

2020 VISION: “*Changing the Face of Education in Fayette County*”

WORK GROUP: Literacy

FINAL REPORT

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Number of Specific Recommendations: 12

Group Recommendation Number: 1

Specific Recommendation:

Develop a reading and writing mentoring program for teachers in Early Start, Head Start, non-profit child care centers, for profit child care centers, and in-home child care centers.

Research Rationale for how this change will help kids:

1. “Headstart staff who participate in hands on training showed greater gains in knowledge, skills, and expertise compared to staff who did not receive hands on training.” – Child and Youth Care Forum, February 2003
2. “The participatory training in the center produced significant gains as compared to similar staff who did not participate in this type of training.” – Early Childhood Research Quarterly
3. “Teachers who participated in collaborative training showed higher levels of positive interactions in instruction than teachers involved in workshop training.” – Early Childhood Research Quarterly
4. “Develop mentoring programs targeted to the students with the highest needs.” – One Community One Voice, World Class Standards and Accountability Subcommittee, Strategy #16
5. “Work with Big Brothers, Big Sisters, the area Universities, LexLinc, the Faith Community and other agencies to identify mentors and connect them with students in need.” – One Community One Voice, World Class Standards and Accountability Subcommittee, Strategy #16

Implementation Steps for Recommendation # 1 Reading and Writing Mentoring Program	Person Responsible for Completing Steps	Possible Resources?	Start Date	End Date
Establish a Mentor Training Committee to develop the mentor training program for Early Start, Head Start, and child care center teachers	Mona Baker, FCPS; Kathy Heath, Community Action Council; Prichard Committee rep; Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development rep; UK Early Childhood/ Special Education rep; "Starting Strong" program rep	Prichard Committee Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development UK Early Childhood/ Special Education Dept. "Starting Strong" program	April 1	May 31
Mentor Training Committee selects 5 mentor training (control) sites	Same as above		June 1	June 30
Administer and assess results of ELLCO (Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation) toolkit as a pre-test at each mentor training (control) site	UK Early Childhood/Special Education rep		Sept 1	Sept 15
Begin mentor training program with resource teachers, education specialists, and literacy coaches as mentors	Mentor Training Committee		Oct. 1	Mar 31
Administer and assess results of ELLCO post-test at each mentor training (control) site	Mentor Training Committee		Apr 1	May 31

Group Recommendation Number: 2

Specific Recommendation:

Develop a program similar to Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library through which every child registered receives a free book by mail each month from birth to 5 years of age.

Research Rationale for how this change will help kids:

1. “The single most important activity for building these understandings and skills essential for reading success appears to be reading aloud to children.” – Wells 1985; Bus, Van Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini 1995
2. “The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for success in reading.” – The Commission on Reading, “Becoming a Nation of Readers”
3. “Reading to young children promotes language acquisition and correlates with literacy development and, later on, with achievement in reading comprehension and overall success in school. The percentage of young children read aloud to daily by a family member is one indicator of how well young children are prepared for school.” – Family Reading, NCES Fast Facts, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.
4. “Give consideration to the “Books Before School Proposal” that would expose children books from birth and would increase preschool literacy readiness.” – One Community One Voice, Early Childhood Education Subcommittee, __Strategy #1

Implementation Steps for Recommendation # 2 Free Book by Mail	Person Responsible for Completing Steps	Possible Resources?	Start Date	End Date
Appoint or hire a Program Coordinator	Superintendent; Board of Education Chair	Success by Six	Upon adoption of recommendation	
Work with Book Wholesalers International or other book wholesaler, company, or individuals who could donate books appropriate for each age from birth to 5 years	Program Coordinator; Superintendent; Board of Education Chair	Mayor; Commerce Lexington; International Book Project	Ongoing	
Develop registration and form collection processes	Program Coordinator	Success by Six; FCPS Webmaster;	Ongoing	
Identify registration sites	Program Coordinator	Success by Six; Public Library; Family Care Center; Child Care Centers; Pediatric Clinics; Health Department	Ongoing	
Place registration forms at designated sites	Program Coordinator	Volunteers	Ongoing	
Collect completed registration forms	Program Coordinator			
Order books from appropriate supplier	Program Coordinator			

Educational research has shown that children become literate more easily if their parents read to them. Books must be in the home in order for that to happen.

