

# 2023 Education Summit



**impact**  
FLORIDA

Great Teaching Matters

## Early Learning Coherence: Support from the Start

Cassandra Murphy Atkins, Jennifer  
Mekler, Dr. Daniel Evans, Veronica  
Scheibner, Lakisha Lawson



**March 2-3 | Wyndham Bonnet Creek, Orlando, FL**



# PINELLAS EARLY LITERACY INITIATIVE



**Pinellas Education  
Foundation**

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# MEET THE TEAM

## PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS



**Dan Evans, Ed.D.**  
Associate Superintendent,  
Teaching and Learning



**Jennifer Mekler**  
Director,  
Early Childhood Education



**LaKisha Lawson**  
Principal,  
Fairmount Park Elementary



**Cassandra Murphy Atkins**  
Elementary Reading and  
Language Arts Specialist



**Veronica Scheibner**  
PELI Coach





**HOW DOES YOUR DISTRICT SHOWCASE  
LITERACY AS A FOCUS?**

**HOW DOES THE WORK IN YOUR DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT  
EARLY LITERACY AS A PRIORITY?**







# THE PERFECT STORM

A STORY BY PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS



S.S. PCS

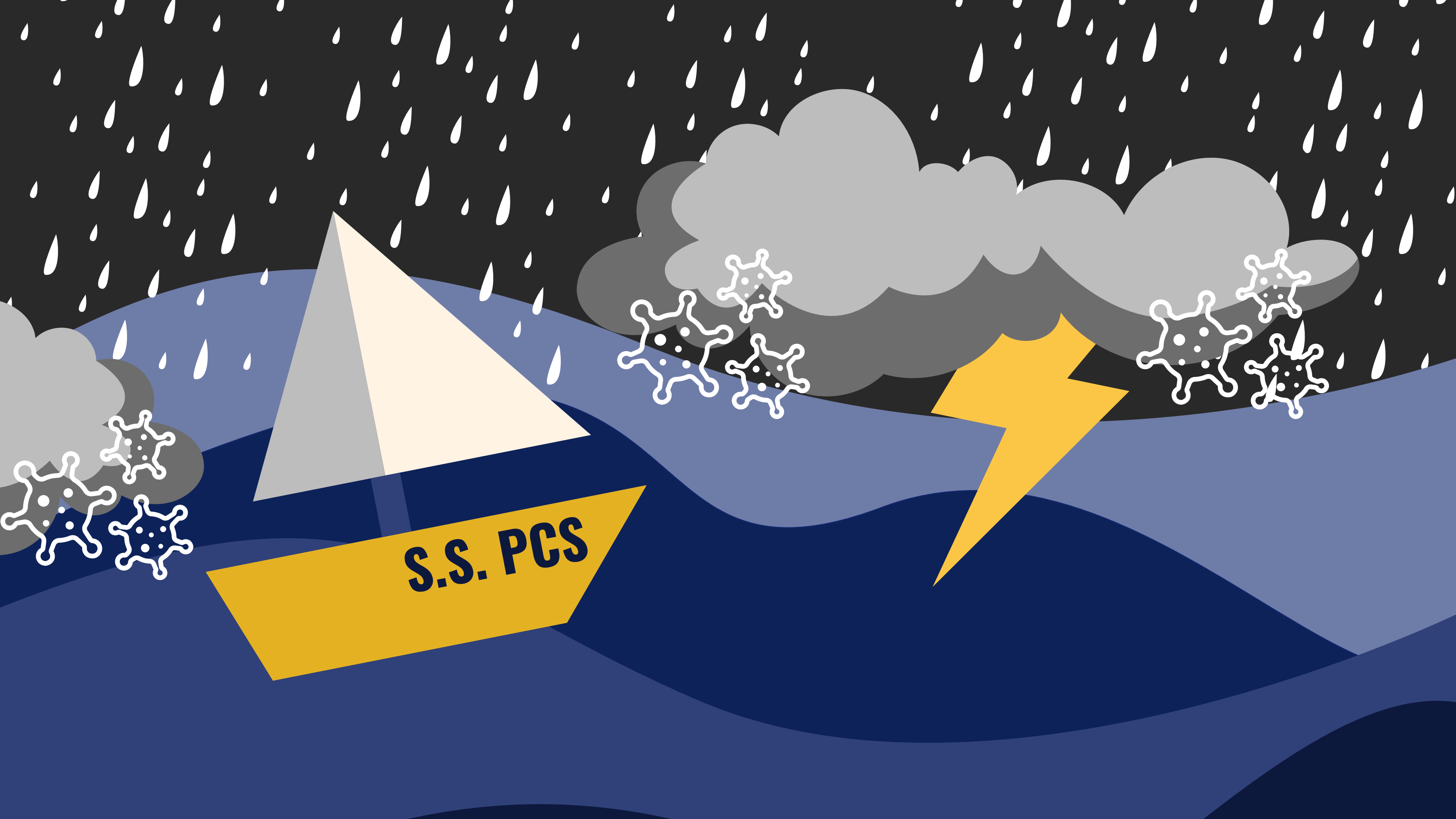


**S.S. PCS**





**S.S. PCS**



**S.S. PCS**





**S.S. PCS**



S.S. PCS



# WHAT IS PELI?

## THE PINELLAS EARLY LITERACY INITIATIVE

The Pinellas Early Literacy Initiative is a strategic focus on prioritizing improvements in literacy instruction for PreK-2 students and teachers in **sixteen** Title I schools and **five** community based VPK providers.

By leveraging high quality professional development with instructional coaching for a cohort of VPK-2nd grade teachers, VPK-2nd grade students literacy gaps will dissipate more rapidly, effectively preparing students for the more rigorous content of grades 3-5 and reducing the need for additional resources in later grades.



# OUR BIG FOCUS

ELEVATING AND ENHANCING EARLY LITERACY INSTRUCTION







