Early Learning and Literacy Initiatives Update

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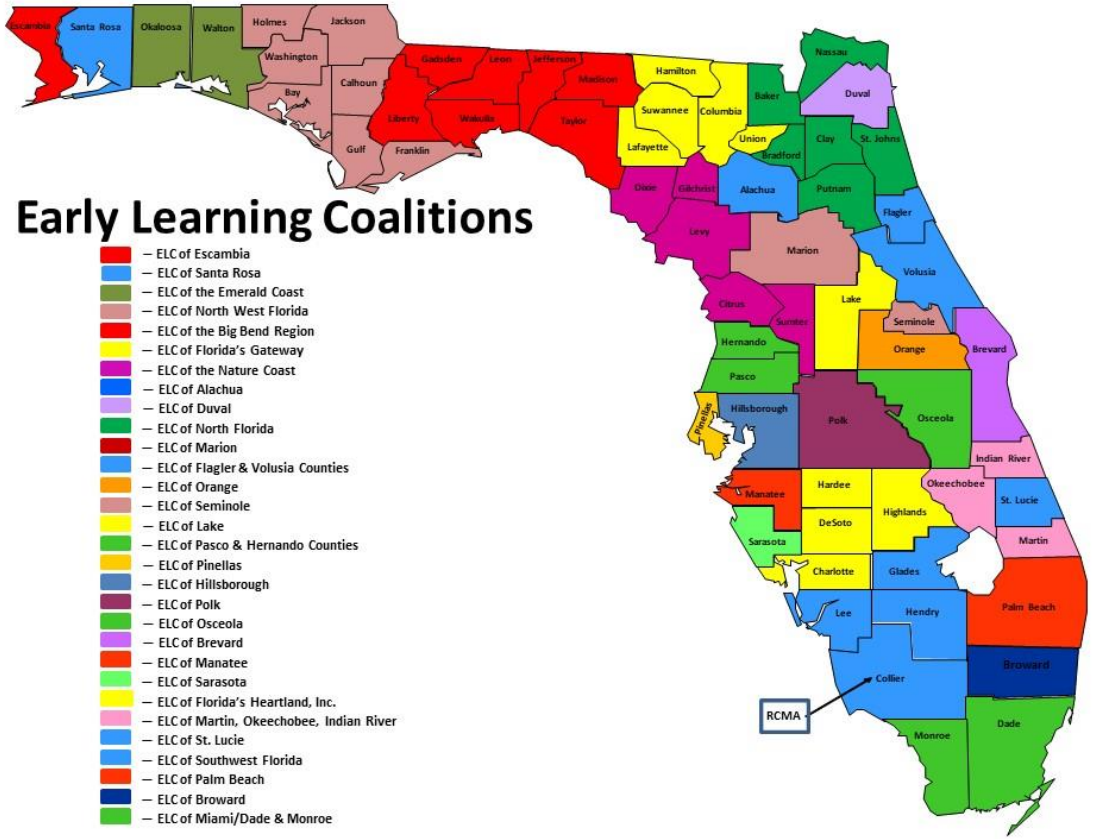
Structure for Early Learning

- In 2021, the Division of Early Learning (DEL) was brought into the Department of Education to provide coordinated and seamless educational services and supports to children from birth through K-12 and beyond.
- The division is the lead administrator for federal and state childcare funds. As such, DEL:
  - Oversees Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) network which helps parents identify and select quality child care options that best meet their needs, and provides technical assistance that improves the quality, availability and affordability of child care.
  - Implements School Readiness (SR), Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) and the Gold Seal Quality Care program.
  - Develops, adopts, and implements quality standards and measures to improve Florida's comprehensive early child care and education system.

Early Learning Coalitions and RCMA

The Department of Education's DEL, administers SR and VPK programs statewide, in partnership with thirty (30) early learning coalitions (ELCs) and the Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA).