Group Recommendation Number: 3

Specific Recommendation:

Expand the Reach Out And Read program in partnership with local pediatricians to encourage early book use among parents, especially those parents of children at risk.

Research Rationale for how this change will help kids:

1. “A body of research has now accumulated to show that literacy-promoting interventions by the pediatrician, including anticipatory guidance about the importance of reading to young children, coupled with an age-appropriate book for the child to take home, have a significant effect on parental behavior.” Pediatrics by the Book: Pediatricians and Literacy Promotion, Perri Klass, MD Vol. 110, No. 5, November 2002, pp. 989-995
2. “This simple and inexpensive intervention, delivered as part of well-child care, changed parent attitudes toward the importance of reading with their infants and toddlers. These intervention parents and their children read more together and this was associated with enhanced language development in older toddlers in this diverse group of low-income families.” Literacy Promotion in Primary Care Pediatrics: Can We Make a Difference? Received Aug 30, 1999; accepted Dec 28, 1999. Pamela C. High^{*, ‡, §}, Linda LaGasse^{‡, §}, Samuel Becker^{*}, Ingrid Ahlgren^{*}, and Adrian Gardner[‡]
3. “Parents who had previously received a book were more likely to report looking at books with their children or that looking at books was a favorite activity... This association was strongest among parents receiving Aid to Families With Dependent Children...This preliminary study suggests that pediatricians can play a role in enriching children's early literacy environments, especially for children at high risk of school failure.” R. Needleman et al, Department of Pediatrics, Boston City Hospital, MA, Vol.145 No. 8, August 1991, Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine.
4. “A modest literacy intervention, such as ROR, can have a significant impact on a child’s home literacy environment”, PEDIATRICS Vol. 113 No. 5 May 2004, pp. 1248-1253, Carol Cohen Weitzman, MD, Lisa Roy, MD, Theodore Walls, PhD and Ricarda Tomlin, BS From the Department of Pediatrics, Yale University School of Medicine, New Haven, Connecticut

Implementation Steps for Recommendation # 3 Books from Pediatricians	Person Responsible for Completing Steps	Possible Resources?	Start Date	End Date
Designate a Program Coordinator to receive initial information and training from ROR national.	Superintendent, Board of Education Chair	Reach Out and Read Program Officials	Ongoing	
Program Coordinator meets with city pediatric practices to engage their support, to designate an on-site Medical Director, and to determine approximate number of books required for each age from 6 months to 5 years.	Program Coordinator	Dr. Tom Young, UK Pediatric Clinic, Fayette County Medical Society	Ongoing	
Meet with local and national book suppliers of new and gently used books to determine appropriate supplier of books for each age and seek agreement for donated books	Program Coordinator, Superintendent, Board of Education Chair	Book Wholesalers International, Scholastic, Inc., Friends of the Lexington Public Library, International Book Project	Ongoing	
Meet with businesses, corporations, and Foundations to seek sponsorship for additional books not covered under donation agreement with book suppliers and not provided through ROR national	Program Coordinator, Superintendent, Board of Education Chair	Knight Foundation	Ongoing	
Recruit volunteer readers	Program Coordinator	Carnegie Center; Lexington Public Library; faith-based organizations; Rotary; Kiwanis; Junior League; United Way of the Blue Grass	Ongoing	
Arrange training, for volunteer readers, through ROR.	Program Coordinator		Ongoing	

Group Recommendation Number: 4

Specific Recommendation:

Fayette County Public Schools will continue to provide Full-Day Kindergarten district-wide.

Research Rationale for how this change will help kids:

- Research studies confirm that attendance in full-day kindergarten results in academic and social benefits for students, at least in the primary grades (Cryan et al., 1992; Karweit, 1992). EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH QUARTERLY 7
- Children enrolled in full-day Kindergarten were rated significantly higher in their readiness for first grade. (James Elicker and Sangeeta Mathur, 2002) EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH QUARTERLY
- Significant short-term academic benefits are evident for at-risk students attending full-day kindergarten. (Finn, J.D., 1989) Review of Educational Research, 59
- Provide full-day programming in the Early Start Center for all children. One Community One Voice, p. 13 (It stands to reason that we would not revert to half-day kindergarten, but rather continue this service in order to reduce the achievement gap.