**Pinellas Early Literacy Initiative • Improving third grade readiness and literacy proficiency**



# PELI COMPONENTS



District  
Commitment to  
the Work



Professional  
Development



Deep  
Engagement from  
Administrators



Community  
VPK Providers



PreK-2 Literacy  
Coaches





# DISTRICT COMMITMENT TO THE WORK



What is your district's current collective understanding around early literacy instruction?

- Has the conversation begun in your district?
- How can you invest around early literacy?
- Who needs to be at the table to ensure instructional coherence around early literacy?
- What stakeholders are essential to this program component?



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



- Identified strategic partner (UF Lastinger) to provide professional learning grounded in the Science of Reading.
- Provided K-2 teachers with explicit and systematic foundational skills program.
- PCS literacy coaches completed literacy coach certification with UF Lastinger.
- Created early literacy training plan for VPK teachers in PCS and private providers to increase foundational knowledge skills.







# RESEARCH TO PRACTICE GAP

The skills needed for proficient reading have been known to researchers across many fields for several decades.

- There is often very little communication between researchers and “on the ground” teachers and other practitioners.
- Teachers are operating in good faith with the knowledge that they currently possess in area of early literacy.





# GROUNDING OUR WORK

## IN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

### Simple View of Reading and the Reading Rope

Adapted from Gough and Tunmer

Scarborough

$$WR \times LC = RC$$

#### Word Recognition

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition



#### Language Comprehension

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge



#### Skilled Reading

Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.



