

In This Issue

President's Message.....	1
Upcoming FLCA Events.....	2
Bit's N' Pieces... ..	2
From the Front Lines.....	3
Legislative Update.....	9
FLCA Area Representatives Email Addresses.....	10

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President's Message

By: Beryl Rogers, FLCA President
Menendez High School Reading Coach/teacher
St. Johns County Public Schools

Happy New Year! Now is the time to contact your state representatives to express your dissatisfaction with the funding for education in the State of Florida. Florida is 50th in the country in per pupil spending for education. We have got to impress upon our legislators the importance of adequately funding our schools in this state. Legislators are in Tallahassee now planning the budget for next year. Please take the time to write or email your local representative.

Also, the International Reading Association has written a draft of the Standards for Reading Professionals and is asking for feedback. You can access the website at:
http://www.reading.org/resources/issues/reports/professional_standards.html.

Please congratulate the *Coach of the Year* from your county. The deadline for submitting the nomination packet was January 23.

Remember to promote Celebrate Literacy Week Jan. 12 – 16.

Beryl Rogers, President



Upcoming FLCA Events

Jan. 12, 09 Celebrate Literacy Week

States: Pennsylvania &
South Carolina

By The Numbers

559 Current membership
61 Districts Represented
2 Other states represented

Bit's N' Pieces...

Use the Budget Cuts to Your Advantage

By Heather Henderson, Reading Coach, Volusia County



Due to state-wide budget cuts, we regret to inform you that the 2009 Just Read! Florida conference has been **cancelled**.

For additional information, please contact the Just Read! Florida office.

Is your district singing the staff development budget blues? Due to the state budget crunch, many districts are abandoning face-to-face staff development in favor of online staff development, however, not all participants like this format. Reading Coaches are the cure for the blues! Now is the time to advertise your services as a reading professional and low-cost staff development expert. Create a flyer for your principal, Curriculum Specialist and department chairmen showcasing the various workshops you have already facilitated. Be sure to note how workshops can be customized to the needs of each department (especially Math). Think outside of the box and offer flexible meeting times (like a series of lunchtime workshops rather than one multi-hour workshop). Remind staff that they are saving money by not driving to another location. Remember, your staff needs you now more than ever (and, let's be honest, you need to be visible and indispensable). With a little nudge from the state budget, that resistant teacher who never needed your services might not be able to resist the lure of on-campus convenience and credits toward re-certification.

From the Front Lines Boys and Reading

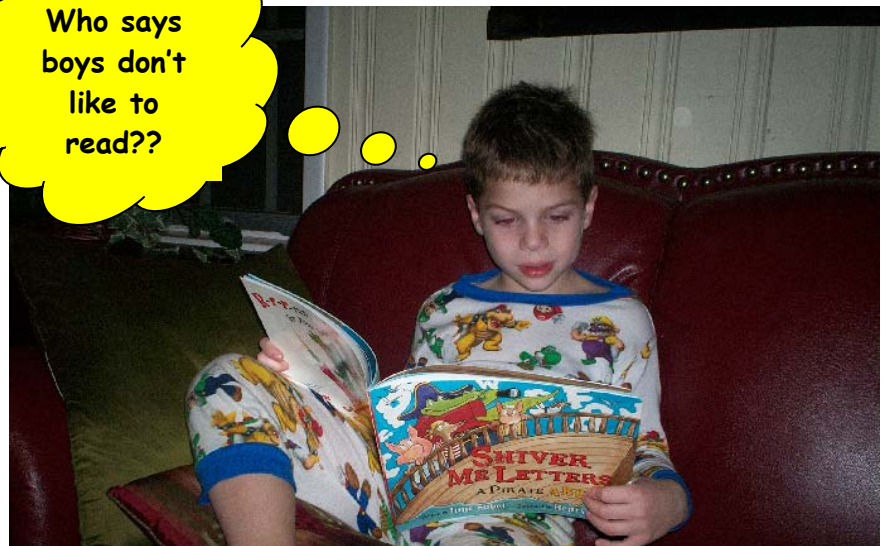
By: Stacie Kagel-Hothem and Nancy Barber, Reading Coaches
Hillsborough County Public Schools

Did you ever notice how boys want to read different topics and genre than girls? Are the girls out-scoring the boys in your class or school on reading assessments? Do boys spend less time reading than girls in your class? You are not alone! Teachers and researchers all over the country are discovering these trends in reading. In Hillsborough County, we are closely studying the issues related to the gender gap in reading achievement. The district has offered Saturday trainings for instructional staff with Dr. Paul D. Slocumb (2004) and his book, *Hear Our Cry: Boys in Crisis*. Dr. Grace Albritton, Supervisor of Evaluation for Hillsborough County Schools, has worked with the Elementary Language Arts Team and Reading Coaches to collect data on African-American and Hispanic male readers. Barbara Rooks, Supervisor of Elementary Media, has put these studies into practice by creating a workshop for Media Specialists, Reading Coaches, and teachers on gender and reading.