Implementation Steps for Recommendation # 4 Full Day Kindergarten	Person Responsible for Completing Steps	Possible Resources?	Start Date	End Date
Establish a staffing policy for requiring full-day kindergarten in all elementary schools.	Supt. Board of Education	Dept of Budget and Staffing	Spring 06	Ongoing

Group Recommendation Number: 5

Specific Recommendation:

Every elementary school will be provided a highly qualified literacy coach to provide job-embedded professional development and coaching with a focus solely on reading and writing. (In the past 9 years, the role of the PSA has changed from best practice coach to much needed assistant principal.)

Research Rationale for how this change will help kids:

- Every school should have access to teachers who are knowledgeable in the area of effective reading instruction and intervention in reading difficulties that can provide guidance to classroom teachers. *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*
- Quality classroom instruction in kindergarten and primary grades is the single best weapon for preventing reading failure. *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*
- Provide all students and teachers with the extra help needed for all students to be proficient in literacy by the end of primary. *One Community, One Voice, p. 14*
- Research shows that writing leads to improved reading achievement, reading leads to better writing performance, and combined instruction leads to improvements in both areas. (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991)
- Provide each student and teacher access to a reading specialist, and/or a quality teacher to assist with instruction. *One Community, One Voice, p. 14*
- Teachers are able to develop mastery of new instructional practices if they are provided training, modeling, sustained practice, feedback and coaching. Coaching seems to be critical to sustaining professional growth in teachers. (Showers, Joyce, & Bennett, 1987) *Educational Leadership*
- Opportunities for professional growth should be integrated into the daily activities of teachers and should take place in the workplace rather than outside workshops. *Professional Learning Communities at Work, DuFour and Eaker*

Implementation Steps for Recommendation # 5 Literacy Coach	Person Responsible for Completing Steps	Possible Resources?	Start Date	End Date
Establish a staffing policy for requiring a literacy coach in all elementary schools.	Supt. Board of Education	Dept of Budget and Staffing	Spring 06	Ongoing
Follow FCPS and SBDM policies and procedures for hiring and consultation.	Human Resources Principal	IAKSS-Dept of Student Achievement	Spring, 06	Fall, 06
Establish a Literacy Cadre where coaches meet monthly to gain PD/dissemination of current best practices)	IAKSS-Dept of Student Achievement	IAKSS-Dept of Student Achievement	Fall, 06	ongoing
Literacy coaches will provide job-embedded PD on reading/writing strategies	Principal/Literacy Coach	IAKSS-Dept of Student Achievement	Fall, 06	ongoing

Group Recommendation Number: 6

Specific Recommendation:

Every elementary school will be provided highly qualified intervention teacher(s) to work specifically with students identified as being below proficiency in reading, as determined by the GRADE assessment or a similar norm referenced assessment. These intervention teachers will be allocated to the schools based on the number of students in need of these intervention services, K-5. These teachers will implement proven intervention programs that exhibit criteria from scientifically based reading research

Research Rationale for how this change will help kids:

- Quality classroom instruction in kindergarten and primary grades is the single best weapon for preventing reading failure by providing adequate intervention to assist children with reading difficulties, such as additional staff for tutoring and smaller class size. *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*
- Quality learning environments in preschool and primary classes foster early literacy development and provide effective support for all children to attain success as readers and writers, especially for high poverty and linguistically diverse children. Stahl, Steven A. and Yaden Jr., David B. (2004) The Development of Literacy in Preschool and Primary Grades: Work by the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA), *Elementary School Journal*, 105, (2), 141-165
- Provide each student and teacher access to a reading specialist, and/or a quality teacher to assist with instruction. *One Community, One Voice, p. 14*
- Schools need to be provided adequate intervention to assist children with reading difficulties, such as additional staff for tutoring and smaller class size. *Learning First Alliance*

