

School Improvement Zone
Irving Hamer, Deputy Superintendent

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH SCHOLASTIC, INC. TO PURCHASE READ 180 FOR AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$5,322,450

COMMITTEE: EDUCATION AND SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Currently, there are 12,372 secondary students (28 percent of the total membership of 43,960 students) in 23 schools reading below the 4th grade level in the School Improvement Zone. Despite the large numbers of secondary students reading far below grade level, there is no common reading program in the middle and high schools in the Zone. The challenges of teaching secondary curricula to struggling readers are legendary and are a primary explanation for low performing schools. Furthermore, the need to teach reading in secondary schools is demonstrated by the 21,503 secondary students (grades 6-12) in the Zone who scored at Level I or II on the 2004 Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). To teach them to read, secondary teachers need appropriate tools. The Division of Language Arts/Reading deemed *READ 180* the most appropriate reading program for secondary students reading at or below the 4th grade reading level. This determination is justified given the experience and research that validate the *READ 180* program.

READ 180 is a core reading program designed specifically for secondary students reading at the 4th grade level or lower. *READ 180* is a research-based comprehensive reading program delivered in stages consisting of three structured, age appropriate, and differentiated instructional components. These components include instructional software that provides intensive individualized instruction, audio books for modeled reading with authentic adolescent and young adult novels and paperbacks for independent reading, and teacher-directed small group instruction supported by materials that provide explicit instruction in reading, comprehension, vocabulary, word study, and writing strategies. *READ 180* is a literature based reading program supported by a technology component that will be delivered in two consecutive periods a day, five days a week.

The literacy program was first developed as collaboration between Vanderbilt University and Orange County Public Schools in Florida. It was successfully used with 10,000 students from 1994 to 1999. It was then licensed by Scholastic, Inc. and the technology, content, and progress-monitoring components were enhanced based on the research findings from Orange County Public Schools. As a core reading program designed for secondary students reading far below grade level, *READ 180* is particularly suited for students in the School Improvement Zone.

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READ 180 is currently being implemented in over 100 schools in the district. In an effort to teach high school students with disabilities, the Division of Exceptional Student Education piloted an "Intensive Reading" (IR) program during the 2001-2002 school year, at G. Holmes Braddock Senior High School and William Turner Technical High School. The Woodcock Reading Mastery Test was administered to the students with disabilities as an independent pre/post-test. During a four to seven-month implementation, 92 percent of the students demonstrated an increase in passage comprehension, ranging from a three-month increase to a five years-eight months increase, with a mean increase of one year-seven months. Data was also collected during the 2002-2003 school year, with similar results. An increase in reading skills was evident and feedback from the implementation of *READ 180*, from teachers and students, is very positive.

In addition, during 2003-2004, a large implementation took place at Miami Edison Senior High School. It is important to note that while the program was implemented only **four months before the administration of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)**, Miami Edison Senior High School had a 51-point increase on the Florida School Grading System that was the **highest** point gain of any school in the state. Given the similarities in student populations the above examples indicate that Read 180 is a strong choice as a core reading program for secondary students in the Zone.

Beyond the experience of using the *READ 180* program within the district, there is a compelling body of research in large urban school systems that justify selecting the program to be the core reading program in Zone schools. Three large-scale research studies from 2002 highlight the efficacy and effectiveness of *READ 180*. In the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Department of Defense Schools, and in four large urban school districts under the auspice of The Council of the Great City Schools, students consistently demonstrated significant gains in reading on standardized tests. While the research specifically looked at measurable students gains, it also suggests a more positive self-image for adolescent and young adults who experience the joy of reading authentic literature for the first time in their lives.

The total cost of the proposed contract with Scholastic, Inc. for *READ 180* is \$5,322,450. This amount includes \$3,960,000 for the instructional materials, which reflects a 25 percent discount, and \$1,362,450 for contracted services from the date of the signed contract until June 30, 2006. The \$1,362,450 for contracted services include \$1,325,50 for training related activities that include the following critical elements: initial and ongoing training for approximately 205 teachers, 23 principals, and 23 reading coaches who will serve 12,372 students; 820 in-class visits of 60 to 90 minutes, to monitor, guide, and ensure fidelity of implementation; 299 specialized training sessions for reading coaches and/or site coordinators; and data analysis on student progress and program implementation for principals and district administrators. The training activities offered will meet the requirements for high quality professional development as defined by both the district and the state. The data analysis includes *READ 180* reports, as well as student results on the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), that students will take on the computer as part of their routine assignments. The data will be used by the teacher

to drive classroom instruction, but does not require teacher grading or loss of instructional time.

Scholastic, Inc. will also produce a reading conference for Miami-Dade County Public Schools that will provide additional professional development to teachers and principals on teaching reading to secondary students at no additional cost. It is estimated that Scholastic Inc. will provide \$255,000 of in-kind services.

In addition to the training services, \$72,450 (which includes a 25 percent discount) will cover the cost of on-site and web-based technical support which will ensure that the program runs effectively and training for school-site technical staff that will support implementation appropriately after the contract period.

According to State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.012(7), the *READ 180* instructional materials are exempt from the bid process because Scholastic, Inc. holds the copyright to the intellectual content and instructional methodology. The Professional Services Contract Committee, established by School Board Rule 6Gx13- 3F-1.021, reviewed the contract in terms of the proposed contracted services on October 27, 2004, and recommended that an exception to the rule regarding bids be granted based on the specific expertise of Scholastic, Inc. to assist the district in the implementation and use of the instructional materials obtained through *READ 180*.

The appropriation for this item is included under the General Fund of the 2004-2005 Adopted Budget under Fund 0100, Function 5102, Program 8560, Object 5520, and Location 9623; and Federal Programs (Contracted Programs Fund) of the 2004-2005 Adopted Budget under Fund 0420, Function 5000, Programs 4297 and 4289, Object 5510, and Location 9623.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

1. authorize the Superintendent to enter into a contractual agreement with Scholastic, Inc. to provide *READ 180* and related contracted services to all students in grades 6–12 in School Improvement Zone schools, who are reading below the 4th grade level, in an amount not to exceed \$5,322,450, from December 15, 2004 through June 30, 2006; and
2. grant an exception to School Board Rule 6Gx13- 3F-1.021.

The appropriation for this item is included in the General Fund and in the Other Federal Programs (Contracted Programs Fund) of the 2004-2005 Adopted Budget.

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