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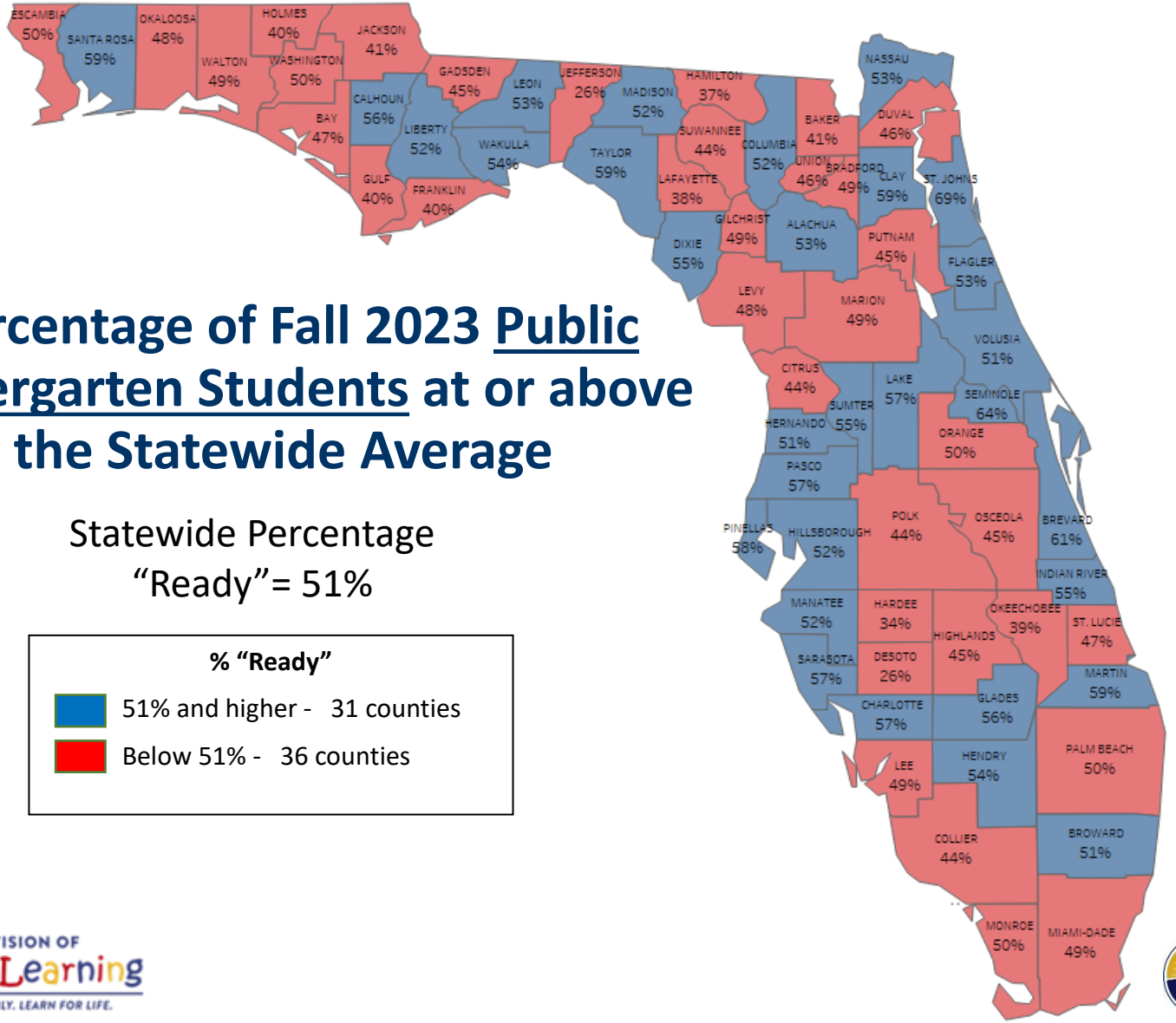
DEL Goals:

1. Increase Kindergarten readiness, setting children on a path to learn, graduate and succeed.
2. Engage families as their child's first teacher and support them in making informed decisions on high-quality child care that best meet their family needs.
3. Support families by providing high-quality child care as they work to become financially self-sufficient.
4. Build high-quality early learning programs to meet the individual needs of all children.
5. Increase knowledge and skills of early learning professionals to provide high-quality care and education.

Importance of Kindergarten Readiness

- For children who enter kindergarten behind, **roughly 75%** will never catch up to their classmates.
- The **strongest predictors of later achievement** are school-entry math, reading and attention skills.
- State and local **prekindergarten programs,** almost without exception**, improve academic readiness for school.**
- Participants in the prekindergarten program **scored higher on third-grade language arts tests** than did nonparticipants.
- Participation in an **early childhood experience** (child care or preschool) **increases** high school **graduation rates.**

2023 FAST PM 1 Kindergarten Results by County



Percentage of Fall 2023 Public Kindergarten Students at or above the Statewide Average

Statewide Percentage
"Ready"= 51%

% "Ready"