Implementation Steps for Recommendation # 6 Intervention Teachers	Person Responsible for Completing Steps	Possible Resources?	Start Date	End Date
Establish a staffing policy for providing highly qualified reading intervention teachers based on individual school needs.	Supt. Board of Education	Dept of Budget and Staffing	Spring 06	Ongoing
Follow FCPS and SBDM policies and procedures for hiring and consultation.	Human Resources Principal	IAKSS-Dept of Student Achievement	Spring, 06	Fall, 06
Train intervention teachers on selected school intervention programs, assessment, and disaggregation of student achievement data.	Principal	Reading Program Consultant Assessment Consultant IAKSS-Dept of Student Achievement	Fall, 06	ongoing
Implement intervention programs with small groups/individuals (K-5)	Reading Intervention Teacher	IAKSS-Dept of Student Achievement	Fall, 06	ongoing

Group Recommendation Number: 7

Specific Recommendation:

FCPS will offer a menu of professional development opportunities that will support the implementation of successful research-based literacy instructional strategies (i.e. 5 essential components of reading, Junior Great Books, Literature Circles, Readers Theatre, Reading/Writing Connection, Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for an Authentic Audiences)

Research Rationale for how this change will help kids:

- Providing extensive professional development is critical for ensuring that teachers stay abreast of current research on effective instruction for struggling readers. Every Child Reading: An Action Plan. Learning First Alliance
- Professional development for teachers produced significantly higher results in student achievement. National Reading Panel, 2000
- Professional development is one of the key elements needed to change the trajectory of progress for struggling readers and to ensure their ongoing success. Teacher quality and its impact on student achievement seem to suggest that teacher quality has a significant effect on student achievement. Chard, David J. (2004) Professional Development in Early Reading Instruction, *Exceptionality*, 12, (3), 175-191
- Provide training for all teachers, related service providers, instructional assistants, principals, etc. who have contact with students on a regular basis and parents/family members. One Community, One Voice, p 15
- Provide Professional development in literacy for all staff (classified and certified) that work with Primary students, including special education. One Community, One Voice, p 15

Implementation Steps for Recommendation # 7 Professional Development Menu	Person Responsible for Completing Steps	Possible Resources?	Start Date	End Date
Develop a PD menu based upon student achievement data	Professional Development Evaluation Specialist, IAKSS Dept of Student Achievement	Literacy Consultants, KDE Curriculum Dept, CCLD – Collaborative Center for Literacy Development, Carnegie Center, Prichard Committee, Lexington Public Library, Bluegrass Writing Project, ESL Dept	Spring 06	Ongoing
Implement PD	Professional Development Evaluation Specialist, IAKSS Dept of Student Achievement , Principal, IAKSS- Dept of Student Achievement	Literacy Consultants, KDE Curriculum Dept, CCLD – Collaborative Center for Literacy Development, Carnegie Center, Prichard Committee, Lexington Public Library, Bluegrass Writing Project, ESL Dept, IAKSS	Spring 06	Ongoing

Group Recommendation Number: 8

Specific Recommendation:

FCPS will provide smaller learning communities in elementary classrooms by reducing the class size or providing classroom assistants.

Research Rationale for how this change will help kids:

- Studies show that elementary students make better progress when the ratio of students to teacher is 15:1. Every Child Reading: An Action Plan. Learning First Alliance
- Reduce class size for elementary students at-risk of educational failure. One Community, One Voice, p. 8
- Lower student/teacher ratio in the primary program. One Community, One Voice, p. 14
- Children in small classes consistently out-perform children in large classes. Reducing Class Size: A Review of the Literature and Options for Consideration
- At the end of third grade, students in small classes in inner city schools, on average, scored 18 points higher on the SAT Reading Test than did their counterparts in regular-sized classes. Reducing Class Size: A Review of the Literature and Options for Consideration
- At the end of third grade, inner-city students (about 97% of whom are minorities) in small classes performed less well than suburban, urban, or rural children; however, the inner-city children in small classes closed some of the performance gap between themselves and children in large classes elsewhere.
- Regular classes with full-time aides out-performed regular classes with part-time aides, but only in the first grade. Small classes, however, consistently out-performed both regular classes and regular classes with aides.
- Children in small classes were less likely to be retained in a grade. Reducing Class Size: A Review of the Literature and Options for Consideration

