



Problem Solving & Response to Intervention

A collaborative project between the Florida Department of Education and the University of South Florida

TO: School Districts, State of Florida

FROM: Florida Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Statewide Project

SUBJECT: Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention (PS/RtI) Demonstration Site
Mini-Grant Application Procedures

Background

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004 embrace the use of Problem-Solving and Response to Intervention (Instruction) (PS/RtI) to ensure that ALL students achieve state-approved grade-level benchmarks. In addition, the PS/RtI method has become part of the eligibility requirements for students with disabilities (effective October 13, 2006). The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) has funded the Florida Problem-Solving/Response to Intervention Project to ensure that all districts in Florida have access to high quality training in the skills necessary to implement this model. The Florida Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Project is funded by a grant from the Florida Department of Education and is administered through the University of South Florida.

The purposes of the FLDOE PS/RtI Project are twofold: 1) organize and deliver statewide training in PS/RtI and 2) evaluate the impact of the PS/RtI model on district, building and student outcomes. The evaluation of the impact of PS/RtI will take place in pilot school sites in demonstration districts throughout Florida.

Demonstration districts will be selected from among those districts completing a Mini-Grant Application. The purpose of this memo is to disseminate information regarding the Mini-Grant Application process.

General Information

Eligible Applicants: Any Florida public school district is eligible to apply to become a PS/RtI Demonstration District.

Pilot Schools: Each district may request funding to support a maximum of six (6) pilot schools within the district. Proposed pilot schools within the district must house at least grades K-3. Demonstration districts may include Reading First schools, Positive Behavior Supports schools, or schools participating in other state or local initiatives. The district must identify one (1) comparison school for each pilot school proposed in the application. The comparison school must contain the same grade levels and share similar student demographics as the pilot school(s). The comparison school data will be used to compare the impact of the PS/RtI Project in schools with and without project implementation.

Start Date: It is estimated that initial implementation activities with the demonstration sites will begin in the spring of 2007, with full implementation starting with the 2007-2008 school year.

Application Deadline: Complete applications must be received by **April 1, 2007**. Mail the original and 5 copies to:

Judith Hyde
University of South Florida
4202 E. Fowler Avenue, EDU 162
Tampa, FL 33620

No FAX or email copies of proposals will be accepted.

Informational Meetings: All districts interested in completing a mini-grant application to become a demonstration district are invited to attend one of three orientation/informational meetings to be held in the north, central, and south regions of the state (see Appendix A). Each district may send up to three people, including the individual who will be primarily responsible for facilitating the grant writing team, one administrative representative from general education and one administrative representative from special education.

Each meeting is scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The meeting agenda will include presentations on the Florida Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Project, the responsibilities of participating districts and procedures for completing the mini-grant application. Mini-grant application requirements are described below. District representatives are encouraged to review the application requirements prior to the meeting. A question and answer (Q and A) session will be included in each meeting.

NOTE: Pre-registration is required in order to attend one of the Informational Meetings. To pre-register, go to <http://floridarti.usf.edu/biddersconference/>, click on "Registration," complete the form and click on "Submit Registration." If you encounter any difficulties with pre-registration, contact Judi Hyde at JHyde@tempest.coedu.usf.edu or 813-974-7448. The schedule for these meetings is as follows:

Monday, February 26

Ft. Lauderdale

Embassy Suites

1100 Southeast 17th Street

Directions:

http://www.embassysuites.com/en/es/hotels/maps_directions.jhtml?ctyhocn=FLLSOES

954-527-2700

Thursday, March 1

Tallahassee

Doubletree Hotel

101 S. Adams St.

Directions: <http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/hotels/index.jhtml?ctyhocn=THLAPDT>

850-224-5000

Monday, March 5

Orlando

Orlando Airport Marriott

7499 Augusta National Drive

Directions: <http://marriott.com/property/propertypage/mcoap>

407-851-9000

Attendance at one of the regional meetings is strongly encouraged but not required of districts planning to submit a mini-grant application.

