

**From:** Lee, Laurie  
**Sent time:** Tuesday, January 31, 2012 1:58:53 PM  
**To:** Holmes, Baron <Baron.Holmes@ors.sc.gov>  
**Cc:** Cari@excelined.org  
**Subject:** RE: SC reading panel

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Dear Baron,

Good afternoon! It was a pleasure to speak with you recently regarding some of the policies that have been implemented in Florida. I think your best bet at this point is for you to connect with Cari Miller at the Foundation for Excellence in Education. She worked for our office for several years and her work now is specifically in assisting states in exploring and implementing Florida policy in literacy. I am copying Cari on this message so that you have her contact information.

Thank you for all of your work and have a great day!

Laurie Lee  
Middle School Reading Specialist  
Just Read, Florida!  
325 West Gaines Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
850-245-0503

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**From:** Holmes, Baron [mailto:Baron.Holmes@ors.sc.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 19, 2012 11:07 AM  
**To:** Lee, Laurie  
**Subject:** SC reading panel

**Main Causes of Improvement** What were the main causes of the improvement in grade 4 NAEP reading scores in Florida from 1998 to 2009?

**Revealing Studies on Florida's Retention and Reading Experience** What revealing studies have been published on: a) Florida's reading instruction efforts over the past decade? b) critiques produced regarding Greene's publications on retention? c) Florida's 3rd grade retention policy and results other than by Greene?

3. **Retention** What is the consensus regarding the impact of the 3rd grade retention policy (just retention alone)? i.e., what would be the impact if the retention policy were dropped and all the other policies remained?
  4. **Causes of Improvement** How much improvement in grade 4 NAEP and FCAT scores in grades 3 and 4 should be attributed to: a) K-3 instructional improvement? b) assessment in K-3 identifying likely level 1 students and progress monitoring their reading growth in relation to the instruction they have received? c) summer camp for retained students? d) professional development training provided to PK-4 teachers? PD provided specifically through/for the reading endorsement? e) the 2nd year of grade 3 for retained students? f) better instruction and support in EC and preschool? 1st and 2nd grades? 3rd grade? g) the motivational threat/stigma of high numbers of students retained in grade 3: i) response of administrators and school boards? ii) of parents? iii) of students? iv) of the legislature providing additional resources?
  5. **Resources** What additional resources were provided by the legislature for reading instructional services and for teacher training? Which resources were most helpful? which least? What resources have been lost in recent years?
  6. **Summer Camp** How many days and hours per day are typical in summer reading camp? What are the required or recommended features of summer camp reading activities? of non-reading activities? Have any studies been done on the reading progress of the students served in reading camps? How much does summer camp cost per student? Are the best reading teachers employed for summer camp or a mix of teachers typical of all reading teachers? Are many teachers employed who do not have reading endorsement/certification?
  7. **3<sup>rd</sup> grade Reading Instruction** How effective has instruction been in 3rd grade: a) for all students? b) for retained students: i) in special classes? ii) receiving special services such as individual and small group tutoring? iii) other notable efforts to improve their reading proficiency?
  8. The progress made by retained students may be totally or partially attributable to their special services during the repeated year. Could this progress have been achieved in the 4th grade in similar interventions without retaining them? or in 3rd grade before retention? or before 3rd grade?
  9. **Alternative Investments of Retention Costs** How much was spent on retention and in the intervention services during the repeated 3rd grade? If this money had been spent in K-3 prospectively to serve students with the lowest language and reading skills, what results could have been achieved as compared with services to those retained in grade 3?
  10. **Outcomes of Retention** The retention approach achieved 3-5 percentile points gain over 2 years for those retained. What other interventions would achieve a 3-5 percentile gain and at what cost?
  11. What percentage of the retained students is no longer in level 1 during subsequent years? Which retained students achieved Level 2 or higher? Were they the lowest in level 1? or the upper group in level 1? or a mix of low, medium, and high? What other characteristics differentiate the retained students who reached Level 2 or higher? Did they receive more or better services?
- **Training** How good was the training in reading for: a) classroom teachers? b) reading interventionists? c) reading coaches? d) principals, asst. principals? e) others such as media center staff, guidance, etc?
  - How variable was the quality of training in reading across: a) districts? b) college vs district? c) individual universities? d) specific reading competencies? e) reading instructional approaches/methods? In particular, what was most difficult for the providers of training and of least satisfactory quality for the content of training: i) which reading competencies? ii) which reading instructional approaches/methods?
  - **Assessment** How effective has assessment been: a) for early identification of the likely level 1 students? b) progress monitoring of young students in K-2 at risk for level 1? b) identifying areas of reading weakness requiring instructional attention? How often did early identification and progress monitoring result in early intervention? How early: PK? Kindergarten? 1<sup>st</sup> grade? 2<sup>nd</sup> grade? first time in 3rd grade?
  - Which assessment instruments have been found most effective and practical? a) for which reading competencies? b) for guiding which instructional approaches?
  - What assessment information is relied upon most for: a) overall reading progress statewide? b) progress of the lowest achieving readers at level 1 or at risk of level 1?
  - What weaknesses have been identified with FCAT? Are FCAT's DSSs reliable for the cross-grade comparisons that Greene did to calculate effect sizes for retention? Who in Florida would be the most informed on this issue?
  - **Other Issues?** What were the other critical policy and practice issues in Florida not addressed in the questions above?

