INTRODUCTION TO DISTRICT PACING GUIDES
LANGUAGE ARTS/READING/LA THROUGH ESOL

The Office of Curriculum and Instruction (C & I), is committed to improving academic standards and student performance throughout the District. To positively impact student achievement across all schools, the consistent implementation of the core curriculum within the context of the Florida Continuous Improvement Model (FCIM) and Response to Intervention (RtI) is essential. To this end, District and Regional Center administrators collaborated on the development of the template for the Pacing Guides and Instructional Focus Calendars ensuring the implementation of these materials District-wide. In addition, lessons plans were developed by subject area administrators. All of these materials are aligned to the District-wide administration of the interim assessments and the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR). The consistent implementation of the core curriculum will maximize the impact of professional development provided and positively impact student learning.

Development of District Pacing Guides

Staff within the core content areas of Language Arts and Reading has aligned State Standards, Common Core State Standards and essential curricular content to instructional materials and resources. Content-specific pacing guides set expectations for student performance at K-12 levels for the 2012-2013 school year. The District Pacing Guides support the following goals to:

- assist teachers with implementation of standards;
- address issues of pacing to ensure that all State Standards and Common Core Standards are being addressed and that curriculum, in full, is being covered;
- improve usage of curriculum programs with fidelity and improve quality and continuity of instruction;
- provide consistency and uniformity at both school-site level and District-wide for increased rigor and equity of instruction for all students;
- address issues which arise due to student mobility within the District;
- ensure that the necessary content included in the FCAT assessment is addressed and begin preparing students for the Common Core assessment;
- allow teachers to be in close instructional proximity of one another through the orderly, systematic use of Pacing Guides by grade levels, though styles and use of materials may vary; and to
- foster collaborative planning and increased rigor of instruction leading to improved student achievement.

Language Arts/Reading and Language Arts through ESOL used a common template to develop District Pacing Guides which are course specific by grade level. The guides can be accessed through the Learning Village.
Areas included in the guide are the appropriate pacing or time frame in which instruction is to occur, the Strand or Body of Knowledge covered, main topic or theme, the curricular content which is the instructional focus, Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for grades K-2, Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) for grades 3-12, Essential Content or Instructional Routines and Objectives. The Instructional Tools column includes resources such as materials, strategies, websites and technology. Additional support for ELL and SPED students are also aligned to the guides. Some variation occurs based on curriculum content and timelines of the implementation of NGSSS or CCSS.

A Year-At-A-Glance document for teachers with an overall look at what is taught within each of the four quarters is available for all grades; including the week, number of days, date range, and title of story. For Secondary Language Arts, a weekly Year-At-A-Glance is now also available.

Research Supporting the Usage of the Pacing Guides

In pacing the year’s curriculum, teachers have little control over the many variables that affect teaching and learning; however, they do have control over how they allocate time to teach the standards and grade-level objectives that every student must master. Instructional pacing is directly linked to time allocation and must begin the first day of the new school year (McLeod, Fisher, Hoover, 2003).

In a joint project between San Diego State University and the San Diego Unified School District, researchers from Stanford University worked with teachers in creating a four-step process for creating a school-wide environment that fosters the precision needed in teaching and learning in order to move all students along a continuum of learning experiences that allows them to achieve grade-level standards. Essential to this school-wide process is the development and use of common Pacing Guides. “Pacing Guides generally identify when the teacher will teach specific content standards, which instructional materials are appropriate, and what types of instructional strategies teachers can deploy.” (Fisher, Grant, Frey, Johnson, 2008, p. 64).

The use of common pacing guides not only provides teachers with these and other components but they also foster collaborative planning and promote instructional conversations. “Talking with colleagues that teach the same content and see the same data results is foundational to instituting improvements and helps teachers determine which instructional strategies are working, which materials are effective, and which students still need help to master the standards.” (Fisher, et. al. 2008)

In a study conducted in an urban elementary school where 100% of students qualify for free lunch, a task force made up of researchers, teachers, parents, and administrators, agreed on the following: learning is social and conversations are critical for learning. “Learning takes place when humans interact with one another: kids with kids, kids with teachers, teachers with teachers-everything related to learning is social.” (Fisher & Frey 2007) One of the core beliefs of this study is that, “it’s not just talk about anything, it’s talk that is focused and based on an agreed upon purpose.” Fisher & Frey (2007) Stated that “we are flush with information about teaching students to read and write well. The challenge, it seems, is putting all of this information into practice at the whole-school level.” (Fisher & Frey 2007) Additionally, guiding teachers’ instructional decisions was an essential component for achieving success. By creating a framework for pacing instruction, expectations were changed and established. The
task force had essentially decided that every student should, and could, meet grade-level expectations. “If every teacher at a specific grade level were focused on specific content standards, then students could be assessed and interventions could be developed.” (Fisher & Frey 2007).

District-wide Pacing Guides provide targeted action plans for teachers when planning lessons. Research on new teachers points to the need for curricular guidance. Kauffman, Johnson, Kardos, Liu, & Peske (2002) found that new teachers can benefit from resources such as pacing guides designed to help them determine what to teach and how to teach it. In Districts where teacher and student mobility is high, the use of pacing guides steer and point all teachers, novice and veteran, to where they need to be at any stage in the academic year.

