Kevin; Lee, Laurie; Webster, Melinda; Colle, Hope
Subject: FL Times Union: Florida legislators skeptical of spending more for reading coaches

Florida legislators skeptical of spending more for reading coaches

Posted: November 1, 2011

By Matt Dixon

<http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2011-11-01/story/florida-legislators-skeptical-spending-more-reading-coaches#ixzz1cYHxZ4d6>

TALLAHASSEE - A panel of lawmakers met a request for an additional \$40 million for 600 reading coaches with skepticism Tuesday, saying the state has already sunk a billion-plus dollars into the program with lackluster results.

Florida Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson wants the additional cash to help offset a loss in federal dollars that was used for reading coaches. It would be used in school districts' lowest performing schools.

Earlier this month, the funding request was slammed by state Sen. Stephen Wise, R-Jacksonville, when Robinson pitched his proposal to the Budget Subcommittee on preK-12 Appropriations.

Wise said despite spending \$1.4 billion over the past 10 years, the state still sees a 60 percent failure rate in reading at the 10th-grade level.

"We are doing the same old, same old and getting the same results," Wise said.

On the House side, a subcommittee that helps write the K-12 education budget wanted some evidence the program works.

"What data do we have, what studies do we have, to show what we are actually purchasing for this extra \$40 million? What result can we expect to achieve?" asked Rep. Janet Adkins, R-Fernandina Beach.

Public Schools Chancellor Pam Stewart said that results aren't necessarily cut and dry.

"Our statistics professors would tell us it's very important to not draw conclusions from data, however, there seems to be a correlation to the increase in reading achievement as we were receiving those federal dollars, and a flattening when we no longer had those," she said.

Committee Chairwoman Marti Coley, R-Marianna, said that surprised her.

"I've actually from time to time been lobbied by specific districts that reading coaches were not effective, and I guess the data would show differently," she said.

The additional funding would be built into the state's public education funding formula and shared by school districts across the state. Specific language in the budget would dictate that school districts can only use the funding in their lowest performing schools.

Stewart said much of a coach's effectiveness depends on how they are used.

"If they are used to provide substantial professional development and actually coach teachers to include reading in whatever subject it might be, I think you will see a dramatic increase in reading gains," she said.

Robinson highlighted the need to count every penny, telling committee members that new revenue estimates show that the preK-12 system would face up to an additional \$240 million shortfall compared to last year's budget.

For public education, the biggest portion of its shortfall will come from the lost \$545 million in federal stimulus funding. Other contributing factors are decreased local property tax contributions and non-reoccurring money from state trust funds that was built into last year's budget.