- 51% and higher - 31 counties
- Below 51% - 36 counties

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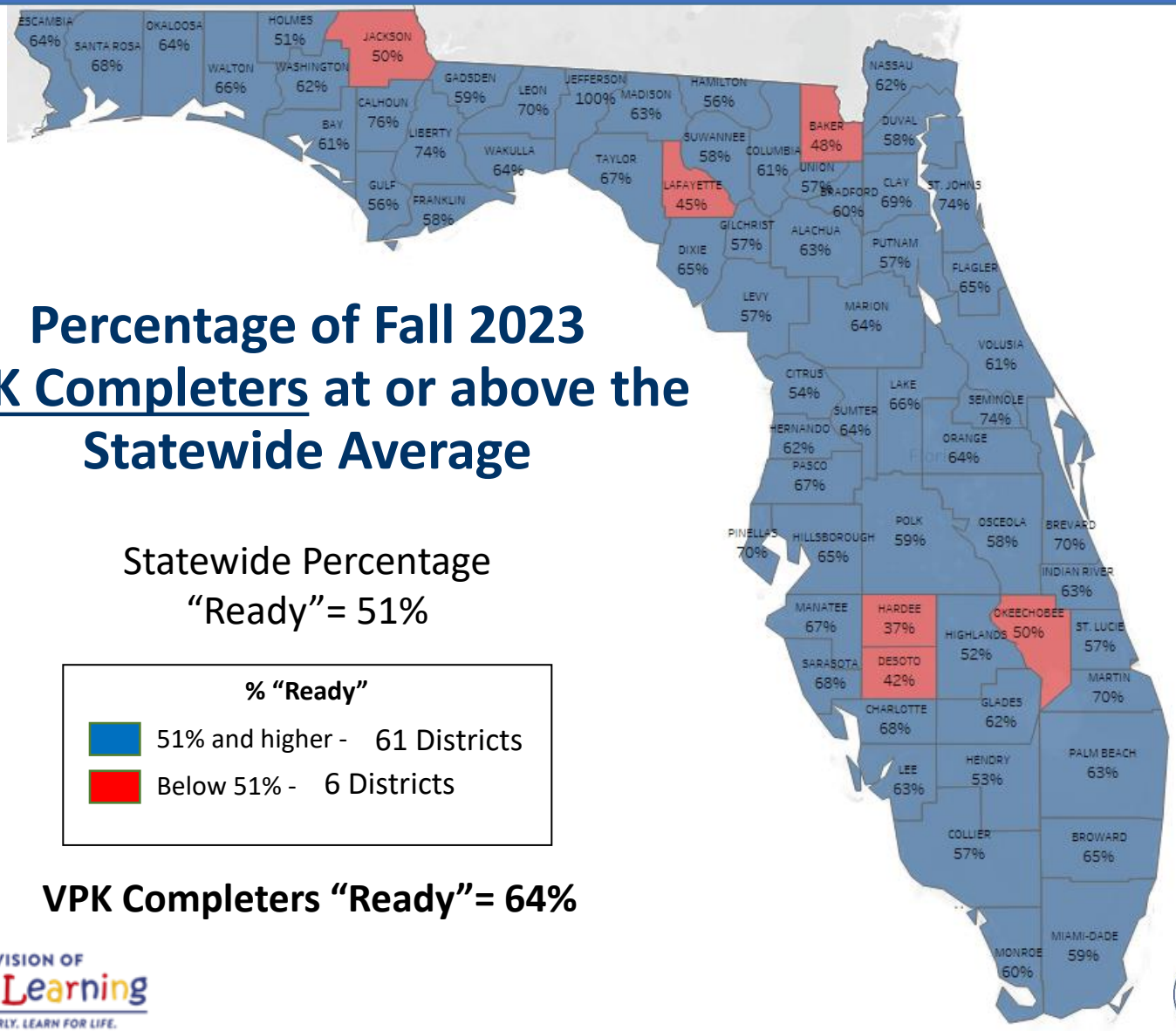
2023 FAST PM 1 VPK Completer Results by County



Percentage of Fall 2023 VPK Completers at or above the Statewide Average

Statewide Percentage
"Ready"= 51%

% "Ready"

- 51% and higher - 61 Districts
- Below 51% - 6 Districts

VPK Completers "Ready"= 64%

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2023 FAST PM 1 Kindergarten Results

Percent Kindergarten Ready Students Statewide – Fall 2023

	Number of Test Takers	Number of Students "Ready"	Percent of Students "Ready"
All Kindergarten Students	186,417	95,494	51%
VPK Completers	101,348	64,394	64%
Non-VPK Completers	11,175	4,472	40%
Non-VPK Participants/ Unmatched	65,520	23,780	36%

Ready for K: Scoring 690+ on FAST Star Early Literacy PM1

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Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program

- **Purpose of VPK**
  - Constitutionally mandated program available to all 4-year-olds who reside in the state.
  - To prepare every four-year-old in Florida for kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success.
- **For Who?**
  - Florida children 4-years-old on or before Sept. 1.
  - Children born from Feb. 2 through Sept. 1 of a calendar year may enroll in VPK either the program year they turn 4 or the next.
- **Program Options**
  - **School Year Program:** Up to 540 hours of instruction available between August through June
  - **Summer Program:** Up to 300 hours of instruction available between May through August
  - **Specialized Instructional Services (SIS):** Services available outside traditional VPK classroom setting for 4-year-olds with disabilities – child must have current individual educational plan (IEP) from local school district.

VPK

- Historically, 70-80% of 4-year-olds participate.
- 80% of VPK children participate in VPK in a non-public setting; 20% public school setting
- Funded primarily by the state's General Revenue fund.
- Funding is $2,941 for the school year and $2,511 for the summer (plus the District Cost Differential).
- VPK provides high-quality instruction based on educational standards adopted by the State Board of Education.
- **In 2022-23, 6,237 providers served 158,408 children.**

School Readiness (SR)

- Offers financial assistance to eligible low-income families for early education and care so they can become financially self-sufficient, and their young children can be successful in school.
- Provides child care services for children, ages birth through 13, who are economically disadvantaged, have special needs, are at risk (homeless, victims of domestic violence) or whose parents participate in Workforce services.
- Parents/guardians must work or participate in an educational activity at least 20 hours weekly or be exempt from work requirements due to a disability or age
- Funded primarily through the Child Care and Development Block Grant
- **In 2022-23, 6,790 child care providers cared for 209,986 children in SR.**

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2022-23 SR/VPK CLASS Results

Program Assessment: CLASS

- CLASS = **CL**assroom **A**ssessment **S**coring **S**ystem
- CLASS is a research-based method of measuring, evaluating and improving teacher-student interactions from infant care-12th grade.
- CLASS measures high quality interactions that lead to improved academic outcomes. The interactions teachers have with children are proven to impact learning development.
- Providers receive the results within 14 days.
- Early learning coalitions (ELCs) are responsible for administration of CLASS which must be conducted by qualified individuals.

