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Just Read, Florida!

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M E M O R A D U M

TO: District School Superintendents

FROM: Dr. Frances Haithcock

DATE: June 22, 2010

SUBJECT: Florida Virtual School – Reading Intervention Course

The Just Read, Florida! Office entered a partnership with Florida Virtual School (FLVS) on the development of a reading intervention course two years ago as a possible alternative for very high performing students who scored at level two on FCAT Reading. The result of this partnership has been the development of a full credit course created by FLVS and 360ed which addresses reading instruction in a unique, innovative way. It is designed for fluent level two high school students. Students read their way through this gaming course, picking up clues and solving mini-games along the way. Essential skills that good readers have are taught in semester one and implementation of these skills occur naturally in semester two.

In each lesson, background knowledge is established, students are provided with systematic and explicit modeling and direct instruction, as well as opportunities for guided and independent practice. Most importantly, this is a highly interactive course which requires a great deal of student and teacher contact. Instructors consistently host discussion-based assessments, in which they establish rapport and conduct informal assessments through repeated reading of course material and discussions of plot to allow for authentic checks of student comprehension and to encourage metacognitive practices. This course balances the delivery of highly engaging multimedia content with the expertise and guidance of highly trained reading teachers to successfully achieve a course never before attempted online.

The course is currently being piloted and researched at Osceola High School in Orlando, Florida. These results and more information on full scheduled release of this course should be disclosed later this summer. While the target release date is fall 2010, there may be additional changes to the course before it is offered.

It is important to note that the course will be offered as an option to districts for high performing fluent level two students. If districts allow this course as an option for these students, then a guidance counselor at the school will need to work with FLVS to enroll the student.

There are several policy decisions to be made about enrollment procedures and criteria. It may be possible to offer the course during, before, or after school. If the course is offered during school, FLVS will provide the teacher of record and will receive the full FTE for students. The school will be required to have a monitor in the lab. If the course is offered before or after school, the school will be required to work with FLVS to make certain that the student is completing the course.

The computer specifications are also higher than many computers currently available at schools and homes:

Intel processor, 1.8GHz or higher
1 GB RAM
3D graphics card with support for Shader Model 2.0 and at least 128MB of graphics memory
High-speed Internet connection
DirectSound(r) compatible sound card with OGG support
Windows(r) compatible keyboard and mouse
1GB Hard Disk for install
Monitor capable of at least 1024x768 resolution

If you have any questions please contact Stuart Greenberg at Stuart.Greenberg@fldoe.org or at (850) 245-0503.

FH/sg/ks

CC: District Reading Contacts