
Section I: Shaping Reading and Literacy Programs

Reading and Literacy education is a multi-tiered decision making process. Its classroom influences stem from the federal level, Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 where its sources are either the President of the United States or Congress. Directly following the federal level is the individual State Department of Education. After this state level, Reading and Literacy receives additional tiered influences from the local school district, and it is lastly shaped by the instructions and resources identified for use by school personnel and district employees. Examining this tiered system is the focus of this section—wherein, I Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 will apply and analyze current policies that impact Reading in one state, Florida, and in one local school district, Orange County, located in Orlando. (An overview of this model is depicted on Chart 1.) In addition, I will evaluate implications of the policies within the classroom and analyze the impact of the policies on learner's professional work and practices by using professional literature and research Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 as corroborating supports.

Policies in Place and their Sources

In our country, “the constant demand for quality and improved education pushes the United States, like Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 all other countries, to undergo a number of education reforms (Ametepee, Tchinsala, and Agbeh, 2013, p.111). The most recent such reform has its roots in the federal government and it continues to be the basis for education at the state and local levels. (A detail Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 overview of the laws and policies in place in each of these levels are depicted on Chart 2.) The federal reform in place that I am referring to is The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). It was passed by Congress and signed into law by President George H. W. Bush on January 8, 2002. Aimed at improving American public schools, NCLB’s primary goals are to 1) create strong standards in Reading (and Mathematics), 2) measure school performance and statewide progress from elementary to secondary schools (grades 3-8), and 3) implement President Bush’s Reading First and Early Reading First Programs to aid in Reading development. In lieu of creating these programs for the nation at large, the federal government mandates that its programs’ administrators adhere

to specific policies in order to receive federal funding for their organizations and or school systems. Two main policies that must be agreed to are 1) programs/districts must use scientific/research based methods and reading instructions, and 2) they must target Reading development in pre and school age children, particularly those from low income families (in the areas of language, literacy, and reading development) (<http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020108.html>). The No Child Left Behind Act continues to impact Reading and Literacy in Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 the state Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 of Florida in general, and in Orange Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 County Public Schools, in Orlando, in particular. In agreement, authors Whitenack & Swanson stated, in their research on the role of The No Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 Child Left Behind Act, that “schools and districts attended by students of color and those from low-income backgrounds” face limitations in students’ Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 Reading abilities and look to professional development Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 to help them reach and devise ways Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 in which to teach these students (2013, p.3). Teachers and administrators follow the guidelines set in place by legislation such as The No Child Left Behind Act to help all students, irrespective of their limitations.

Another federal policy that influences education and the teaching of Reading in Florida and its schools is noticeable via the National Reading Panel’s contribution to the No Child Left Behind Act. Specifically, commissioned from 1997 to 2000 to evaluate existing research and evidences to find the best ways of teaching children to read, the Panel was created by the Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 collaboration of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 Development and the United States Department of Education, at the urging of Congress. Its fourteen members included school administrators, working teachers, and scientists involved in reading research. Tasked with reviewing more than 100,000 research Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 studies on how children learn to read, the Panel narrowed their recommendations on research depicting the main components of Reading: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Guided Oral Reading, Teaching Vocabulary Words, and Reading Comprehension Strategies (<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/research/supported/Pages/nrp.aspx>). The panel has not reconvened since its final report in 2000. The contents of its final report were imbedded in President Bush’s NCLB Act as Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 recommendations.

Years later, after President Barack Obama took office, he continued the policies set in place by his predecessor George H.W. Bush. The Obama Administration worked with the United States Department of Education to create a federal fund in 2014 called The Race to the Top Fund. The Fund solicited district improvement proposals across America and awarded its winners with prize money. In vast numbers, school districts across America responded by

submitting proposals detailing how they plan to use the funds to enhance urban education for teachers and students alike. Winning proposals were identified as the Broad Prize Winners (for Urban Education). The Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) in Orlando was one such winner. For its efforts and prize package, it was awarded \$500,000 in student scholarships. This money was earmarked for use to make equity and access a priority. It was also aimed at preparing each student to 1) master the content and skills required for college-and career-readiness, 2) provide each student the opportunity to Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 pursue a rigorous course of study, and 3) accelerate and deepen students' learning through attention to their individual needs. Aside from students benefitting from Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 their district being Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 a Broad Prize winner, teachers and principals also benefitted. The award included money for the school district to recruit, reward, and train teachers and principals (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs /racetothetop/index.html>). The goal is to develop a professional staff who are highly effective in their roles. The Broad Prize money is also aimed at making districts and their schools accountable to their respective states for student growth and performance.