2022-23 CLASS Assessment Results

School Readiness:
More than 97% of SR providers scored 4.0 or higher

VPK:
Almost 99% of VPK providers scored 4.0 or higher

Overall Score Group	Count of SR Providers:	Count of VPK Providers:	SR + VPK Providers	Providers in Both SR and VPK Counts	Distinct Providers by Scoring Group
Below 3	3	8	11	0	11
3 to 3.49	12	10	22	1	21
3.5 to 3.99	64	44	108	2	106
4 to 4.49	657	894	1,551	198	1,353
4.5 to 4.99	1,168	1,665	2,833	365	2,468
5 to 5.49	987	1,908	2,895	344	2,551
5.5 to 5.99	464	1,048	1,512	132	1,380
6 to 6.49	108	320	428	25	403
6.5 and above	17	37	54	1	53
Grand Total	3,480	5,934	9,414	1,068	8,346

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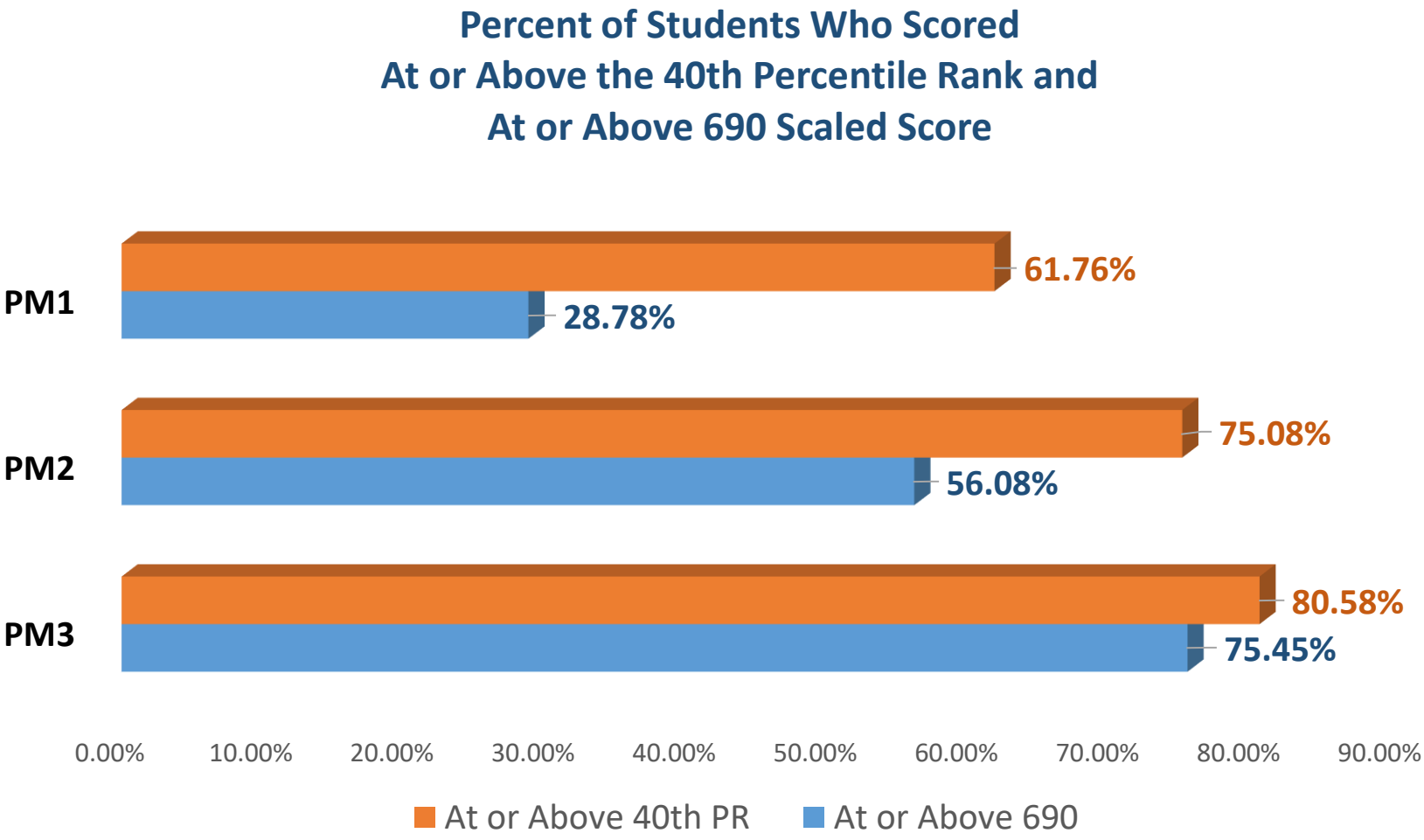
2022-23 VPK FAST Star Early Literacy

VPK Student Assessment - FAST Star Early Literacy

The Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring Program is the statewide, standardized progress monitoring system known as FAST Star Early Literacy.