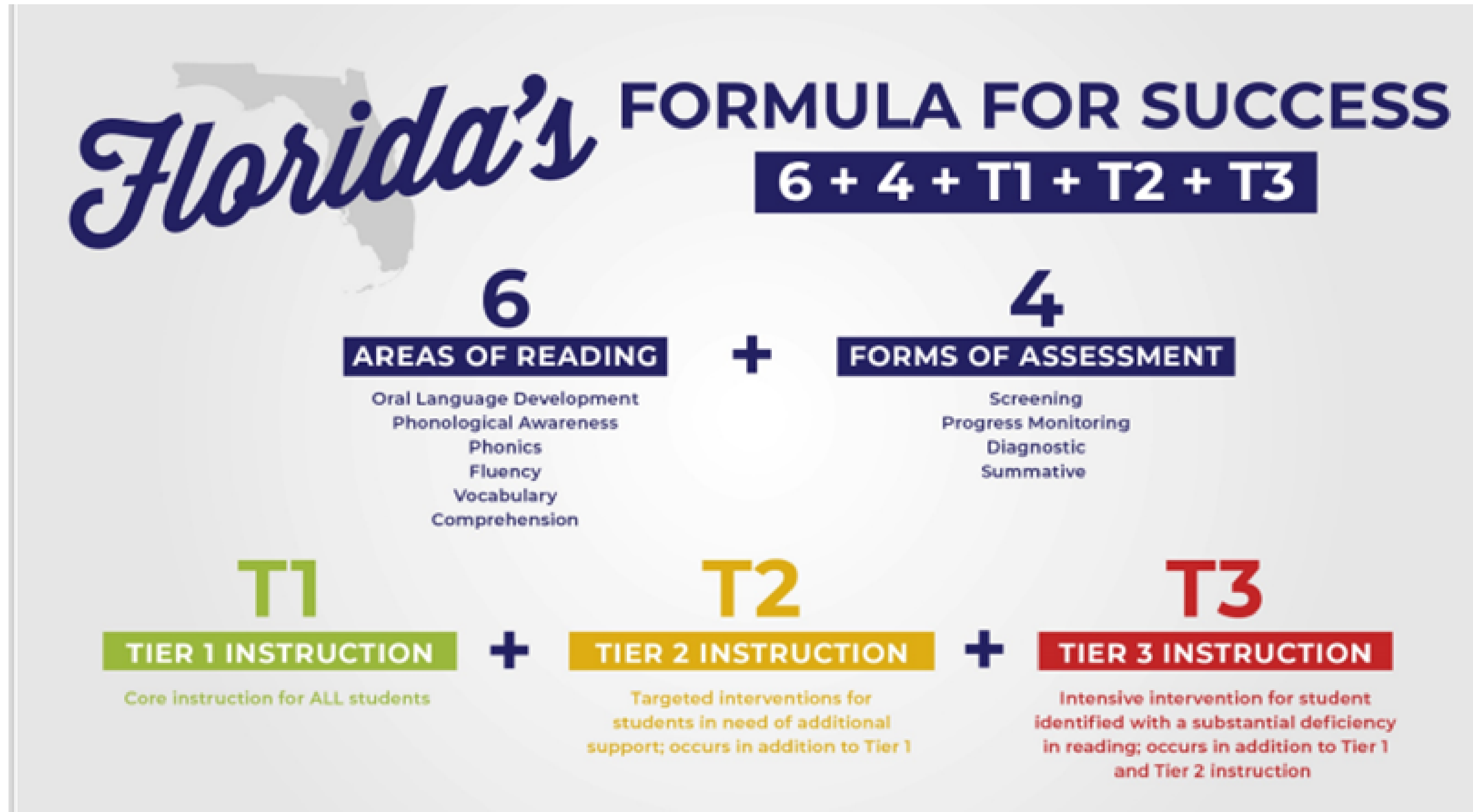
### The 6 Components of Reading





# GROUNDING OUR WORK

## IN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE





**“If we are serious about improving reading achievement for all children, we are only likely to get there if we hold ourselves to the highest standards of professional practice.”**

**(SHANAHAN, 2023)**





- **IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOU WORKING TO CLOSE THE RESEARCH TO PRACTICE KNOWLEDGE GAP IN LITERACY IN YOUR DISTRICT?**
- **WHAT PROCESSES DO YOU HAVE IN PLACE TO ENSURE YOUR TEACHERS LEARN ABOUT EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES?**



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



- What district initiatives are currently in place regarding professional development in early literacy?
- In what ways could you enhance your current professional development in early literacy?
- How can district, state, or university content experts be leveraged to support teacher knowledge in the foundations of early literacy?
- What stakeholders are essential to this program component?