Implementation Steps for Recommendation # 8 Smaller Learning Communities	Person Responsible for Completing Steps	Possible Resources?	Start Date	End Date
Establish a staffing policy for providing smaller learning communities in all elementary schools by reducing the class size or providing full time classroom assistants (K-5)	Supt. Board of Education	Dept of Budget and Staffing	Spring 06	Ongoing
Follow FCPS and SBDM policies and procedures for hiring and consultation.	Human Resources Principal	Dept of Budget and Staffing	Spring, 06	Fall, 06

Group Recommendation Number: 9

Specific Recommendation:

Each Fayette County Elementary School will develop and implement a school-wide Parent Involvement Policy (Program) based on individual school and population needs (i.e. student demographics, parent needs, community need or support, NCLB requirements, assessment results, etc.) for the purposes of promoting better communication among home, school and community, providing specific training for parents that will support more positive academic experiences between parent and child; and keeping parents informed of current curricular and assessment expectations. Title I, Part A grant schools would continue with parent involvement requirements and provide models and examples of programs and activities for those schools initiating plans.

Research Rationale for how this change will help kids:

- “Research has proven beyond dispute the positive connection between parent/family involvement and student achievement. The committee strongly believes parents and community members must become involved in the education of our children.” *One Community, One Voice Report*, p. 18
- Even though, research states that family involvement programs do not always require new or additional money (Rioux and Berla, 1994; Flaxman and Inger, 1991), past experiences with Fayette County Elementary Schools have shown greater participation when family programs are paired with budgets that provide food and materials.
- Parents want success for their children and can help them succeed. The benefits are not just beneficial to early or elementary students, but up through middle and high school. (Rioux and Berla, 1994; Flaxman and Inger, 1991)
- Partners to schools will extend to meet the needs of parent involvement programs when the plans are creative and innovative.
- Students do best when they see parents in four key roles: teachers, supporters, advocates, and decision makers. (Henderson and Berla, 1994)
- Research shows that there is a direct correlation between parents who read to their children, answer their questions, and show their children how reading impacts their lives, and the children’s success in school. *What Research Has to Say About Reading Instruction*, 2002; Durkin, 1966.

Implementation Steps for Recommendation # 9 Parent Involvement Program	Person Responsible for Completing Steps	Possible Resources?	Start Date	End Date
Form a parent involvement planning committee	Principal	FRC, Title I, Prichard Committee, KIFL, Lexington Public Library, UK, Carnegie Center	Spring, 06	Spring, 06 Ongoing
Create a survey and assess survey results for the purpose of planning parent involvement activities.	Principal, Parent Involvement (PI) committee	FRC, Title 1, Prichard Committee, KIFL, Lexington Public Library, UK, Carnegie Center	Spring, 06	Spring, 06 ongoing
Present results of survey to SBDM for approval to proceed with the plan	Principal, PI committee	FRC, Title 1, Prichard Committee, KIFL, Lexington Public Library, UK, Carnegie Center	Spring, 06	Spring, 06 ongoing
Conduct year round planning committee meetings to coordinate times and activities.	Principal, PI committee	FRC, Title 1, Prichard Committee, KIFL, Lexington Public Library, UK, Carnegie Center	Spring, 06	Spring/ summer, 06
Plan and conduct PD for staff on how to work effectively with parents	Principal, PI committee	FRC, Title 1, Prichard Committee, KIFL, Lexington Public Library, UK, Carnegie Center	Summer 06	Summer 06
Implement school-wide parent involvement plan	Principal, PI committee	FRC, Title 1, Prichard Committee, KIFL, Lexington Public Library, UK, Carnegie Center; US Dept of Educ.	Fall, 06	ongoing

Group Recommendation # 10

Specific Recommendation:

Every student in Fayette County middle schools and those high school students two years below grade level will be required to participate in a literacy program designed to strengthen achievement. This work group recommends that all middle schools in the district have a block of 90 minutes per day devoted to the literacy workshop.