- **Why implement FAST Star Early Literacy?**
  - To assess and monitor VPK student achievement and learning gains of the performance standards in early literacy and mathematics *(ss. 1002.68 and 1008.25(9), F.S.)*
  - Use results to inform instruction to meet the needs of each child
- **Who is assessed?**
  - All VPK students enrolled with valid certificates of eligibility
- **When are students assessed?**
  - Three progress monitoring periods in a program year (PM1, PM2, PM3)
- **How long does it take?**
  - 10-20 minutes average test length
- **What is assessed?**
  - 27 total items – 22 early literacy items and 5 numeracy items
  - 10 key early literacy sub-domains: Visual Discrimination, Alphabetic Principle, Concept of Word, Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Structural Analysis, Vocabulary, Sentence-Level Comprehension, Paragraph-Level Comprehension, Early Numeracy

FAST Star Early Literacy VPK Results



VPK Accountability

Methodology to Calculate Each Provider's Performance Metric

- The department shall adopt a methodology for calculating each private prekindergarten provider's and public school provider's performance metric, which must be based on a combination of the following:

1	Program assessment composite score, which must be weighted at no less than 50 percent. **(CLASS)**
2	Learning gains operationalized as change-in-ability scores from the initial and final progress monitoring results. **(FAST Star Early Literacy)**
3	Norm-referenced developmental learning outcomes. **(FAST Star Early Literacy)**

- Produce a limited number of performance metric profiles that must be used to inform designations: Unsatisfactory, Emerging Proficiency, Proficient, Highly Proficient, Excellent ***or*** comparable terminology determined by the department which may not include letter grades.
- Applied at the end of the 2024-25 program year.

**s. 1002.68, F.S., Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program accountability*

Early Learning and K-12 Schools Online Portal

- Pursuant to Section 1002.82(2)(q), Florida Statutes, the Department of Education is to create and deploy an online, forward facing early learning provider search that integrates with the online portal for K-12 schools under s. 1001.10(10), F.S.
- The integrated online portal enables parents to choose the early learning provider or K-12 school that best meets their child's needs.
- The online portal will be available in English and Spanish and will provide families with real-time, searchable information on child care openings, tuition and fees, curriculum utilized, health and safety violations, inspection reports, quality initiatives, CLASS scores, openings and other services offered.

Emergent/Elementary Literacy Micro-Credential

- **Emergent – Designed for instructional and child care personnel who work in a public or private early learning program.**
  - 60 hours/3 components (20 hours each)
  - $2,000 stipend for completion
  - Meets the VPK instructor emergent literacy course requirement
- **Elementary – Designed for PreK-Grade 5 instructional personnel who work in public schools.**
  - 60 hours/3 components (20 hours each)
  - For child care and instructional personnel who work in a public or private early learning program: $2,000 stipend for completion
  - For K-5 instructional personnel: $1,000 stipend for completion
  - Satisfies Competency 1 of the Reading Endorsement
  - Satisfies the 40-hour reading requirement for teacher certification renewal
  - Allows instructional personnel to teach intensive reading intervention if supervised by a certified or reading endorsed teacher

FLAMINGO LITERACY

New Worlds Reading Initiative

New Worlds Reading Initiative (NWRI) is expanded to include eligible VPK students.

What is NWRI?

- Eligible VPK-Grade 5 students receive free books monthly until the students exit fifth grade.
- Eligible students include VPK-Grade 2 students scoring below 40%ile on FAST Star in early literacy/reading or grades 3-5 students scoring below a Level 3 on FAST (PM1, PM2 or PM3).
- Distribution of books begins no later than October and continues through at least June.
- Parent resources are included.
- Teacher resources around books being distributed.

Literacy Mission, Milestones & Goals

Mission: Improve birth to grade 12 literacy policies, regulation and practices through cross-agency, cross-bureau collaboration to ensure a seamless and cohesive approach to increase educator knowledge and skill in the science of reading and the use of evidence-based practices to increase literacy achievement and close the achievement gap for our most vulnerable students statewide.