Contact Person: For more information about application procedures, contact Clark Dorman, Project Leader at Dorman@coedu.usf.edu or 813-391-3059.

Overview of the Demonstration Site Project

The demonstration site component of the Statewide PS/RtI Project is designed to provide training, technical assistance and implementation support to individual schools within school districts. Statewide Project staff will conduct the training, provide technical assistance and provide other training and implementation supports to the pilot schools. Pilot schools, in turn, will serve as evaluation sites to determine the impact of this project on student and other district and building outcomes.

The demonstration site component of the Project will rely on a “coaching” and “trainers” method for implementation. State Project staff will serve as the “external coaches” to the schools. Funding will be provided for districts to hire one “internal” coach for up to three (3) pilot schools. Each school will create a “school-based” implementation team consisting of six to eight members that includes representatives of general education, special education, instructional support and student services. The building administrator must be included as a member of the team. Building teams will learn how to develop a building implementation plan. The school-based team and the building coach will become “trainers” and “coaches” for the building staff and will be responsible for building-wide implementation.

I. Services Provided to Demonstration Schools by the Statewide Project Staff

1. Training and technical assistance for school-based teams to implement the Problem Solving/Response to Intervention model in pilot schools
2. Funding for each selected demonstration district for up to two coaches (one for each three schools) to complement training and provide technical assistance to pilot school sites in implementing PS/RtI, data collection and analysis, and dissemination of student outcome data
3. Training of and technical assistance and support for the coaches and building administrators
4. Training, technical assistance and support for the use of school-based data to develop, implement and evaluate core, supplemental and intensive instruction/intervention
5. Training and technical assistance in the use of technology to organize and display building, classroom and student-based data
6. Training and technical assistance in the use of technology to monitor intervention implementation, support data-based decision making and track student progress
7. Support integration of existing and potential state-level, district and school initiatives to facilitate implementation of DOE Strategic *Imperative #3-Improve students' rates of learning*, and Strategic Imperative *#5-Increase the quantity and improve the quality of education options*
8. Provide web-based programs to collect and organize data from the demonstration sites. Internal coaches will be responsible for submitting demonstration site data to the web-based programs

II. Expectations of Demonstration Districts and Pilot Sites

Each demonstration district may identify up to six (6) pilot schools and an equal number of comparison schools within the district. In order to receive the services delineated above, districts and their pilot schools submitting an application under this project initiative must agree to the requirements set forth in “Commitments Needed for Success” in Appendix B. These include certain district- and school-level administrative, curricular, financial, and personnel commitments, as well as parent involvement, data collection and reporting requirements.

Each proposed pilot school must have a comparison school that is similar to it on key demographic variables. Comparison schools will be asked only to participate in certain data collection activities, and must agree to participate in these activities. Coaches will support the collection of data in both pilot and comparison schools.

III. Funding

Each district may submit a mini-grant application for up to \$100,000.00 per year in funding for a maximum of three years. The mini-grant is intended to support the employment of district-based coaches and training activities. Districts must commit to a minimum of three years of project implementation. Each application is for one year of funding. Continuing applications will be required each year for years 2 and 3 of the funding cycle. Continuation of funding for years 2 and 3 will be contingent on fulfillment of expectations by the district and pilot and comparison schools.

Mini-Grant Application Requirements

Each proposal must address each of the five components specified below in a narrative format, in the order in which they are presented for a) the demonstration district, and b) **each** of up to six (6) proposed pilot schools within the district. The total narrative (excluding demographic data required in item 2 below) must be double-spaced, using a 12-point font and should not exceed 25 pages in length. Documentation required in I and II below should be included in appendices to the application and do not count against the 25 page limit.