At the high school level, the literacy workshop will be an additional class required for students who still score two years below grade level on literacy assessments. Students in both middle and high school who score two years below grade level will have an Individual Literacy Plan, which they develop with teachers and parents (see sample).

In order to meet the needs of individual schools, each school will design its own literacy program which will be included in the school's comprehensive plan. However, this work group strongly recommends that the board implement a program similar or identical to the Reading and Writing Studio Course © described in the attached literature.

To acknowledge the powerful connection between the processes of reading and writing, we further recommend that school reading specialists be called literacy coaches.

Research rationale for how this change will help kids:

Society demands increasingly literate workers and citizens. Individuals must be able to read, write, and communicate at high levels in order to remain economic and social contributors. A report commissioned by the Educational Testing Service underscores the need: "The twenty-five fastest growing professions today have far greater than average literacy demands, while the twenty-five fastest-declining professions have lower than average literacy demands" (Barton, 2000).

Although the world asks for increasing levels of literacy, students at the middle- and high-school levels continue to make slow progress toward achieving proficiency. An analysis of National Center for Education Statistics indicates that approximately eight million young people between fourth and twelfth grade struggle to read at grade level. This is nearly 25 percent of the 32.5 million fourth through twelfth grade students enrolled in American schools (Analysis of the National Center for Education Statistics, 2003).

While Fayette County students did demonstrate improvement in reading and writing from 1999 to 2004, reading scores for high school students have risen only two points from 76.0137 to 78.8796, and the 2004 score lags 9 points below scores achieved in the middle grades. Writing scores lag even further behind, with middle school students posting an average score of 51.9085 in 2004 (68.7525 for high school students).

Fayette County should be commended for the steps it has taken thus far to address these deficiencies. Each middle and high school has a reading specialist on staff. Some schools have reading intervention programs like Read 180, while others are experimenting with classes in technical writing to give students real-world writing experiences. However the time has come for schools to create instructional plans for those students who are significantly below grade level. Fayette County students must be given the opportunity to make more significant gains in their literacy attainments.

Our committee recommends strengthening the measures we take to ensure literacy gains for our students. When the Denver, Colorado, Public School District implemented a Reading and Writing Studio Course ©, a two-period per day program serving students below grade level, district reading and writing scores steadily improved. This rigorous course, designed by John McMillan, focuses on best practices in reading and writing. According to the Alliance for Excellent Education, “in the 2003-04 school year, Denver Public Schools made greater gains in reading than students in the rest of the state, especially in the tenth grade, where the percentage gain was double that of the state average” (www.all4ed.org/casestudy) The work group recommends that Fayette County emphasize both reading and writing in this additional required class. (In the Denver model, students are expected to read 1 million words per year and to write every day.)

However, this work group recognizes that due to district curriculum maps and state assessments, it may be difficult to use the Reading and Writing Studio Course without revision. In this case, school-based teams, headed by the school literacy coach, would design a literacy workshop for use with all middle-school students and with high-school students who are two years below grade level. In recognition of the fact that reading and writing are complementary processes involving the use of similar cognitive strategies (Carol Booth Olson, *The Reading/Writing Connection*, 2002), the literacy program designed by each school should focus on developing the student as both reader and writer.

This recommendation aligns with the work of One Community One Voice. Strategy #7 reads as follows: “Assure strong reading skills for transition from elementary to middle and middle to high school.” (World Class Standards and Accountability Subcommittee). Moreover, the Individual Literacy Plan that we recommend for underachieving high school students can form a central portion of the Individual Graduation Plans (IGPs) recommended by this same group in Strategy #10.