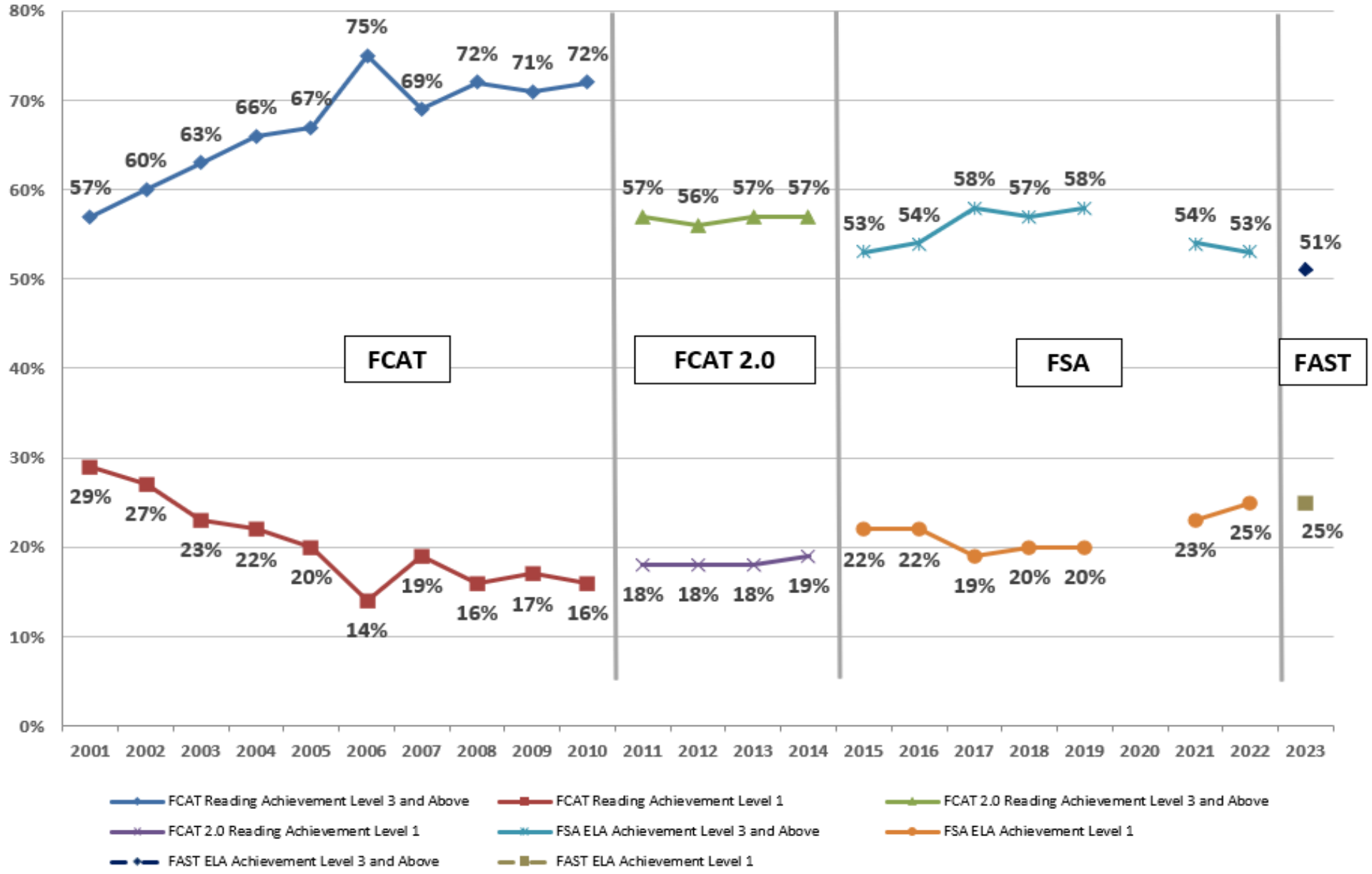
2 Major Milestones:

1. Kindergarten Readiness
2. Grade Level Reading by the End of Third Grade

3 Measurable Goals:

1. Increase % of students ready to learn when entering Kindergarten
2. Increase % of students on grade level by the end of third grade
3. Close the achievement gap for our most vulnerable students

Grade 3 ELA/Reading Performance Over Time



Vehicles Driving Literacy Policy and Initiatives

CARES Act/ ESSER II/ARP

House Bill (HB) 7011 (2021) & HB 3 (2021)

Senate Bill 2524 (2022)

HB 5101 (2023) & HB 7039 (2023)

Literacy Grants

State Regional Literacy Directors (SRLDs)

Under the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence (RAISE) Act, SRLDs:

- Build capacity of district and school-level literacy leadership teams.
- Support literacy coaches with focusing on coaching practices proven to improve teacher practice/student achievement.
- Provide professional learning and support implementation for the B.E.S.T. ELA Standards grounded in the science of reading.
- Provide training and support with effective implementation of evidence-based practices/programs proven to work.
- Use data to inform supports and instruction to meet the needs of all students.

2023-2024 RAISE Tiers of Support Criteria

- Universal Support (1,184 schools)
  - Grades 3-5: Fifty (50) percent or more students scored below a Level 3 in any grade level on the Spring 2023 statewide, standardized ELA assessment
  - Grades K-2: Fifty (50) percent or more students scored below the 40th percentile in any grade level on the Spring 2023 coordinated screening and progress monitoring system
- Targeted Support (465 schools)
  - Grade 2: Fifty (50) percent or more students scored below the 40th percentile on the Spring 2023 coordinated screening and progress monitoring system
- Intensive Support (228 schools)
  - Grade 3: Seventy-one (71) percent or more students scored below a Level 3 on the Spring 2023 statewide, standardized ELA assessment

Science of Reading: An Introduction Course

- Free, online professional learning course (5 hours)
- Designed specifically for K-12 classroom educators but may also be useful for school administrators, other school personnel, pre-service teachers, and college and university faculty to gain a better understanding of the science of reading
- Access through the Independent Course Catalog on the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) Portal to Professional Learning Alternatives – fl-pda.org

RAISE High School Tutoring Program

Tutoring Program

- Training was deployed for the High School Tutoring Program to districts opting to participate
- High school students must meet eligibility criteria
- Participating districts must recruit, train and deploy tutors in RAISE schools
- High school students may earn up to 3 credit hours
- Tutoring hours may be counted toward meeting community service requirements for high school graduation and Florida Bright Futures
- Tutors providing at least 75 hours of tutoring = New Worlds Scholars designation by FDOE

New Worlds Scholars

- In the 2022-2023 school year, 61 high school tutors received the New Worlds Scholar designation
- For the 2023-2024 school year, there are currently 49 high school tutors who have been awarded the New Worlds Scholar designation

Literacy Coach Endorsement

Face-to-Face (Boot Camps)

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY | FCRR FLORIDA CENTER for READING RESEARCH

- In 2022-2023, 466 educators earned the Literacy Coach Endorsement in Cohorts 1-2 of the FCRR pathway (led by SRLDs).
- In June 2023, SRLDs trained 118 district personnel to facilitate the FCRR pathway in their districts.
- Currently, 171 educators are participating in Cohort 3 of the FCRR pathway for Literacy Coach Endorsement Boot Camps (led by SRLDs).

