

**From:** Greenberg, Stuart  
**Sent time:** Tuesday, September 13, 2011 10:22:26 AM  
**To:** MaryLaura@excelined.org  
**Subject:** Fw: MDRC letter of intent -- IES grant

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**From:** Greenberg, Stuart  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 13, 2011 10:15 AM  
**To:** Greenberg, Stuart  
**Subject:** Fw: MDRC letter of intent -- IES grant

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**From:** Robert Meyer [mailto:robert.meyer@failurefree.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 23, 2011 10:04 PM  
**To:** Greenberg, Stuart  
**Subject:** RE: MDRC letter of intent -- IES grant

Hi Stuart, your response immediately below has been bothering me all day. After further reflection, I am not sure that in response to your question #3 below that students are "obviously using PA/phonics skills" when unscrambling words or sentences. I believe that depends on the student. I also don't know which students are using phonics (some IDD and LD students absolutely are not) and I absolutely disagree that Failure Free requires the use of phonics.

I feel that you have twisted my words on these points, and that you are continually building a case for phonics intervention for all remedial reading, versus our language development approach which we promote for students who have failed to respond to traditional (alphabetic) remediation. I work for Failure Free because I believe very strongly that there is tremendous progress to be made through innovation and that the publishing industry has completely failed students in this area. For that reason I believe this FL reading grant is very important, and that an IES funded study would be an incredible opportunity.

I'd like to ask that if you share my email responses below with anyone including the Chancellor that you include the complete email thread (including this part of the thread) so that the complete context is there to be understood. Please don't use any excerpts from my responses below.

Thank you for your consideration on this.

Rob

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**From:** Greenberg, Stuart [mailto:Stuart.Greenberg@fldoe.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 23, 2011 12:51 PM  
**To:** Robert Meyer  
**Subject:** RE: MDRC letter of intent -- IES grant

Rob,

I think there a few issues that you need to understand. The matched data is very clear. FFR did not equal the learning gains of similar students that were not provided additional resources so from a fiscal perspective it was not cost effective.

**Table 1: FCAT Reading Results – Target Students Meeting the Eligibility Criteria**

FCAT Reading Results	2010-11 Implementation of Failure Free Reading for Target Students	2010-11 Broward County Public Schools Comparison Group for Target Students not using FFR	2010-11 Statewide Comparison Group for Target Students not using FFR
<b>Students With DSS Gains</b>	49%	51%	<b><u>50%</u></b>
Students with DSS Gains within Achievement Level-	24%	30%	<b><u>31%</u></b>
Students with DSS Gains-increasing Achievement Level	25%	21%	19%
Students whose DSS Reading Score decreased	<b><u>28%</u></b>	25%	27%

For the target group, 49% of the eligible students made an annual learning gain, slightly lower than 51% for the Broward comparison group and 50% for the statewide comparison group. 24% of the target students in FFR achieved a within level gain but remained at FCAT Level 1, 30% of the Broward group achieved a learning gain but remained within achievement Level 1, and 31% of the statewide group achieved a learning gain but remained within achievement Level 1. The percentage of students who increased an FCAT Level was 25% for FFR, 21% for the Broward comparison group, and 19% for the statewide comparison group. 28% of the students in FFR decreased achievement scores, 25% of the Broward comparison group decreased in achievement scores, and 27% of the statewide comparison group decreased in achievement scores.

Also based upon your response below you realize students are using phonics and your intervention requires the use of phonics.

I will share your offer and responses with Chancellor.

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**From:** Robert Meyer [mailto:robert.meyer@failurefree.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 23, 2011 1:18 PM  
**To:** Greenberg, Stuart  
**Subject:** RE: MDRC letter of intent -- IES grant

Hi Stuart, I've responded in CAPS in your email below.

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**From:** Greenberg, Stuart [mailto:Stuart.Greenberg@fldoe.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 23, 2011 10:05 AM  
**To:** Robert Meyer  
**Subject:** RE: MDRC letter of intent -- IES grant

Rob

Thank you for the correspondence. I will ask staff above me if they are interested. Three questions that I know I will be asked;

1. For matched students in 10-11 FFR did not meet or exceed the learning gains of the state average. How would this study reveal anything new to influence practice other than what the state study and the Power 4 Kids study indicated?

I BELIEVE IT WOULD BECAUSE SUBSETS OF THE 10-11 FFR COHORT CAN BE ANALYZED AND NOT JUST SUMMARY STATISTICS FROM THE 400 STUDENTS WHO MET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR EVALUATION. FROM THE 17 PRINCIPAL MEETINGS THAT TOOK PLACE WE KNOW FFR PRODUCED SIGNIFICANT EDSS GAINS FOR MANY OF THE STUDENTS, AND FROM THE DOE REPORT WE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE % OF STUDENTS IN FFR WHO MOVED UP AN FCAT LEVEL WAS 32% GREATER THAN THAT OF THE STATE-WIDE COMPARISON GROUP (I WOULD STILL LIKE TO HAVE MORE COMPLETE INFO BECAUSE NEITHER OF THOSE STATISTICS IS VERY COMPLETE IMO). IN OTHER WORDS THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO REPORT A MORE COMPLETE ANALYSIS THAT INFORMS PRACTICE.

THAT SAID, THE STUDY IF FUNDED WILL BE FOUR YEARS STARTING NEXT SPRING SO THE FIRST YEAR OF ANALYSIS I ASSUME WILL BE OUTCOMES FROM 2011/12.