# DEEP ENGAGEMENT FROM ADMINISTRATORS



Principals, assistant principals, and community provider directors attend professional learning alongside teachers and coaches with the University of Florida Lastinger Center (UFLC)

- Administrator focused professional development
- Program-wide convening with a focus on VPK-2 instruction
- Walking VPK through second grade classrooms weekly with coaches to notice effective instruction around reading foundations
- Attend common planning weekly to provide content-focused feedback
- Provide specific content-focused feedback to individual teachers, grade level teams, and VPK through second grade literacy coaches



# ENGAGING THE VERTICAL PROGRESSION

Sample Vertical Progression of Instructional Coherence	
Assistant Principal/ Learning Specialists	<p>Study Student Writing: Extending Reading Power Through Transfer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning from student writing</li> <li>• Writing's contribution to reading</li> <li>• Teaching for transfer</li> </ul>
ELA Coach	<p>Transfer of Foundation Skills: Writing Lesson Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning from student writing</li> <li>• Teaching for transfer</li> </ul>
ELA Champions	<p>Explicit Teaching → Transfer of Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A closer look at teaching literacy for transfer</li> <li>• Demonstration video clips</li> <li>• Plan for transfer</li> <li>• Evidence of transfer → Writing record</li> </ul>
Teachers	<p>Module Roll Out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District wide collaborative planning</li> <li>• Core curriculum focused</li> <li>• Power of transfer min-professional learning highlighted</li> </ul>



# DEEP ENGAGEMENT FROM ADMINISTRATORS



- Who are the administrators in your district that have a background or interest in early literacy?
- What are your current structures focusing on growing administrators' knowledge of early literacy?
- What systems are in place to support administrators to give content focused feedback to teachers and coaches?



# COMMUNITY VPK PROVIDERS



- Identified the need to impact student learning as early as possible based on Kindergarten Readiness rates at identified schools.
- Created a coaching and professional development plan to support VPK teachers alongside our PCS staff.
- Developed communities of practice that bring all teachers together five times a year.
- Leveraged relationship with Early Learning Coalition and United Way to grow community preschool partnership.





# THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIP



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Education Foundation



**UF** | **Lastinger Center for Learning**  
UNIVERSITY *of* FLORIDA



# COMMUNITY VPK PROVIDERS



- Do you have VPK in your district at your elementary schools?
- Have you studied your kindergarten readiness rates?
- What is your current relationship with community providers?
- What stakeholders are essential to this program component?



# PELI COACHES



- K-2 Literacy Coaches support 2 schools. VPK Literacy Coaches support 16 PCS schools and community VPK providers.
- Coaches engage in the Literacy Coach Endorsement Program with UF Lastinger Center
- Coaches support teacher through
  - Individual Coaching Cycle
  - Collaborative Planning
  - Data Driven Professional Learning Communities



# A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF VPK PELI COACH

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
5	6	7	8	9
		Email Points of Pride/Picture to V€↻		
<b>Ponce De Leon - AM</b> Ponce De Leon Elementary School (1301 Ponce De Leon Blvd, Clearwater, FL 33756)	<b>Lealman AM/PM Split</b> Lealman Elementary  <b>New Heights</b> New Heights Elementary School (3901 37th St N, St Petersburg, FL 33714)	<b>Kings - All AM Support with Assessments</b> Kings Highway Elementary	<b>Belleair - Full Day Support</b> Belleair Elementary School (1156 Lakeview Rd, Clearwater, FL 33756)	<b>High Point</b>
<b>PreK Team Mee</b> Disston Annex Gt Baird Croley	<b>Lealman Planni</b>	<b>Ridgecrest - Pla</b>	<b>Belleair Plannir</b>	<b>PELI Progr€↻</b>
<b>PreK Team M</b> ↻	<b>Ponce</b> Lealman Elementary School (4001 58th Ave N, St Petersburg, FL 33714)	<b>Ponce De Leon - PM</b> Ponce De Leon Elementary School (1301 Ponce De Leon Blvd, Clearwater,		<b>Beland - RA Ob:</b>
				<b>Johnson - SG Ol</b>
				<b>Lealman</b>
				<b>Nero - SG Planr</b>
				<b>ECE Newsletter Info Due; Wagner J</b>