1. District and Pilot Schools Commitment:

Proposals must outline specific commitments to implementing PS/RtI as a way of work and the activities (i) the district, and (ii) pilot schools will carry out in order to meet the requirements specified in Appendix B. Letters of agreement/commitment from the following individuals must be included in the grant application. (See Appendix B for the minimum required content of these letters).

- a) District Superintendent
- b) Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
- c) Director of Elementary Education
- d) Director of Exceptional Student Education

- e) Director(s) of district/school-wide Reading First and Positive Behavior Support Programs (if applicable)
- f) Principal of each of the proposed pilot schools
- g) Principal of each comparison school to provide data requested by Project Staff

2. District, Pilot and Comparison Schools Demographic Data:

Proposals must include an outline of the

- a) District demographic data (see Appendix C- “Demonstration District Demographic Profile”)
- b) Each proposed pilot school’s demographic data (see Appendix D – “Demonstration Pilot School’s Demographic Profile”), and
- c) Each comparison school’s demographic data (see Appendix E-“Comparison School Demographic Profile”)

(Appendices C, D, and E outline the minimum required content for this section.)

3. Statement of Need and Expected Outcomes:

Proposals must, for **each** pilot school

- a) Describe the school’s needs (particularly student academic and/or behavioral needs) that will be addressed through participation in the PS/RtI project, including specific gaps, barriers, or weaknesses
- b) Indicate how implementation of the PS/RtI model would impact the academic and/or behavioral outcomes of students in each pilot school
- c) Identify measurable student and school outcomes, tied to the identified needs, that will result from participation as a pilot school site
- d) Identify outcomes for specific target populations or school goals, including over-representation of minority students in special programs, low-SES and LEP students and/or D/F school status

4. District and Pilot Schools’ Experience with Initiatives and Programs:

Proposals must describe the district’s and each pilot school’s current and/or previous level of involvement in and extent of implementation (e.g., beginning, intermediate, fully implementing) of academic and/or behavioral initiatives and programs (e.g., Just Read Florida, Positive Behavioral Support). Include information for any reading initiatives implemented within the last five years in the district and in each proposed pilot school. Specify any existing curriculum-based measures (e.g., DIBELS, CBM-Math) or data collection tools (e.g., PMRN, SWIS, AIMSweb®) currently in use. In addition, discuss any involvement the district and each proposed pilot school has had with the following FLDOE projects/initiatives:

- Continuous Improvement Model (CIM)
- Reading First
- Just Read Florida
- Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) programs

- Positive Behavior Support
- PS/RtI

Describe any other educational reform initiatives or elements of the above initiatives in which the district or school has been involved within the past five years.

5. District Personnel Resources and Technology:

Proposals must, for the district and each proposed pilot school:

- Identify personnel (e.g., teachers, student support staff, and administrative staff) who will be assigned to this specific initiative at the district level and in each specific pilot school site; identify one coach for each three pilot schools
- Identify percent FTE each will be assigned
- Identify experience/qualifications to support implementation of the PS/RtI initiative
- Include a brief vita for each of the individuals identified as a potential coaches in (a) above in an appendix to the application
- Briefly describe the technology resources at the building or district levels that will be used in support of this initiative. In particular, describe any data management systems that will be used

(See Appendix B)

The Application Process

Only one (1) mini-grant application will be accepted from each district.

The Application Packet should include:

- 1) A Cover Letter from the District Superintendent indicating a desire for the district to participate in the PS/RtI Project
- 2) The School District's response to relevant components of the proposal as specified under Proposal Requirements:
 - Component 1 - District Commitment
 - Component 2 - District Demographic Data
 - Component 4 - District and School Experience with Initiatives and Programs
 - Component 5 - Personnel Resources and Technology
 - Letters of Agreement/ Commitment as described above in sections 1.a) through 1.g)
- 3) Pilot Schools' Responses – A response for ***each*** proposed pilot school (up to six schools) to relevant components of the proposal as specified under Proposal Requirements:

- Component 1 - Pilot School Commitment
- Component 2 - Pilot School Demographic Data and Comparison School Demographic Data
- Component 3 - Statement of Need and Expected Outcomes for the Pilot School
- Component 4 - Pilot School's Experience with Initiatives and Programs
- Component 5 - Personnel Resources and Technology

Proposal Evaluation Scoring Guide

Total points awarded will be an important consideration in the selection of demonstration districts. However, it also is important that a diversity of students, schools, and districts be represented in the demonstration districts and their pilot schools. Therefore, after all applications have been evaluated against the criteria below and have received a final score of from 0 to 175, additional factors will be considered prior to the selection of sites. Districts and pilot schools will be selected to include sites that are diverse with respect to:

1. Size of districts (i.e., small, medium, and large)
2. Geographic location
3. Student population demographics
4. Inclusion of D/F schools

The application from each district will be evaluated using the **Proposal Evaluation Form** according to the following criteria:

- 1. District and Pilot Schools Commitment (50 points):** The proposal demonstrates clear administrative, programmatic and fiscal commitment (including the required letters of commitment) to fully implementing PS/RtI and a capacity to fulfill the demonstration site's requirements as outlined in Appendix B. *(Note: District=20, mean rating across pilot schools = 30)*
- 2. District and Pilot and Comparison Schools' Demographic Data (30 points):** The proposal provides detailed and current demographic data for the district and each proposed pilot school as required in Appendices C, D and E respectively. It provides a clear picture of the district's and pilot and comparison schools' status on the indicators given. *(Note: District=10, mean rating across pilot schools =15, mean rating across comparison schools =5)*
- 3. Statement of Need and Expected Outcomes (35 points):** The proposal clearly defines each pilot school's needs that will be addressed through participation as demonstration sites and provides convincing evidence that without assistance from the project, these needs would not be met. The proposal also delineates projected student and school outcomes, including outcomes for specific target populations that: a) are measurable, b) are clearly linked to the identified needs, and c) that demonstrate an increased capacity to support students' academic and behavioral