I THINK YOU HAVE OUR TAKE ON THE POWER 4KIDS REPORTS FROM PRIOR EMAILS... I SUGGEST PEOPLE READ THE TWO SPECIAL ED JOURNAL STUDIES FROM THE 90'S THAT REPORTED 35% OR MORE OF THE FFR STUDENTS NO LONGER QUALIFIED FOR SPECIAL ED SERVICES BASED ON IQ ACHIEVEMENT DISCREPANCIES... WASN'T ANYONE INTERESTED DURING THE PAST 10 YEARS IN DISPROPORTIONALITY, OR TOO MANY IEP'S? IN OTHER WORDS WHERE WAS THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY?

2. What is the benefit of doing a study of FFR without comparing FFR to other interventions?

IN MY OPINION, THE IMPORTANCE OF A STUDY ON FFR IS TO ASCERTAIN THE EFFICACY OF NON-PHONIC INTENSIVE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT WITH CHRONIC LEVEL 1 READERS. A FOUR YEAR TIMEFRAME WOULD ALSO PROVIDE THE CHANCE TO NOT JUST STUDY THE IMPACT OF SUCH INSTRUCTION ON READING OUTCOMES, BUT IN VARIOUS CONDITIONS, DIFFERENT COMBINATIONS AND SEQUENCES OF INSTRUCTION, AND WITH DIFFERENT SUBGROUPS. WITH 30% OF ALL FL STUDENTS STUCK AT LEVEL 1 IN READING, AND PRESUMABLY A VERY LARGE % OF THOSE KIDS CHRONIC LEVEL 1'S, THIS SEEMS TO ME TO BE A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN A LOT MORE ABOUT WHAT WORKS, IN WHAT CONDITIONS, AND WHY.

I SPOKE WITH FRED DOOLITTLE OF MDRC THIS MORNING ABOUT INCLUDING ADDITIONAL INTERVENTIONS. HE HAS QUESTIONS ABOUT FCAT THAT HAVE TO DO WITH THE ABILITY OF RDD TO BE ABLE TO COMPARE STUDENT OUTCOMES BY DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVENTION. I PROPOSE WE HAVE A CONFERENCE CALL WITH YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES ASAP TO DISCUSS. MY STRONG VOTE IS TO ABSOLUTELY MAKE A STUDY LIKE THIS AS COMPREHENSIVE AND FAR REACHING AS POSSIBLE AND INCLUDE ALL OF THE PREVALENT INTERVENTIONS THAT FLDOE CAN CAPTURE INTO THE EDW, PLUS DESIGN THE STUDY TO INCLUDE FOLLOW ON OR "COMPANION" COMPLEX TEXT COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTION AS YOU ARE DEVELOPING. I SEE THIS AS A VERY SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY FOR FL AND K-12 READING NATIONALLY GIVEN THE OVERWHELMING CHALLENGE AND CONSEQUENCES OF LOW LITERACY -- AND THE TERRIBLY WASTEFUL ONGOING PROBLEM OF DISTRICTS OVER-BUYING COMMERCIAL PROGRAMS. I DO NOT VIEW THIS STUDY AS ONLY A "FAILURE FREE" STUDY ALTHOUGH WE WOULD OBVIOUSLY BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD REPORT THAT FAILURE FREE PRODUCES HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT OUTCOMES FOR SPECIFIC CLASSIFICATIONS/SUBGROUPS OF STUDENTS.

3. Writing in English is the application of the alphabetic principal. If FFR is 100% non phonemic how do students unscramble words and sentences if not through the application of letter sound correspondence? If FFR is non phonemic why does it include writing activities that requires students to write and expand sentences? IF/AS THEY ARE UNSCRAMBLING SUCCESSFULLY, THEN THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY USING THEIR PHONEMIC AWARENESS/PHONICS SKILLS. WE DON'T FEEL THAT ALPHABETIC INSTRUCTION ISN'T IMPORTANT. TO THE CONTRARY, ALPHABETIC INSTRUCTION IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR ALL CHILDREN. THAT SAID, THE STUDENTS WHO END UP NEEDING READING REMEDIATION BUT WHO DO NOT RESPOND TO PHONICS INTERVENTION NEED AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH IN ORDER TO BEGIN PROGRESS IN READING AND BECOME ENGAGED IN LEARNING. INTENSIVE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT CAN PROVIDE THAT BENEFIT. AS STUDENTS RESPOND TO FFR AND ARE BUILDING COMPREHENSION, VOCABULARY, FLUENCY AND CONFIDENCE THEY CERTAINLY NEED ADDITIONAL READING INSTRUCTION (E.G. WORD STUDY, ADVANCED PHONICS) AND CERTAINLY INDEPENDENT READING, ADDITIONAL SCAFFOLDING.

I THINK THE MDRC APPLICATION WOULD BE STRENGTHENED BY A COLLABORATIVE DISCUSSION WITH JUST READ FL, AND THAT THE RESULTING STUDY COULD BE A MAJOR STEP FORWARD FOR READING INSTRUCTION. AND THAT WE CAN LEARN MUCH MORE IN PRACTICAL TERMS FROM A STUDY LIKE THIS THAN THE PROGRAMS FUNDED LAST YEAR WITH \$100M IN RESEARCH MONEY. LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR THOUGHTS AND I WOULD BE GLAD TO ARRANGE A CALL WITH MDRC IF YOU LIKE.

ROB

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**From:** Robert Meyer [mailto:robert.meyer@failurefree.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 23, 2011 9:32 AM  
**To:** Greenberg, Stuart  
**Subject:** MDRC letter of intent -- IES grant

Hi Stuart

I discussed the attached LOI with Fred Doolittle this morning. It is just an LOI and not binding in terms of the scope of the actual project application... He also sent me the attached paper... and is starting to develop a list of questions pertaining to a study design. Please let me know if you need additional info as we discussed yesterday.

Rob

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