# A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF K-2 PELI COACH

	MONDAY 19	TUESDAY 20	WEDNESDAY 21	THURSDAY 22	FRIDAY 23	
7 <sup>AM</sup>	KDG ELFAC - Grading Period 1 PM	1st Grade ELA Planning; Craft's roo	PMP Party!!!!; M	Grouping Meet	ILT; Melrose	
8			Teacher Check-	Teacher Check-i	Teacher Check-ins	
9	Phonics - Ms. Murphy ; Murphy	Phonics ; Elliott	Kinder PLC - ELI	1st Grade - Writing, Read Aloud, Reading	Writing with M.	Prep - Planning
10		2nd Grade PLC	2nd Grad	Chat with	1st Grade	ILT Weekly Meeting; Microsoft Tear
11	Writing ; Zerbe	Writing ; Mener				Lunch & Travel
12 <sup>PM</sup>	KDG - Phonics ;	Week 7 Lesson	Lunch	1st Grade Willia	Read Aloud - M	PELI Team Meeting Woodlawn
1	Lunch	Action Items	2nd Grade Inter	Lunch	Debrief Follow	
2	KDG Interventio	2nd Grade Writ	Action Items & Prep for Planning	Debrief with M:	Planning Debriefs/Follow Ups	
3	Post Planning C	Planning			Post Planning \	
4		1st Grade Inter			Debrief ; Ms. Va	



