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## Press release : 2004 : 06 : 29 : COE Helps Reading Camps Offer Teachers More

Holly Kickliter

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## COE Helps Reading Camps Offer Teachers More

By: [Holly Kickliter](#)

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College of Education professors from USF St. Petersburg, in collaboration with Pinellas County Schools, are helping improve the way teachers teach reading skills this summer to better prepare students to take and pass the FCAT.

Through a grant provided by the Verizon Corporation, the College of Education provided scholarships for 22 Pinellas County teachers to take three of five graduate courses that will give them their Reading Endorsement. Courses have been offered during a six-week program at Lakewood Elementary School that began in May to help teachers teach students better reading techniques while working with struggling second and third grade students.

Pinellas County Schools offered reading camps for struggling second and third grade students throughout the County to improve literacy. Teachers on scholarship at Lakewood have been providing the instruction to students in the morning, with coaching and mentoring provided by College of Education professors and two trainers from Pinellas County Schools.

Summer camp teachers throughout the County have been participating in a 75-minute professional development seminar. The teachers on scholarship at Lakewood have stayed the rest of the afternoon to study with Frye and fellow faculty member Gwyn Lightsey.

"There is a strong need to improve reading skills among second and third graders," said Barbara Frye, associate professor. "By helping teachers improve, we can help those students learn important literacy skills to advance in school by passing the FCAT. Working in the community allows us to improve the learning of both USF St. Petersburg students and students in all schools."

While there were 24 teachers at the Lakewood site, 22 were awarded scholarships. The content for the Reading Endorsement is state-mandated and the competencies correspond to scientific findings by a National Reading Panel report that has consistently resulted in student achievement gains in reading.

The program is being funded by Verizon with money remaining from the Verizon Literacy Grant, which provided for teacher study groups at Lakewood, an on-site literacy mentor for teachers during the day, guidance in implementing a special second grade model for struggling students, new books for classrooms and other teacher-related support.

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