Online

UF Lastinger Center UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

- In 2022-2023, 208 educators earned the Literacy Coach Endorsement through the UF Lastinger Center online pathway.
- Currently, 165 educators are enrolled in the UF Lastinger Center online pathway.

Literacy Leadership Series

FCRR Journey to Literacy and Leadership Professional Learning Series

Guided by the *Roadmap to Implementing Evidence-Based Practices* developed by the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southeast and the *Lead for Literacy Framework* developed by the Lead for Literacy Center, these sessions were developed to help principals and other school-based leaders implement evidence-based and evidence-informed literacy practices in their classrooms. Effective school leaders understand the importance of working collaboratively with teachers, coaches, and other professionals in the school and in the community to create environments that effectively support literacy learning for all students. These sessions are designed to support school leaders in building teachers' and coaches' capacity to implement evidence-based literacy practices to improve student learning and achievement. Each session includes an evidence-based or evidence-informed tool or resource that can be used immediately to support school-based leaders. Leaders can complete the sessions in order or individually based upon priorities and needs.

Overview of Literacy and Leadership Sessions

Session	Objective	Tool	Length	Florida Principal Leadership Standards
1	Why Leadership and Literacy?	Overview of the Roadmap to Implementing Evidence-Based Literacy Practices & Literacy for Literacy Framework	90 minutes	FPLS.1.1.a, 1.1.b, 1.2.a, 1.2.b, 1.2.c, 1.2.d
2	The Science of Reading	What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Practice Guides, Literacy Mission, Vision, & Goals	90 minutes	FPLS.2.3.a, 2.3.b, 2.3.c
3	Understanding and Evaluating Evidence-Based Practices	FCRR Reading Program Repository, WWC, Evidence for ESSA, & National Center for Intensive Interventions Tools Charts	90 minutes	FPLS.2.3.e, 2.4.d
4	Using Your Implementation Team	School Leader's Literacy Walkthrough Tool Self-Study Process and REL Self Study Guides	90 minutes	FPLS.1.2.a, 1.2.b, 1.2.c, 1.2.d, 2.4.b
5	Creating a Logic Model for Implementing & Evaluation Evidence-Based Practices	REL Logic Model Tools, School Improvement Plans, and FDOE Comprehensive Evidence Based Reading Plans (CERP)	90 minutes	FPLS.2.3.d, 2.4.e, 2.4.a
6	The Inputs: Selecting Materials, Strategies, & Assessments	CERP Assessment/Curriculum Decision Tree What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Practice Guides National Center for Intensive Interventions Tools Charts	90 minutes	FPLS.2.4.c, 2.4.e, 2.4.f
7	The Outputs: Implementing Evidence-Based Practices	REL Professional Learning Communities National Center for Improving Literacy Toolkits	90 minutes	FPLS.2.5, 3.6
8	The Outcomes: Ongoing Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices	REL Continuous Improvement in Education: Toolkit for Schools & Districts REL Self-Study Guides FDOE CERP Reflection Tool	90 minutes	FPLS.2.5, 3.6

Literacy Micro-Credentials

- 3 Micro-Credentials:
  - Emergent Literacy (Birth-PreK)
  - Elementary Literacy (PreK-Grade 5)
  - Secondary Literacy (Grades 6-12)
- 60-hour stackable literacy professional learning
- Competency-based
- Instructional personnel who have successfully earned the literacy micro-credential (60 hours) can provide intensive reading intervention, under supervision of someone endorsed/certified in reading.

Reading Endorsement

- Two high-quality state pathways to earn Reading Endorsement:
  - UF Lastinger Center Literacy Matrix (Online)
  - FCRR Reading Endorsement Pathway (Face-to-Face)
- Matrices aligned to 2022 Reading Endorsement Competencies were submitted July 1, 2023.
- Effective July 1, 2024, instructional personnel will be prohibited from earning a Reading Endorsement solely by achieving a passing score on the Reading K-12 exam (s. 1012.586, F.S.).

Who's Required To Be Reading Endorsed/Certified?

- Teachers who teach summer reading camps for third grade students scoring Level 1 on state standardized assessment of ELA (s. 1008.25, F.S.)
- Teachers instructing retained third grade students (s. 1008.25, F.S.)
- Teachers providing Tier 3 reading intervention must possess a literacy micro-credential or be endorsed/certified in reading (Rule 6A-6.053, F.A.C.)
- Literacy coaches (Rule 6A-6.053, F.A.C.)
- School district personnel and instructional personnel who supervise teacher candidates during internship in grades K-3 or who are enrolled in a teacher preparation program for a certificate area identified in Rule 6A-4.0051, F.A.C., pursuant to s. 1012.585, F.S. (s. 1004.04, F.S.)
- Candidates entering an ITP, EPI, or PLCP for a certificate area identified in Rule 6A-4.0051, F.A.C., pursuant to s. 1012.585, F.S. (ss. 1004.04 and 1004.85, F.S.)

Comprehensive Evidence-Based Reading Plan (CERP, Rule 6A-6.053, F.A.C.)