# PELI COACHES

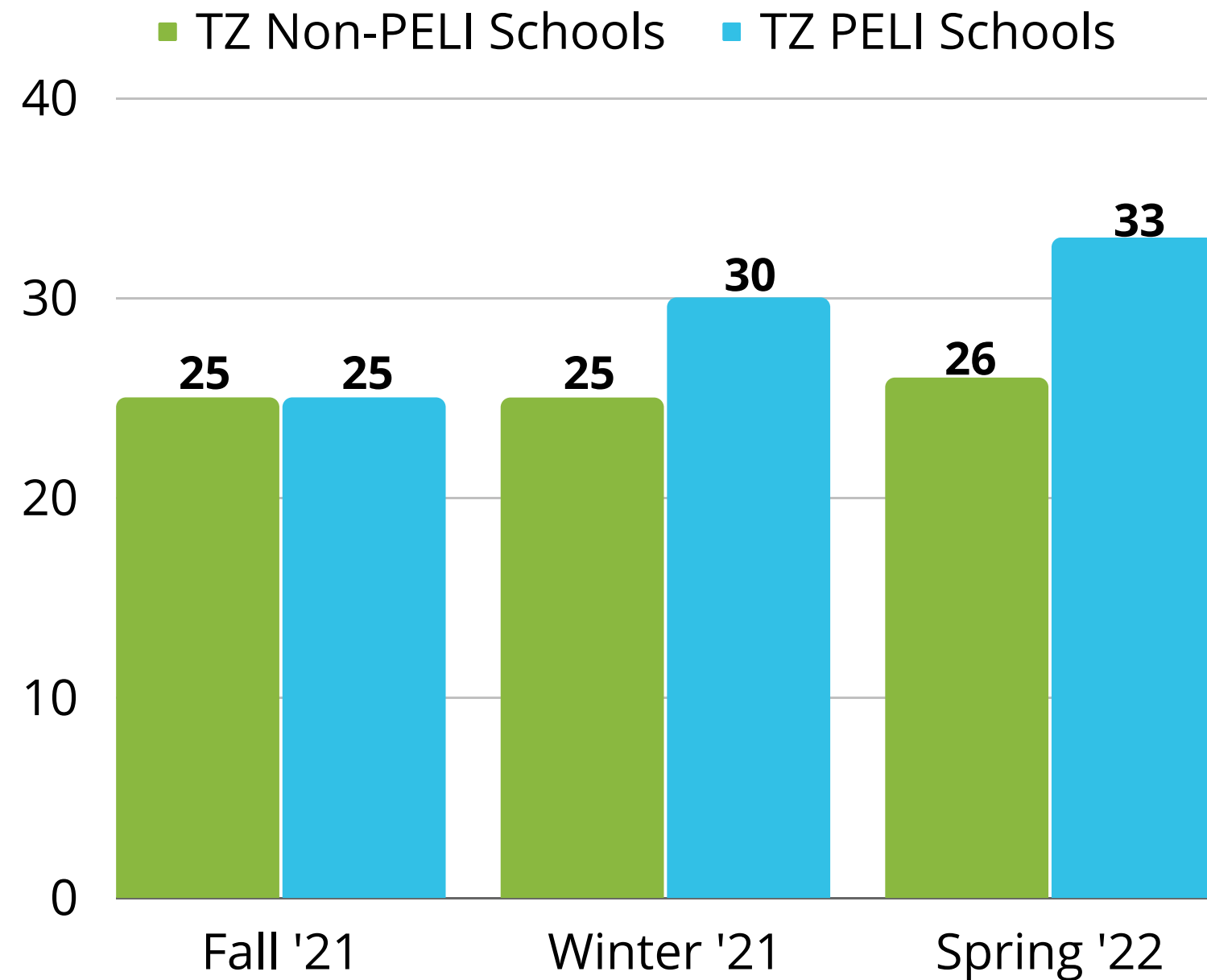


- What is your district's current literacy coaching model?
- How might you create opportunity to focus on early literacy coaching?
- Where is your district's entry point for coaching in community VPK providers?
- What systems are in place to support administrators to give content focused feedback to teachers and coaches?



