



What We Do

A new literacy journey has begun at 12 Pinellas County Schools this year. It goes by the name of Reading Recovery – a highly effective, short-term reading intervention, featuring one-to-one tutoring for low-achieving first-graders. The nationally acclaimed program helps these struggling students reach grade level proficiency before they fall further – and possibly irretrievably – off track.

Participating schools have some of the district’s largest populations of low-income students, many of whom start school not ready for kindergarten. Studies show that by the time they reach first grade they are already behind in their reading ability. Pinellas County Schools examined schools in need of the greatest help and decided to begin Reading Recovery as a pilot program, providing the resources and training to give a cohort of teachers the knowledge they needed to put the program into action. Some 15 to 20 percent of first-grade students in these schools, who are not catching on to concepts that make reading and writing possible, will receive this crucial intervention after screening their reading ability at the start of the school year.

Two teachers at each school work with students having the greatest difficulties – spending between 12 and 20 weeks with them. When a student achieves grade-level reading proficiency, and can read grade-level text independently, that child moves into a small, teacher-led reading group and a new student joins the program for one-on-one instruction. Reading Recovery has been used in the U.S. since 1984 and ranks as the most researched reading intervention program in the *What Works Clearing House*.

Impact by the Numbers

- 1** The grade level for which the program is tailored, helping first-graders experiencing serious reading struggles get on track.
- 12** The number of Pinellas County elementary schools selected for the program.
- 30** Number of minutes in the daily lessons, which are customized and taught by specially trained instructors.
- 70** The percentage of students expected to improve to first-grade level in the program.

The Teachers’ Perspective Powered by a Reading Passion

To appreciate the importance of the intensive reading program – developed in the 1970s by New Zealand educator Marie Clay – just consider the words of some of our teachers.

“I decided to be a Reading Recovery teacher because I really love reading, and I’ve taught Kindergarten here for the past few years,” says **Jeffy Roualet of Fairmont Heights Elementary**. “So I’m looking forward to learning how I can better help them. How I can tweak my teaching and just be a better and more effective reading teacher.”

“What attracted me to become part of this program is that I have a master’s in reading and I just love children’s literature,” says **Campbell Park Elementary’s Michelle Early**. “I love helping children to read and the fact that I actually get to combine reading and my other love – helping children grow – makes this the perfect job for me.

Adds **Campbell Park Principal Kathleen Parker-Young**: “This is a research-based program, and we have tons of data showing its success.”



Reading Recovery®

For more information about the program or donor opportunities, please contact Vice President of Advancement Julie Perrelli at 727-588-4816 ext. 2113 or julie.perrelli@pinellaseducation.org

MORE ABOUT READING RECOVERY

How It Works

The district recruited two nationally regarded lead teachers to launch the program, allowing the initiative to start this year with 12 schools and 24 teachers. Individual students receive a daily, half-hour lesson for 12-to-20 weeks from a specially trained Reading Recovery teacher. There are two such teachers at each of 12 schools (**Bay Point, Bear Creek, Campbell Park, Fairmont Park, Frontier, Gulfport, High Point, Lakewood, Maximo, Ponce de Leon, Sandy Lane and Woodlawn**). During their lessons, students learn to read an array of very short books. The teachers review the previous day's reading and introduce a new story to read. Along the way, students learn to write and read their own stories, and are aided by magnetic letters that assist in visualizing how words are put together. They are also taught various reading and phonetic skills during their reading and writing exercises. As soon as students meet grade-level expectations and demonstrate they can continue to work independently in the classroom, their one-on-one lessons are discontinued, and new students move into the program for individual instruction. Meanwhile, the progress of students who have been promoted is supported and monitored in small work groups during the school day within the first-grade classroom.

Positive Outcomes

This level of individual, high-intensity and successful intervention has not previously existed in Pinellas County Schools. According to the Reading Recovery Council of North America, there are two fundamental positive outcomes for students: since 1984 when Reading Recovery began in the United States, approximately 70 percent of students who complete the program meet grade-level expectations in reading and writing. Follow-up studies indicate that most Reading Recovery students also do well on standardized tests and maintain their gains in later years. Parental involvement is a crucial part of the program's success. Parents are involved in multiple conferences to understand the program, consent to participation, observe the individual sessions, engage in homework and receive updates on student progress.

Professional Development

Reading Recovery teachers undergo extensive professional development, including a minimum of three hours each week through a university partner, to ensure that the strategies and program are being followed properly. Professional development for all Reading Recovery professionals begins with an academic year of graduate-level study and continues in subsequent years. According to the Reading Recovery Council of North America, Reading Recovery teachers – supported by a teacher leader – “develop observational skills and a repertoire of intervention procedures tailored to meet the individual needs of at-risk students.”

Looking Ahead

The plan is to bring Reading Recovery to a handful of other schools and, at several larger schools, add a third teacher. We are excited by the results and potential of the program – both in raising individual students to reading proficiency and the level of expertise we are building in our teachers. In addition, they are increasing the knowledge of their peers, who are teaching the same skills. Your support can help us expand the program to impact a wider group of children in need. In the process, you will help make teachers more effective – and make a lasting difference to young students at a critical juncture of their education.



**Pinellas Education
Foundation**

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