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**Sent time:** Friday, September 23, 2011 4:47:32 PM  
**To:** cari@excelined.org  
**Subject:** FW: Teaching the Common Core State Standards Foundational Skills  
**Attachments:** COI CCS\_Foundational Skills K-5\_Chart\_Final.doc

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Sincerely,

Cari Miller

Deputy Director

**Just Read, Florida!**

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**Sent:** Thursday, September 22, 2011 6:33 AM

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**Subject:** Teaching the Common Core State Standards Foundational Skills

Good morning Literacy Leaders,

#### Teaching the Common Core State Standards Foundational Skills

Students come to school unevenly prepared, so instruction must have the capacity to meet a range of needs. Instruction need to incorporate systematic and explicit instruction with more powerful practice — including distributed practice — for all aspects of foundational reading than has typically been taught. In K-2 reading instruction that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards should provide differentiated small group instruction and diagnostic support in concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, and fluency. These foundational skills are necessary, important and must be taught in a logical and sequential order designed to develop proficient readers with the capacity to comprehend texts across a range of types and disciplines. Reading is the single most important educational skill students will learn. Understanding the organization and meaning of text and instruction in both phonics and literature/informational text is essential to helping young children read. By understanding the prerequisite skills for reading, teachers can build a solid foundation for their students to learn and succeed in school.

Attached please find a document developed by the staff at the Florida Center for Reading Research through the Center on Instruction that contains prerequisites or sub-skills, in sequential order, that should be accomplished before a particular skill is learned. Instruction should provide ample opportunities for students to understand and fully learn the spelling/sound patterns that are necessary — though not sufficient — to become successful readers. This goal is accomplished when students can transfer knowledge of these patterns to words not previously seen or studied.

#### Differentiated Instruction

Because students differ widely in how much instruction and practice they need to master foundational skills, instruction must be differentiated in small groups to ensure a range of instruction from those students who are able to reach mastery with less practice and taught at an accelerated pace to those students that need additional instruction as soon as a learning gap is determined.

#### Fluency Development and Instruction

Instruction should also provide ample opportunities for repeated oral reading with a variety of grade-level texts that can be easily implemented, including providing a framework and tools for assessing oral reading accuracy, rate, and expression. Teacher support for fluency instruction should explicitly recognize that reading rates vary with the type of text being read and the purpose for reading. For example, comprehension of texts that are of greater informational density or complexity generally requires slower reading. A key strategy for improving fluency and offering all students access to complex text is to ask students to follow along while text is read aloud by the teacher. By the end of 2nd grade, a key goal should be that students are able to read independently with automaticity and flow to ensure that their focus can be freed for comprehension.

#### Vocabulary Development and Instruction

Instruction must develop academic vocabulary prevalent in complex texts throughout reading, writing, listening, and speaking instruction. When they enter school, students differ markedly in their vocabulary knowledge. Instruction must address this vocabulary gap early, systematically, and aggressively, or it will expand and accelerate. This means instruction must provide differentiated opportunities and provide more instruction and use for students with weaker vocabularies rather than offer them fewer words than their peers. Students must have multiple encounters with words throughout the day and use the newly acquired words in speaking and writing to ensure that the skills generalize to text.

#### Assessment for Instruction

Instruction should include assessment opportunities that genuinely measure progress in the foundations of reading. Activities used for assessment should clearly denote what standards are being emphasized, and materials should offer frequent and easily implemented assessments, including systems for record keeping and follow-up. These should include a framework and tools for assessing oral reading accuracy, rate, and expression with a variety of text types when fluency is being measured. The Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) contains a unique progress-monitoring tool – equated oral reading passages. This ensures that any fluctuations with fluency are accounted for through an empirically validated process rather than relying on the readability variation. In addition FAIR has a unique diagnostic assessment in K-2. As of September 21, the FAIR screener has been administered to 1,135,988 students as a tool to assist teachers with informing instruction.

Please let us know if the attached chart is beneficial to teachers in determining prerequisites or sub-skills and providing differentiated instruction.

Wishing you a great day,

Stu, Cari, Katie, Kevin, Laurie and Ruth

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Stuart Greenberg

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