# SECOND GRADE DATA

## TZ NON-PELI VS. PELI PROJECTED PROFICIENCY 3+

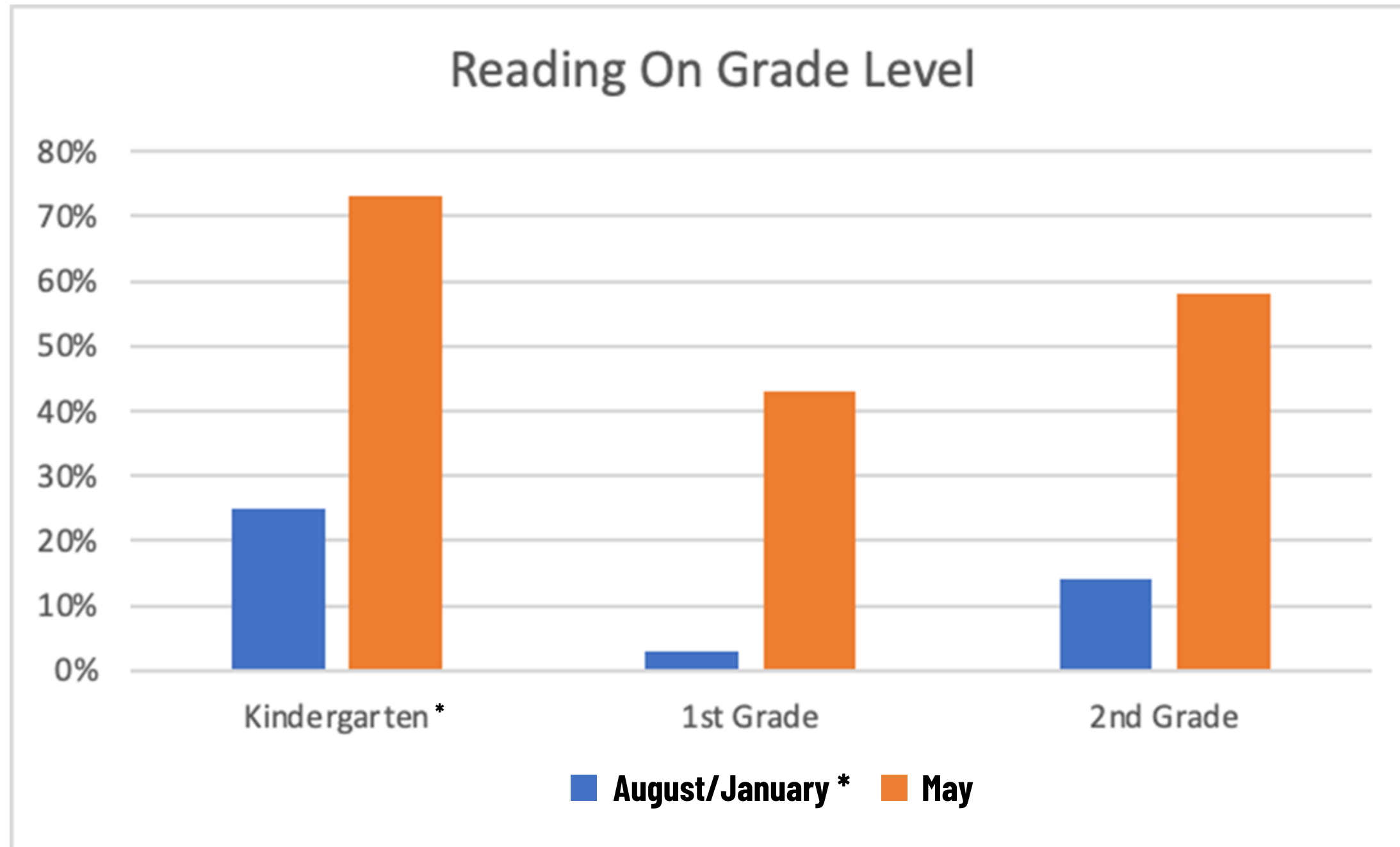


Eight Transformation Zone (TZ) schools were targeted for additional supports, including the small group literacy instruction model and job-embedded support. TZ schools without support made little progress while TZ schools with support had a positive trajectory in student reading proficiency (see graph on right).



# PINELLAS K-2 TEXT LEVEL DATA

## READING ON GRADE LEVEL



**UF** Lastinger Center for Learning  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

- 8 Transformation Zone schools
- Implemented Flamingo Small Group Reading Model with Fidelity
- Job-embedded support
- Leadership support
- Focused literacy coaching
- DEDICATION








# PINELLAS EARLY LITERACY INITIATIVE



Watch on  YouTube





**QUESTIONS?**





**PINELLAS  
EARLY  
LITERACY  
INITIATIVE**

2023  
Education  
Summit

#CommitToImpact

**Thank you!**

Cassandra Murphy Atkins, Jennifer Mekler, Dr.  
Daniel Evans, Veronica Scheibner, Lakisha Lawson

[murphyatkinsc@pcsb.org](mailto:murphyatkinsc@pcsb.org) and [meklerj@pcsb.org](mailto:meklerj@pcsb.org)



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on this session:



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@impactfla

# Breakout #2: Transition Notes

- **Now** 30-minute snack break in Ponce Foyer
- **4 p.m.** Role-Alike Sessions
  - Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, CAOs - **Discovery**
  - District Level Curriculum Leaders - **Voyage**
  - District Level Leaders (Non-Curriculum) - **Journey B**
  - Principals and Teachers - **Journey A**
  - Stakeholders - **Ponce Ballroom**
- **5 p.m.** Networking Happy Hour in Tesoro Cove