Language Arts/Reading Pacing Guides

The Language Arts/Reading District Pacing Guides for elementary grades include the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) for grades 3-5 and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for grades K-3. Each Pacing Guide is correlated to Houghton Mifflin. Pacing varies according to the complexity of the text being taught. The dates are based on the 2012-2013 academic calendar. ELL strategies are highlighted in yellow on the Pacing Guides. The mustard highlighted areas are standards that span grade-levels.

The red header color for the K-2 Pacing Guides, reminds teachers that full implementation of the CCSS is required. Third grade Pacing Guides include both the NGSSS and CCSS which are in parenthesis and bolded. The blue header color for the Pacing Guides in the intermediate grades reminds teachers that NGSSS remain as the benchmarks that are taught and tested.
Time has been created for teachers to implement a close, analytic read of a complex text via an Exemplar Lesson. In grades K-3 an Exemplar Lesson is expected four times per year. In grades 4-5 an Exemplar Lesson is expected twice a year. Teachers can choose the text used for the Exemplar lesson as long as it meets the criteria of complex text as defined in the Common Core State Standards (See Appendix B). The Division of Language Arts/Reading website will contain links for suggested Exemplar Lesson Plans.

A separate Writing Pacing Guide for elementary outlines steps for establishing Writer’s Workshop and writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. Both CCSS and NGSSS are addressed where appropriate. The Instructional Tools column contains the name of the suggested mentor text and other suggested materials, strategies, web sites, and technology. Using resources from the instructional tools column is at the teacher’s discretion.

Secondary Language Arts/Reading District Pacing Guides are posted on the Learning Village website by week, and include the NGSSS. Pacing for Language Arts is based on a traditional weekly schedule and would be adjusted according to a school’s schedule; dates are included based on the 2012-2013 academic year. Included are literary and nonfiction texts found within the McDougal Littell literature series novels and technology resources. A Year-at-A-Glance both quarterly and weekly per grade level is provided. Writing process and application objectives and NGSSS are infused in the weekly guide. In addition, a Creative Writing Pacing Guide for grade 10 guides teachers’ effective writing instruction. New for the 2012-13 academic year are Advanced(Middle School), and Honors(High School) Pacing Guides which promote critical thinking, classroom discussion writing in response to literature and synthesis with non-text and non-fiction texts.

Pacing Guides for the reading programs are weekly or biweekly, depending on the reading intervention program. For the middle schools, Pacing Guides for the Voyager Intensive Reading classes, Voyager IR-Enrichment, and Language! Intensive Reading Plus classes are included. For high schools, the Hampton-Brown Edge Intensive Reading Plus program, Pacing Guides covering levels, A, B, and C have been developed and include a focus on the following: Reading Comprehension, Listening/Speaking, Vocabulary Development, Literary Analysis, Writing Applications/Creative Writing, Editing for Language Conventions, Technology links, and SPED Strategies. For the Jamestown Reading Navigator program, the biweekly Pacing Guides have been developed for Treks 2-4 and include a Cross Trek Focus Skill (Whole Group Instruction), IR-Enrichment differentiated Instruction, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary Development, Fluency, Writing, Literary Analysis, Technology Links, SPED Strategies, and suggested thematic novels. An IR-Enrichment Pacing Guide is also available. Exemplar text lessons for Language Arts/ELL have been included each quarter, and can be accessed at the LA/Reading website.

**Instructional Focus Calendar**

The Instructional Focus Calendar (IFC) is a document which is found at the end of every District Pacing Guide and provides schools the opportunity to personalize instruction based on school needs. This document is data-driven and includes the date-range, benchmarks, activities, assessment(s), and strategies, and is aligned to the Florida Continuous Improvement Model (FCIM) and Response to Intervention (RtI). Regional Center staff, in collaboration with C&I designed the calendar and it will be used by school-site leadership teams to customize data-driven instruction. The color coding of the headers in the elementary IFC is aligned and have the same purpose as in the Pacing Guides.
The IFC is a template-based tool used in conjunction with the Curriculum Pacing Guide to facilitate action-in-common among teachers teaching the same course of study. For example, communities of instructional practice, such as Elementary Grade Level teams or Secondary Course-alike teams (Intensive Reading, Intensive Reading Plus, Language Arts, Language Arts Through ESOL), use this calendar to collectively plan and customize learning to meet the needs of their particular students.

The course-alike/grade level communities of instructional practice meet regularly to develop the instructional focus calendar, design lessons that focus on five (5) key elements of instructions: preparation, meaning, content, practice, and performance. Additionally these teams analyze student data and work product so as to research, discuss, design, and implement instructional strategies to improve student achievement.

In preparing the IFC, course-alike/grade level communities of instructional practice teams come together to begin the work of planning their focus for the content to be studied. Teachers must
keep in mind that the IFC is a calendar designed to target benchmarks in need of maintenance, enrichment, or remediation. Teachers utilize current FCAT data to include baseline assessments, interim assessments, and teacher-designed assessments in order to focus on selected benchmarks. Teachers will work collaboratively to examine and discuss instructional strategies that stimulate students to think more deeply about the concepts. Once the IFC is developed, teachers will independently develop their daily plan.