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**From:** Lee, Laurie [mailto:Laurie.Lee@fldoe.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 19, 2012 8:38 AM  
**To:** Holmes, Baron  
**Cc:** Greenberg, Stuart  
**Subject:** RE: SC reading panel

Dear Baron,

Good morning! It would be a pleasure to speak with you. I am available this morning if you would like to give me a call at 850-245-5059. If you would like to call about 10:30, that would be perfect.

Thanks for all of your work and have a great day!

Laurie Lee  
Middle School Reading Specialist  
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850-245-0503

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**From:** Holmes, Baron [mailto:Baron.Holmes@ors.sc.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 19, 2012 8:26 AM  
**To:** Greenberg, Stuart; Lee, Laurie  
**Subject:** RE: SC reading panel

Laurie, I would welcome the opportunity to talk with you soon. When might I be able to call you and at what number?

Stu, thanks for the referral.

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**From:** Greenberg, Stuart [Stuart.Greenberg@fldoe.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 18, 2012 5:02 PM  
**To:** Holmes, Baron; Laurie.Lee@fldoe.org  
**Subject:** Re: SC reading panel

Laurie Lee in our office can assist you with information about courses at the university level.

-----Original message-----

**From:** "Holmes, Baron" <Baron.Holmes@ors.sc.gov>  
**To:** "Greenberg, Stuart" <Stuart.Greenberg@fldoe.org>  
**Sent:** Wed, Jan 18, 2012 21:58:37 GMT+00:00  
**Subject:** SC reading panel

We are the point of submitting our report to the legislature. Our State Superintendent has reservations about requiring more reading courses. Currently the universities require only two reading courses for EC and Elementary certification; an endorsement is voluntary.

With whom should I talk in Florida about the training provided for teachers to obtain their reading certification or endorsement? If you are the best person, when might you be available to fill me in on what was done in providing reading training that made the most difference, how well school districts did with quality training, and similarly how well the universities did. I have pasted below my response to the assistant to the State Superintendent regarding his concerns. I referred to Florida's efforts as best as I understand them. Also I sent them two documents on Florida's certification and endorsement requirements which I have attached, since there are likely other documents that you might suggest for us to consider.

Thank you for your guidance in our prior conversation.

**From:** Holmes, Baron

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 17, 2012 4:39 PM **To:** Ragley, Jay  
**Subject:** draft recommendations in g

When I talked with Dr. Z after his Rotary speech and again after a panel meet he said that he does not want to add additional course credits for getting a degree in teaching but rather that the deans should replace existing courses with additional reading courses. This is an approach that would deal with **problem 1 = not enough courses**. Of course this is already a battleground in Colleges of Education over whose favorite courses should be required rather than be just an elective. However, as a starting point for promoting better training of teacher trainees to provide effective instruction, Dr. Z's approach could get the job done.....if the deans agreed or are required to reallocate courses to prioritize more reading courses. So if this is the proposal, will it go to and through discussions with the deans or to the legislature for enactment as a requirement? Or consult with the deans simultaneously with submitting to the legislature?

This leads to **problem 2 = quality/effectiveness of teacher training courses and PD**. Yes! Yes! Yes! This is why our reading expert professors recommended that:

**For all pre-service teachers:**

- 1) **Outline the knowledge, skills and strategies** needed to be an effective first-year teacher of readers and writers.
- 2) Describe the **kinds of pre-service experiences** which support the acquisition and effective use of this information.
- 3) **Review syllabi in certification programs** relative to #1 and #2.
- 4) Offer **state endorsement of, and support for, programs that meet criteria.**

Their proposal is to institute criteria for and monitoring/approval of the adequacy of content and experiences in the reading courses. Right now individual professors decide what they want to teach, constrained only by agreement from the dean and/or department head and submission of paper-based "evidence" of compliance with NCATE/IRA standards. So we do not want to leave the courses in their current state which ranges from wonderful and very effective to ineffective. What Florida decided was that in order for their students to become proficient readers, all their teachers should be required to obtain reading certification (30 credit hours = 10 courses in reading) or reading endorsement (300 hours of PD or 5 college reading courses). The state of SC requires teacher certification but not for reading other than two courses; and, as you imply, our enforcement of quality is minimal, to say the least. We are not proposing to require top-down quality control for all teacher certification courses, but only in reading as Florida has done. However, just as we are insisting that reading instruction become much more effective, we are emphasizing that teacher training in reading must become much more effective. This necessitates something as substantial as the four action steps listed above. Dr. Z has referred to the progress that Florida made in reading proficiency, as shown on grade 4 NAEP. I am no authority on all that Florida did, but I believe that the training of their teachers in reading assessment and instruction had a lot to do with it. I would be happy to seek out more information on the details of what

Florida did (see the two attachments for some information I already have). I can seek additional information by myself or working with anyone in SCDE whom you designate. The reading/literacy staff are in Mark Bounds' division, so Mark and his staff would be good partners in getting to the bottom of the training part of Florida's success. I just don't want to violate the worn saying: "if we keep doing what we've always done, we'll keep getting what we've always gotten". These are just my first thoughts, so I'll follow up with specific information on Florida and other perspectives on the very important challenge of adequately trained teachers of reading. Thanks for hearing out my thoughts. I'll hunt for any information that Dr. Z and you would like.

To Holmes, Baron  
Subject: RE: draft recommendations

Couple of things. One is the whole issue of certification. **Dr. Zais thinks the State already requires too much to get certified, and there has not been huge gains (though some gains made) in reading with all the certification requirements. Second, the reading coaches, that would be a local decision. Some districts would adopt, some would not, but ultimately it's a local decision on coaching.**

JWR