At the state level, the Florida Statutes dictates the responsibility more in-depthly for school districts. Beginning in the year 2000, Florida implemented the use of Sections 1007.264 and Sections 1001.42; 1001.51 as its guiding laws. They support Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 the policies outlined in The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. These policies include guidelines on: ideal placement, curriculum, assessment, and monitoring. The Florida Statutes are voted on by the Florida State Senate. The Senate oversees the operational guidelines for all public schools, state colleges, and universities' programs in place in the state. They also mandate that each of these educational facilities follow the state's standards established for Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 students and their parents' rights in pursuing the best education for them. The Senate also discuss and vote into law decisions ranging from such topics as accountability, school districts, public education, and educational instructions (<http://www.flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2015/Title48/#Title48>). The Florida State Senate also request input from local school districts in deciding whether or not to adopt federal initiative(s) for change in education.

One such initiative that the Senate sought input on in recent history is Common Core. Common Core is a federal initiative in education reform but its use is not mandatory. Instead, its adoption for use is left to the discretion and liberty of each state to decide upon. In Florida, the decision was made to adopt Common Core for use. The central shift after adopting

Common Core lies in its standards. The new standards under Common Core sought to merge Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 Reading and Language Arts into English Language Arts/Literacy standards (ELA). The standards are geared towards preparing students for colleges and careers. They are further aimed at providing districts and schools with a clearer understanding of expectations of learning in specific content areas. Most freeing for local school systems under Common Core is that it allows schools and districts to select their own curriculum and resources to meet the rigorous learning outlined in the standards (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>). OCPS's school district makes a conscious effort Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 to exercise both the clear expectations and free choice in identifying specific curriculum it determines is ideal to meet the needs of its students. For this, among other reasons, it has been an award winning school district.

Sterling Award recipient two years in a row, 2014 and 2015, for exemplary performance Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 and excellence, and named AP (Advance Placement) District Honor Roll by the College Board for increasing access to advance placement course work for students, three out of the last five years (starting in 2010), OCPS is working to be the “top producer of successful students in the nation” (<https://www.ocps.net/Community/Pages/default.aspx>). In order to continue to excel and succeed on this initiative, OCPS is using a three tiered system when teaching Reading so that it can continue to follow its pacing guide, called Scope and Sequence, to teach the ELA standards while meeting students' needs “for (placement in the) least restrictive environment” as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home>). The three tiers are Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III.

Implications of Policies and Opinions

The above mentioned policies, laws, and legislations have implications for both students and school staffers: administrators, coaches, specialists, teachers, and paraprofessionals. Within OCPS' elementary schools, all three tiers occur daily. In the classroom setting, the Tier I level of instructions are given to the entire class population—in content such as Reading and Literacy. This tier is often successful for the majority of the students in the classroom and it is often synonymous with students considered to be regular track learners. These students are deemed to be performing at grade level in this content area. In

contrast, students who are performing below grade level in Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 Reading receive an additional thirty minutes of intensive Reading Theoretical Inspections and Applications for Reading and Literacy: Volume 1 instructions daily, in a small group setting, on the skills that they are deficient in. This group is comprised of students whose formative assessment data suggest that they are performing in the lowest 25% of the grade level and thus the lowest 25% of the school wide average. This group is called Tier II and they include students with language deficiencies such as English Language learners. Finally, students who are performing drastically below grade level and who have been identified as having a learning disability or processing deficiency, comprise the Tier III group. These students in OCPS are staffed into its Exceptional Student Education Program (ESE) and receive services as described in their Individual Education Plans (IEP) in small group or inclusion formats. They are often identified as special needs learners. Needless to say, the tiered system of Reading instruction works well if it is followed with fidelity and if students are progress monitored to determine what, if any, learning gains are evident.

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