Implementation Steps for Recommendation #10: Reading and Writing Studio Course	Person Responsible for Completing Steps	Possible Resources?	Start Date	End Date
Contact Denver Public /Schools and John McMillan, developer of the Reading and Writing Studio Course	School Board representatives	Lorenza Lara (DPS Secondary Literacy Coordinator) 720 423-3631 John McMillan mcmillanconsulting@sbcglobal.net 817 269-9154	On adopting this recommendation	
Each school designates team to customize literacy workshop or Reading and Writing Studio Course	Team is chaired by School Literacy Coach; should include reps from each dept.		June 1	Aug. 1
Teams receive training from Reading and Writing Studio Course expert or team continues to develop its own workshop	School Literacy Coach	Lara, McMillan Bluegrass Writing Project (see brochure)	Summer 2006	Ongoing during school year
Identify students (in high schools, locate those students who are two years below grade level)	School administration		Summer 2006	Aug. 1
Implementation	Schools		Fall 2006	
Professional development continues throughout the year	School Literacy Coach	Bluegrass Writing project	Fall 2006	Ongoing during school year
Individual Development plans created for below proficiency students enrolled in the literacy workshop or Reading and Writing Studio Course	Overseen by School Literacy Coach; plans developed between teacher, parent/guardian, student	See sample Secondary Individual Literacy Plan (ILP), attached	Fall 2006	Ongoing during school year
Monitor effects on student achievement	District Assessment Coordinator (?)		Summer 2007	Ongoing

Group Recommendation Number 11

Specific Recommendation:

Every middle and high school teacher in Fayette County will have the opportunity to experience professional development that focuses on literacy instruction. They will be able to select from a menu of programs that are both long-term and ongoing. This work group recommends that the menu of choices include but not be limited to the following best practices in literacy instruction:

- the reading-writing connection (including strategies for improving reading comprehension and using writing-to-learn strategies, as well as ways to strengthen and incorporate vocabulary)
- the workshop approach to literacy instruction, which emphasizes student involvement
- good writing: what it is and how to get it (This week-long program is currently available to Fayette County Middle School teachers. This group recommends expanding this offering to high-school teachers)
- information on brain-based research; understanding gender differences in literacy instruction; how to intentionally differentiate among learning styles; training in accommodating multiple intelligences in literacy instruction
- a school faculty or subset of that faculty could elect to undertake a book study in fulfillment of this requirement.

Research Rationale for how this change will help kids:

Professional development programs focusing on literacy must be offered to all middle and high school teachers, regardless of subject area taught. These programs must offer ongoing, thorough support as teachers implement new literacy instruction with their students. Models of professional development based on a "sit and get" approach cannot provide the necessary support for teachers who are adapting their instructional methods to achieve better results. The work group envisions that teachers would choose a focus for professional development prior to the start of the school year. Following an initial in-depth immersion in their focus, teacher groups would meet monthly to share progress and to demonstrate how they are putting training into practice.

Because Writing Matters, a National Writing Project publication, summarizes the importance of strong professional development opportunities: "A 1996 National Commission on Teaching and American's Future report makes the case...directly: teacher expertise is the most significant factor in student success. It cites studies showing that teacher qualifications account for 40 percent of the difference in overall student performance and that teacher quality is more powerful than a student's socioeconomic background in student learning" (59). Moreover, in a study for Stanford's Center for Research on the Context of Secondary Teaching, Milbrey McLaughlin and Joan Talbert argue that systemic improvements "cannot be accomplished through traditional staff development models—episodic, decontextualized injections of 'knowledge' and technique. The path to change in the classroom core lies within and through teachers' professional communities" (*Because Writing Matters* 57).

Considering the connections to drop-out rates, the need for remediation in college courses, and continuing minority achievement gaps, low literacy scores indicate that all middle and high school teachers need to receive additional training in literacy instruction—including literacy coaches, resource room personnel, librarians and administrators (Alliance, 20). Content-area teachers must be included in literacy professional development as they are in the best position to demonstrate how reading and writing are negotiated in their own disciplines.

This recommendation underscores several recommendations made by One Community One Voice. The Exceptional and Diverse Learners Subcommittee recommended training for teachers in “Culturally Responsive Teaching” and “Multiple Intelligences teaching approaches based on the work of Howard Gardner” (Strategy #1). Moreover, the Leadership Subcommittee requested “face-to-face accountability relationships,” recommending that principals, teachers, district administrators, and content specialists hold monthly school conferences to analyze classroom practice and its impact on student performance. The report stresses that principals and teachers cannot be held accountable for practice and student performance without district support in the acquisition and practice of effective knowledge and skills (Strategy #2).