As Reading coaches we are always looking for new information to share with teachers, parents, administrators and students with whom we have the privilege of working. Throughout this article, we share our discoveries about boys and reading with you. If any information can assist you in reaching out to boys in reading, then this is the BEST gift we can offer to start your new year! So what do you need to know and what can you do NOW that will make a difference?



Who says
boys don't
like to
read??



The Research

You need to know...

‘The guy thing’ is really a brain thing – the male brain is configured differently from the female brain, and these differences are rarely taken into account in the classroom.” The following excerpt is from Dr. Paul D. Slocumb’s book, *Hear Our Cry: Boys in Crisis* –

A must read for any educator noticing these trends in their class or school. He goes on to explain that we should think about the brain as a house – for a male, each ‘room’ has a specific purpose, for a female, the ‘rooms’ are used for multiple purposes” (Slocumb, 2004, p.13).

Another thing to take into consideration that is specific to boys from poverty - they aren’t exposed to language the same way as middle-class boys. “With limited language a person doesn’t have the tools necessary to manipulate and negotiate his or her position in the world. To develop that ability, an abstract structure must be built in the mind. Language and experience build that structure” (Payne, 2005). In understanding learning, Dr. Ruby K. Payne writes: “the mediation of the mind happens when an individual is taught the what, the why, and the how” (Payne, 2005, p 30).

An idea taken from this training opportunity was to make a poster for your classroom with those three words written on it. Brain research tells us that the brain stays focused for about 8-10 minutes, so set a timer for about 10 minutes, and then ask one child each of the three questions: What are we learning? How are we learning it? Why are we learning it? The key is to ask two, three or four students the same set of three questions each time you stop. The results of using this technique with the students has been increased understanding of what, how and why they are learning the particular strategy.

Not only do boys and girls learn differently, they even take tests differently. Grace Albritton’s studies have shown that during reading comprehension tests, boys answer quickly and off-the-cuff (n.d.a; n.d.b.). They often answer questions based upon their schema and not on what the text states. Her studies show this among 4th grade Black and Hispanic males taking comprehension assessments formatted similar to the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test. Based on the results of the studies, recommendations have been made to teachers as to how to prepare students to take the test – using test-taking strategies such as “think about the question – know what you’re looking for” and “Search for clues in the passage” (Albritton, n.d.a; n.d.b.).

After reading *The Trouble with Boys* by Peg Tyre (2008), Barbara Rooks and several Media Specialists were inspired to look further into the idea of catering to boys’ reading interests in order to increase the amount of time they spend reading. One of the many discoveries that they made was found in a national survey from YALSA in 2001. The survey reported the top obstacles to reading for boys of average age 14 were:

-
-
- Boring/no fun – 39.3%
 - No time/too busy – 29.8%
 - Like other activities better – 11.1%
 - Can't get into the stories – 7.7%
 - I'm not good at it – 4.3%

The many solutions they discovered included: engaging boys in book talks that include non-fiction texts, increasing the number of magazines, comic books and newspapers in libraries, recruiting boys to work in the library, buying books that boys recommend, and starting boy book clubs.

Recommendations

What you can do...

David Booth, author of *Me Read? No Way!*, stated that using literature circles can enhance boys' literacy development if they meet the following criteria:

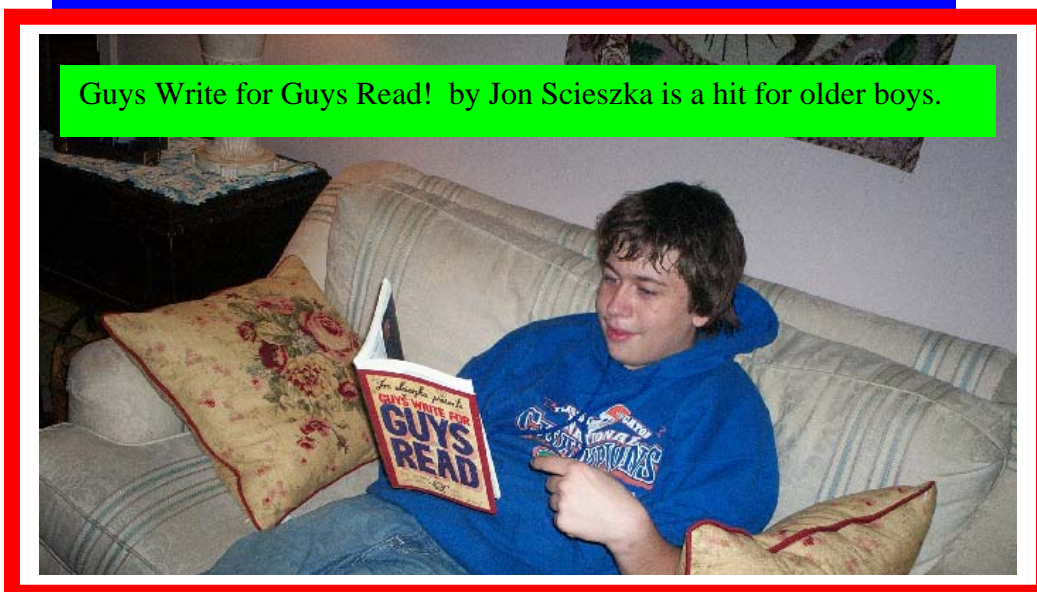
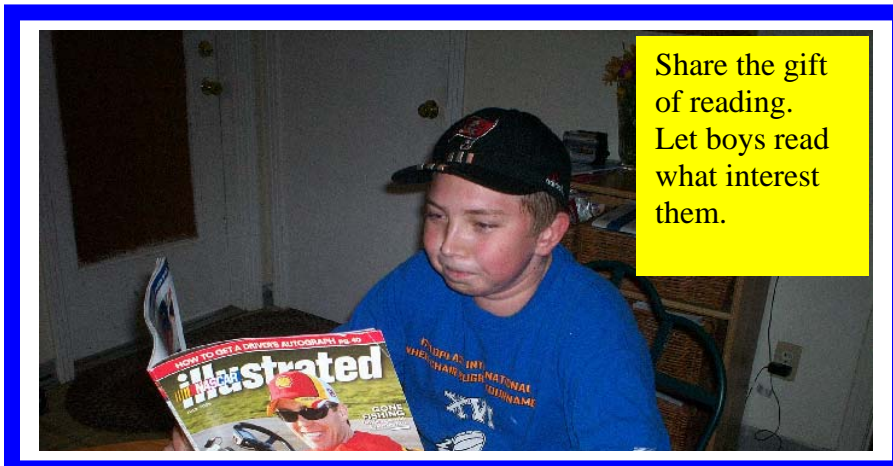
- Boys need to be given choice in and ownership of their reading
- Book selection for boys should reflect their interests, backgrounds, and abilities
- Boys need occasions for talking to others in meaningful ways about what they have read
- Boys who are reluctant readers need to have successful reading experiences (Booth, 2002).

Books you may want to showcase in your classroom libraries throughout your school and in your school libraries include but are not limited to:

- ☺ *The 39 Clues* series by Rick Riordan
- ☺ *The Stupids Step Out* by Harry Allard
- ☺ *Patrick's Dinosaurs*, by Carol Carrick
- ☺ *Night Driving*, by John Coy
- ☺ *Chester's Way*, by Kevin Henkes
- ☺ *Ira Sleeps Over*, by Bernard Waber
- ☺ *Nate the Great*, by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat
- ☺ *The Stories Julian Tells*, by Ann Cameron
- ☺ *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*, by Jon Scieszka
- ☺ *The Mouse and the Motorcycle*, by Beverly Cleary
- ☺ *The Adventures of Captain Underpants*, by Dav Pilkey
- ☺ *Holes*, by Louis Sachar
- ☺ *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, by J. K. Rowling
- ☺ *My Side of the Mountain*, by Jean Craighead George
- ☺ *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom*, by Louis Sachar

- ☺ *Bunnicula*, by Deborah Howe and James Howe
- ☺ *Encyclopedia Brown*, by Donald J. Sobol
- ☺ *James and the Giant Peach*, by Roald Dahl
- ☺ *Hatchet*, by Gary Paulsen
- ☺ *Crash*, by Jerry Spinelli
- ☺ *Stuart Little*, by E. B. White
- ☺ Graphic novels, comic books and magazines

We hope our gift to you will inspire your teachers to reach out to MORE BOYS and for boys to reach out for MORE BOOKS. Happy New Year and Happy Reading!