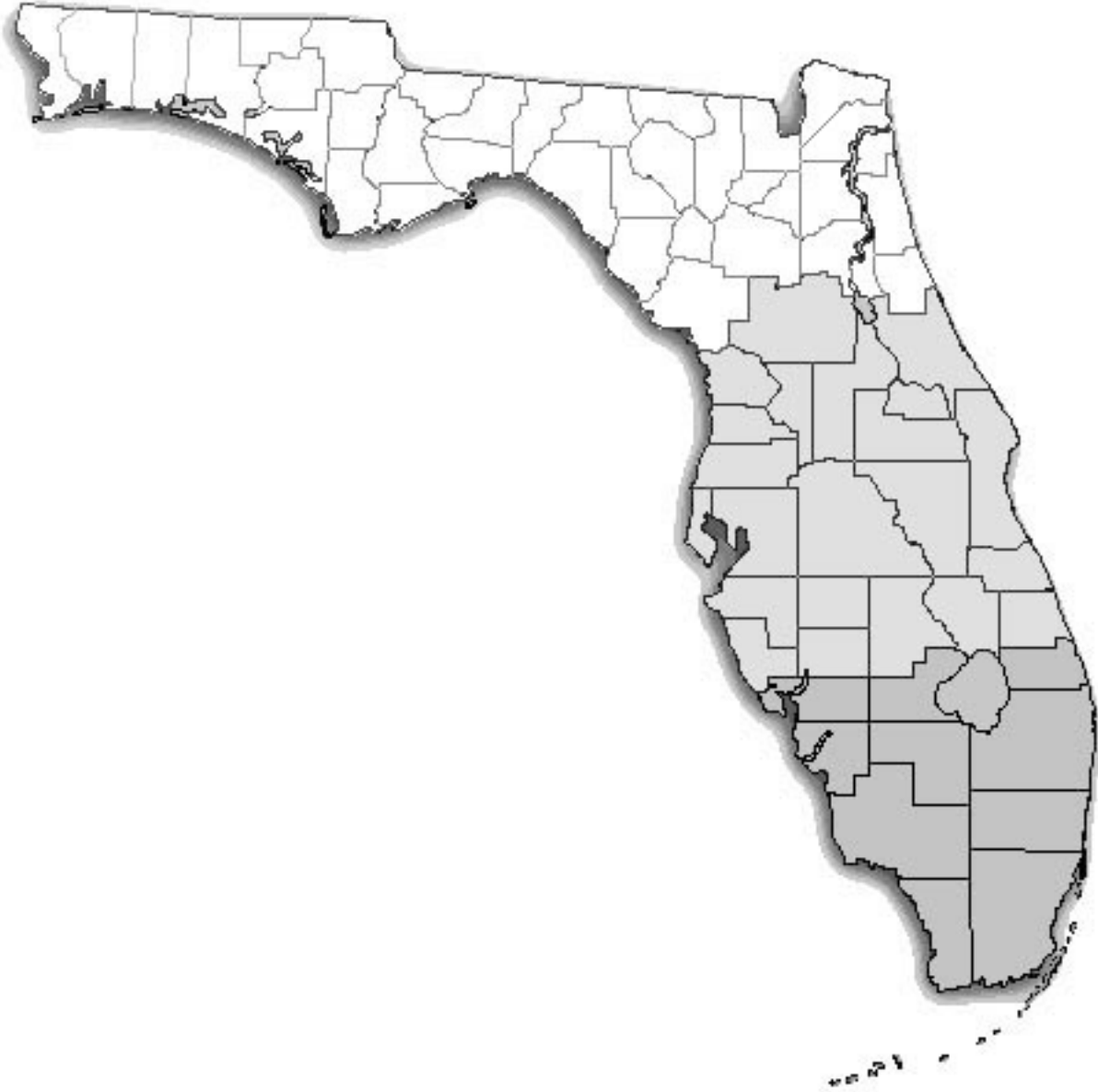
performance in the general education environment. (*Note: Mean rating across pilot schools=35*)

- 4. District and School Experience with Initiatives and Programs (20 points):** The proposal describes in detail the level of district and school involvement in academic and/or behavioral initiatives and programs, resulting in a comprehensive picture of the district's and each pilot school's current systemic capacity. (*Note: District=10, mean rating across pilot schools =10*)
- 5. District Personnel Resources and Technology (15 points).** The proposal clearly identifies personnel assigned to the PS/RtI initiative at a) the district level, and b) each proposed pilot school site and the percent FTE each is assigned to the initiative. It provides a clear picture of personnel qualifications and experience to support implementation of PS/RtI. Technology resources and a data management system to support the initiative at the district and school site level are clearly delineated. (*Note: District = 6, mean rating across pilot schools =9*)
- 6. Inclusion of D/F Schools (25 points).** D or F schools are represented among the proposed pilot school sites.

Total Possible Score = 175 points

APPENDIX A

PS/ Rtl Regional Areas



APPENDIX B

Commitments Required for Success

Demonstration District Administration will commit to:

1. Developing and implementing a plan to ensure that general education, special education and other program personnel work together at the district level to effectuate the successful implementation of PS/RtI in the district pilot schools
2. Assigning district personnel with the requisite qualifications and experience to the PS/RtI initiative to support district coordination and implementation of the initiative across the pilot school sites
3. Putting in place a district-level leadership team to help pilot schools with the implementation of the PS/RtI initiative
4. Implementing evidenced-based practices to support learning of all students, including those at risk and ESE students, to achieve AYP and Florida's A+ Education Plan
5. Designating funds/resources to implement research-based supplemental instruction and interventions to support students who do not attain expected grade-level outcomes in reading and math
6. Designating resources to adequately support PS/RtI implementation at both the district and pilot school level, including faculty and staff, time, materials for screening, assessment and interventions, and financial support for scientifically-based progress monitoring software (e.g., AIMSweb® or DIBELS)
7. Providing funds/resources (including time) for professional development of district-level personnel and pilot school teachers and staff in PS/RtI, data collection and management, data analysis and interpretation
8. Having in place the technological resources and infrastructure, including personnel, and a data management system to ensure ease of access to student performance data by school level and project personnel and to support the PS/RtI initiative
9. Providing access to district and state-level student performance data for school-level and project reporting purposes
10. Developing and implementing a plan to ensure parent involvement with PS/RtI efforts at the district and pilot school levels
11. Reviewing the district's policies and procedures for general and exceptional student education to ensure that they are consistent with PS/RtI

Pilot School Principal and Administrative Team will commit to:

1. Implementing PS/RtI as a way of work at the pilot school site
2. Assigning personnel with the requisite qualifications and experience to the PS/RtI initiative to support its implementation at the school site
3. Putting in place a school leadership team that is representative of the school's grade level faculty, support staff and parents (consisting of individuals with collective knowledge and experience in leadership, curriculum, data-based decision-making and systems change)

4. Being active participants in the school leadership team (attend PS/RtI trainings and team meetings)
5. Providing for a regularly scheduled time and place for team meetings
6. Securing agreement from the school faculty to commit to PS/RtI Project Initiative training and practices (including identification and selection of appropriate scientifically-based interventions, continuous monitoring of student progress and the systematic review of academic and discipline data for decision-making)
7. Developing and implementing a plan to ensure that general education, special education and other program personnel work together to effectuate the successful implementation of PS/RtI at the pilot school site
8. Allocating required resources (funds, designated time, staff) to facilitate professional development of teachers and other professional personnel at the school site
9. Working collaboratively with the Project Coach and Regional Coordinator in implementing PS/RtI at the school site
10. Providing dedicated time and resources for the Project Coach to work with classroom teachers and other school-based support personnel (as needed) to effectively support PS/RtI implementation at the school site
11. Allocating required personnel and other resources (e.g., teachers, administrative staff, time, materials) for full implementation of PS/RtI at the school site
12. Having in place adequate technology infrastructure and a data management system to support the PS/RtI initiative at the pilot school site
13. Reallocating resources based on data outcomes
14. Budgeting funds for PS/RtI supplies, materials, travel and substitutes for team trainings/meetings, etc.

School Leadership Team will commit to:

1. Implementing a team-based, problem-solving process to provide interventions for all students at the universal, targeted and intensive levels
2. Participating in PS/RtI trainings and networking meetings
3. Working collaboratively with the Project Coach and Regional Coordinator (as needed) to effectively implement PS/RtI at the school site
4. Meeting on a regular basis at specified times for school leadership team meetings
5. Collecting and using student outcome data for decision-making purposes
6. Working collaboratively with parents to ensure their involvement in PS/RtI planning, training and implementation activities
7. Using and submitting required student performance and other data (e.g., satisfaction surveys)
8. Developing an annual action plan for PS/RtI activities based on analysis of collected data

Appendix C

District Demographic Data Outline

1. Total student enrollment
2. Student enrollment
 - By grade level
 - By race/ethnicity
 - By SES (use eligibility for free and reduced lunch)
3. Number and percent (of student population) of LEP students
 - Overall
 - By grade level
4. Number and percent of students with disabilities (elementary level)
 - By grade
 - By race/ethnicity
 - By disability type
 - Analysis of disproportionality in the identification of students eligible for special education, if available
5. Student performance on FCAT in reading and mathematics
 - For all elementary level students
 - By grade level
 - By race/ethnicity
 - For elementary level students with disabilities
 - By grade level
 - By race/ethnicity
 - By disability
 - For LEP students
 - By grade level
6. Percent of students (at elementary level) who attained AYP in AY 2004-05 and AY 2005-06
 - overall
 - by grade level
 - by race/ethnicity
 - SES
 - LEP status
7. Number and percent of students retained in grade 3 based on performance on FCAT reading in
 - AY 2004-05
 - AY 2005-06