The Finance Ad Hoc Committee of One Community One Voice also addressed the need for specialized professional development in their Strategy #5. “Teachers responding to the One Community, One Voice survey,” they wrote, “were particularly eager for substantive professional development in the specialized areas of literacy, diversity, technology and properly assessing and meaningfully assisting special needs students.

Implementation Steps for Recommendation #11: Professional Development for Teachers	Person Responsible for Completing Steps	Possible Resources?	Start Date	End Date
Each school determines its most significant professional development needs in literacy; creates submenu of choices; determines providers; registers teachers	Middle & High School Language Arts Content Specialists; PD Chair; Literacy Coach; Writing Cluster Leader; Academic Dean	Bluegrass Writing Project (see brochure)	June 1	Aug. 1
School staff begins chosen professional development training	School staff	Bluegrass Writing Project	Summer 2006	Ongoing during school year
Schedule monthly follow-ups to check for implementation & accountability	School staff	Bluegrass Writing Project	Fall 2006	Ongoing throughout school year
Share results with peers/share best practices at district level	PD chair & Literacy Coach; School staff		Spring 2006	
Monitor effects on student achievement	District Assessment Coordinator (?)		Summer 2007	Ongoing

Group Recommendation Number 12

Specific Recommendation:

Every student in Fayette County middle and high schools will be encouraged to participate in a summer reading program open to the entire community and organized with the help of community partners. The summer reading program will provide student choice in reading materials and will accommodate a wide range of reading abilities. The community-wide discussions will center on reader responses to literature rather than “correct” interpretations or mastery of literary terms. The goal is to instill a lifelong love of reading.

Research rationale for how this change will help kids:

The report of the Alliance for Excellence in Education emphasizes that little improvement will be realized if literacy instruction is confined to one period per school day (20). While many schools make summer reading assignments designed to extend students' contact with texts, there does not seem to be a systematic approach to summer reading in Fayette County, nor does there seem to be a recognition that summer reading lists should offer a wide range of choices, from classics to contemporary fiction and nonfiction. This recommendation offers the promise of support from community partners such as the Lexington Public Library and the Carnegie Center, who may host summer book discussions at various community venues centered around titles included on summer reading lists. We have also learned that the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives is developing middle-school and teen book discussion kits. Twenty kits will be available for loan by January 2006.

This recommendation also provides for involvement from parents and other adults in the community, in line with One Community One Voice's request that schools provide “support to students and families for academic learning and social development” (Strategy #18).

Linda Gambrell, principal investigator for the National Reading Research Center, discovered that “engaged readers like to choose their own books” (“What Motivates Children to Read?” *Scholastic Literacy Research Paper*, 1994). Eighty percent of the students Gambrell and her colleagues interviewed indicated that they ‘most enjoyed’ books they had selected themselves. Other researchers have substantiated this finding.

“Summer Belongs in the Hands of the Students: Celebrating Choice in School Reading Lists” by Linda Williams emphasizes the need to let student choice drive summer reading programs. This article appeared in the December 2003 issue of VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates: The Library Magazine Serving Those Who Serve Young Adults).

In recognition of research which indicates that adolescent boys are drawn to nonfiction titles rather than fiction, the Fayette County Schools summer reading list will include a balance of genres.

Implementation Steps for Recommendation #12: District-wide Summer Reading Program open to all middle- and high-school students	Person Responsible for Completing Steps	Possible Resources?	Start Date	End Date
Committee formed	Language Arts Content Specialists/Middle & High School Community members	Carnegie Center Lexington Public Library School Librarians (Lynda Short at Dunbar who organizes Reading Extravaganza)	Sept. 2006	Ongoing meetings
Committee calls for suggested titles, designs guidelines; creates incentives; recruits celebrities and other discussion leaders	Committee	Grants from local funders	Sept. 2006	Ongoing during school year
Publicize summer reading campaign	Committee; Fayette County Public Information Office, Channel 13	Grants from local funders	Spring 2007	Through summer 2007
Implementation—hold events in various public venues; award certificates	Committee	Lexington Public Library; Carnegie Center; other community centers	June 2007	August 2007
Monitor effects on student achievement	District Assessment Coordinator (?)		Summer 2007	Ongoing