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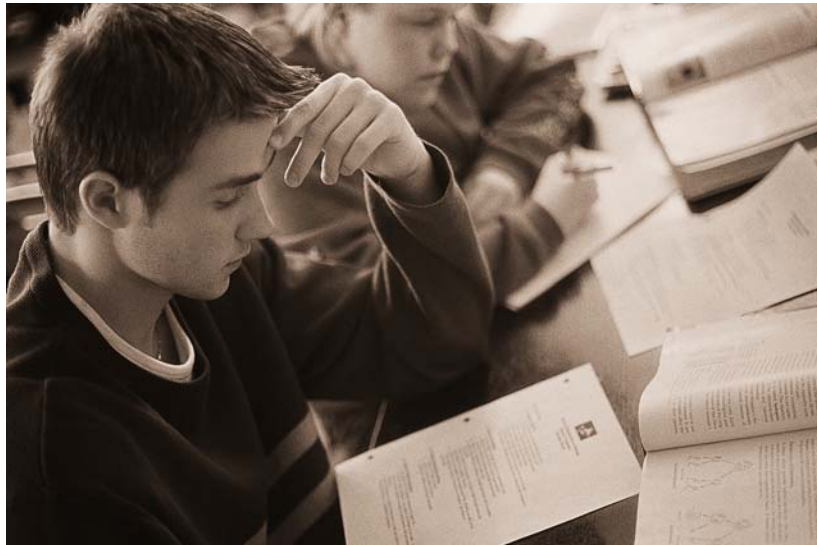
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Legislative Update

By: Adam Peshek
Foundation for Florida's Future

FLCA Talking Points for Meeting with Your State Legislator

Special Session and the Education Budget – During special session in January, lawmakers were faced with a deficit of \$2.3 billion, meaning that tax revenues were \$2.3 billion less than the budget the Legislature passed for the current year. They worked for nearly two weeks to identify funds to cover this shortfall, but they also had to make cuts to current programs, including education.

The Legislature cut the current year public school budget \$469 million—\$140 per child or 2%. All counties in the state received the same 2% cut. The reading allocation (funds that are used to fund reading coaches and reading curriculum) was cut by \$2.4 million (2.16%).

Next year's budget does not look any better. Regular session begins March 3rd, and it is very important that we let our legislators know the importance of quality reading instruction. We need them to protect reading funding and ensure that it is dedicated to reading coaches. Please meet with or call your local legislator and use the following outline to guide your conversation.

Introduction – Tell your legislator something about you and FLCA.

- “I am here today on behalf of the Florida Literacy Coaches Association, which is a statewide organization for reading coaches that enables us to share best practices and techniques with one another.”

About Reading Coaches – Explain what a reading coach does (and does not do).

- You instruct classroom teachers, not students.
- You help teachers in every subject area incorporate reading strategies into their lessons.
- “As a reading coach, I share research-based strategies for promoting literacy with more than (insert approximate number) classroom teachers at my school and guide them in making informed instructional decisions based on their students' needs and abilities.”
- Without a reading coach in a school, any emphasis on literacy is usually limited to language arts classes, even though after third grade, a student's ability to learn other subjects will be limited by their ability to read.
- You are available to help any classroom teacher integrate literacy strategies into their content area, such as science, math, or social studies.
- You support your principal by keeping him/her up-to-date on the latest state requirements for reading and by tracking the progress of my school's lowest performing (level 1 and 2) readers.

Coaching Update

January 2009
Volume 3 Issue 5
Page 9



- You also work with your school's reading leadership team to review assessment data, set goals, and monitor progress toward those goals.

Impact of Reading Coaches – Show the difference reading coaches make, using data and anecdotes.

- [Share student performance data for your school that has improved because of reading coaches. Go to <http://schoolgrades.fl DOE.org/default.asp> for school-level data.]
- [Tell a personal story about how reading coaches help students learn to read by making teachers more effective educators. Talk about how coaches support new or struggling teachers.]

Support for Reading Coaches – Explain how the Legislature funds reading coaches and why it's critical.

- Reading coaches and their salaries are primarily funded through designated reading funds in the FEFP.
- "Flexibility language" in the budget allows school districts to use these reading funds for other purposes. This flexibility has enabled many school districts throughout Florida to divert funds from the important purposes of funding reading coaches, instruction, and materials. As a result, many schools have already lost their reading coaches.
- Ask your legislator to remove this flexibility and restore designated funding for reading coaches.

Closing – Bring the meeting to a close and ask for their support.

- Do you have any questions for me?
- Thank you again for your support of reading, and I hope we can count on you to support reading coaches during the upcoming session, especially during budget negotiations.
- [Leave behind a fact sheet on reading coaches.]



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ATTENTION!!!

Encourage your fellow coaches to join!

MEMBERSHIP FORMS AVAILABLE ON THE
FLORIDA LITERACY COACHES
ASSOCIATION WEBSITE
WWW.FLORIDALITERACYCOACHES.ORG