- House Bill 5101 created a new statute for reading plans – s. 1003.4201, F.S.
- Each school district must implement a system of comprehensive reading instruction for students enrolled in the PreK through grade 12.
- Districts must develop CERPs on an annual basis and submit to Just Read, Florida! for approval by August 1, after approval by the governing board or authority.
- The CERP includes the district's approach to leadership, professional learning, literacy coaching, assessment, curriculum, instruction and intervention.
- The CERP focuses districts on evidence-based reading practices proven to work.

2024-2025 Instructional Materials Adoption Cycle

An update to the instructional materials adoption cycle relating to provisions created by House Bill 7039 requires:

- The primary instructional strategy for teaching word reading is phonics instruction for decoding and encoding.
- The identified reading instructional and intervention programs for foundational skills may not include strategies that employ the three-cueing system model of reading or visual memory as a basis for teaching word reading.
- Such programs may include visual information and strategies that improve background and experiential knowledge, add context, and increase oral language and vocabulary to support comprehension, but may not be used to teach word reading, pursuant s. 1001.215(7), F.S.
- The Department shall provide a list of state examined and approved comprehensive reading and intervention programs.

Science of Reading Literacy and Tutoring Grant ($16M)

Purpose: Provide additional literacy support to K-5 students enrolled in a public school who either scored below Level 3 on 2023 FAST ELA PM3 or who the district has determined through progress monitoring to be below grade level and in need of additional reading intervention.

- Program ends: June 30, 2024; Liquidation: August 20, 2024
- Funds may be used for:
  - Stipends for tutors during the school day, before and after school, or a summer program;
  - Licenses for computerized or automated literacy tutoring that provides each student with the ability to read to the software and receive, in real time, tutoring interventions that are based in science of reading principles and individually tailored to the needs and ability of each student;
  - Professional learning; or
  - Curriculum, resources and materials necessary to implement explicit and systematic instructional strategies.

High-Impact Reading Interventions and Targeted Supports Grant ($50M)

Purpose: Provide supplemental support to promote high-quality evidence-based reading practices and literacy professional learning based on the science of reading, prioritizing intensive interventions at schools with 50% or more of students in VPK through grade 3 scoring below grade level in reading.

- Program ends: September 30, 2024; Liquidation: November 20, 2024
- Major areas of focus:
  - Professional Learning: Provide professional learning aligned to the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards (FELDS) and the B.E.S.T. ELA Standards and include professional learning on evidence-based practices and programs
  - Strategic Partnerships: Strategically partner with State Regional Literacy Directors and VPK Regional Facilitators, providing services and supports to RAISE schools to enhance reading interventions and targeted supports.
  - Final Report: Submit a final report including specific qualitative and quantitative data.

Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant ($21M)

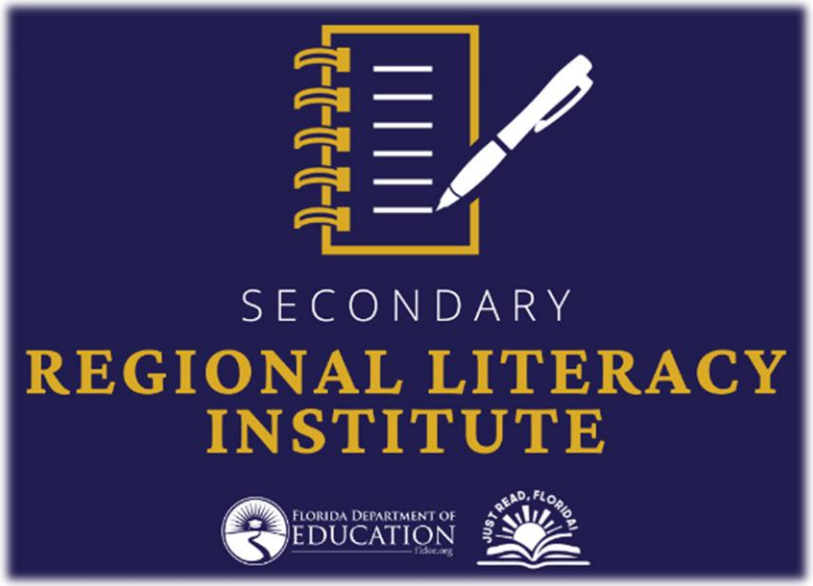
- **$21 million over a 3-year period with the overarching goals to:**
  - Build knowledge and capacity of local leaders, families and teachers in the use of evidence-based practices and programs; and
  - Increase literacy achievement and reduce the achievement gap in high need schools/early childhood programs.
- **Target audience:**
  - 15% to serve students from birth to age 5
  - 40% to serve students from Kindergarten to grade 5
  - 40% to serve students from grade 6 to grade 12 in an equal distribution (20% grades 6-8; 20% grades 9-12)
  - Up to 5% for additional support in identified areas (e.g., administrative costs)
- **Program ends: September 30, 2025; Liquidation: November 20, 2025**
- **9 subgrantees selected**

2024 Summer Literacy Institute

- June 12-14
- Omni Orlando Resort
- Audience:
  - RAISE Literacy Leadership Teams
  - District K-5 literacy representatives
  - District VPK representatives
  - Early Learning Coalition representatives

2024 Secondary Regional Literacy Institutes

- North Districts: June 25-26
- South Districts: June 27-28
- Omni Orlando Resort
- Audience:
  - Grades 6-12 Reading/ELA Teachers
  - Grades 6-12 Literacy Coaches



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Questions?

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