Appendix D

Pilot School Demographic Data Outline

(To be completed for each Proposed Pilot School)

1. Grade levels served (school site must at least house grades K – 3)
2. Total student enrollment (report number and percent)
 - By grade level
 - By race/ethnicity
 - By SES (based on eligibility for free and reduced lunch)
3. Number and percent (of student population) of LEP students
 - Overall
 - By grade level
4. Number and percentage of students with disabilities
 - By grade level
 - By disability type
 - By race/ethnicity
 - Analysis of disproportionality in the identification of students as eligible for special education, if available
5. Number and percent of students placed in ESE in AY 2004-05 and AY 2005-06
 - By grade level
 - By disability type
 - By race/ethnicity
6. Educational environment/least restrictive environment data for students with disabilities
 - By grade level
 - By disability type
 - By race/ethnicity
 - Analysis of disproportionality in placement of students, if available
7. Title I status (non-Title I, Title I targeted assistance, or Title I school-wide)
8. Student performance on FCAT in reading and mathematics
 - For all students
 - By grade level
 - By race/ethnicity
 - For students with disabilities
 - By grade level
 - By race/ethnicity
 - By disability
 - Analysis of performance gap between students with and without disabilities

9. Percent of students who attained AYP in AY 2004-05 and AY 2005-06 for reading and mathematics
- overall
 - by grade level
 - by race/ethnicity
 - SES
 - LEP status
10. Number and percent of students retained in Grade 3 based on performance on FCAT reading in
- AY 2004-05
 - AY 2005-06
11. School Grade (i.e., A through F) assigned by FLDOE based on 2005-06 school year: _____
12. Does your school currently have or ever had a Reading First Grant?
_____ Yes _____ No
13. Does your school have a positive behavior support (PBS) program in place?
_____ Yes _____ No

Appendix E

Comparison School Demographic Data Outline (To be completed for each Comparison School)

1. Identify pilot school for which school will serve as comparison
2. Grade levels served (school site must at least house grades K – 3)
3. Total student enrollment (report number and percent)
 - By grade level
 - By race/ethnicity
 - By SES (based on eligibility for free and reduced lunch)
4. Number and percent (of student population) of LEP students
 - Overall
 - By grade level
5. Number and percentage of students with disabilities
 - By grade level
 - By disability type
 - By race/ethnicity
 - Analysis of disproportionality in the identification of students as eligible for special education, if available
6. Number and percent of students placed in ESE in AY 2004-05 and AY 2005-06
 - By grade level
 - By disability type
 - By race/ethnicity
7. Educational environment/least restrictive environment data for students with disabilities
 - By grade level
 - By disability type
 - By race/ethnicity
 - Analysis of disproportionality in placement of students, if available
8. Title I status (non-Title I, Title I targeted assistance, or Title I school-wide)
9. Student performance on FCAT in reading and mathematics
 - For all students
 - By grade level
 - By race/ethnicity
 - For students with disabilities
 - By grade level
 - By race/ethnicity
 - By disability

- Analysis of performance gap between students with and without disabilities

10. Percent of students who attained AYP in AY 2004-05 and AY 2005-06 for reading and mathematics

- overall
- by grade level
- by race/ethnicity
- SES
- LEP status

10. Number and percent of students retained in Grade 3 based on performance on FCAT reading in

- AY 2004-05
- AY 2005-06

11. School Grade (i.e., A through F) assigned by FLDOE based on 2005-06 school year: _____

12. Does your school currently have or ever had a Reading First Grant?

_____ Yes _____ No

13. Does your school have a positive behavior support (PBS) program in place?

_____ Yes _____ No