



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2023-2024

LFIR # 1442

**1. Project Title**

**2. Senate Sponsor**

**3. Date of Request**

**4. Project/Program Description**

The current proposal will expand upon our pilot work which supports a significant impact of personalized format readability on reading performance for children. The project will focus on strengthening and refining our current understanding of how individualized format readability can optimize reading speed and comprehension in K-12 populations and building tools to bring this technology into classrooms. The Readability Consortium was formed in 2021 with the mission to enhance digital readability for adults and children. The U.S. Department of Education reports that only one-third of fourth grade students in the U.S. are reading proficiently, making no improvements by eighth grade. This project aspires to reverse these trends by developing individual format readability prescriptions for all readers. Adobe is requesting \$1,000,000 for the University of Central Florida (UCF). UCF's The Readability Consortium will engage in individual readability research for 900 K-12 students.

**5. State Agency to receive requested funds**

**State Agency contacted?**  No  Yes

**6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2023-2024**

Type of Funding	Amount
Operations	1,000,000
Fixed Capital Outlay	0
<b>Total State Funds Requested</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>

**7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (including matching funds available for this project)**

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	1,000,000	77%
<b>Matching Funds</b>		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	300,000	23%
<b>Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2023-2024</b>	<b>1,300,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

**8. Has this project previously received state funding?**  No  Yes

Fiscal Year (YYYY-YY)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		

**9. Is future funding likely to be requested?**  No  Yes

**a. If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.**

**b. Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.**



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2023-2024

LFIR # 1442

10. Has the entity requesting this project received any federal assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

If yes, indicate the amount of funds received and what the funds were used for.

## Complete questions 11 and 12 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

11. Status of Construction

a. What is the current phase of the project?

Planning   
  Design   
  Construction

b. Is the project "shovel ready" (i.e permitted)?

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

12. List the owners of the facility to receive, directly or indirectly, any fixed capital outlay funding. Include the relationship between the owners of the facility and the entity.

13. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

Spending Category	Description	Amount
<b>Administrative Costs:</b>		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits	Dr. Ben Sawyer and Dr. Stephanie Day will oversee all aspects of the proposed study. They will be responsible for the implementation of the research design in schools, recruitment, data collection, analysis of the data, and dissemination of research findings. We budget for two months of FTE effort for Dr. Sawyer and five months FTE effort for Dr. Day.	84,092
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
<b>Operational Costs: Other</b>		
Salary and Benefits	The requested funds will support a postdoctoral scholar who will implement the research design, data collection, and analysis. A full-time project coordinator will be responsible for recruitment and coordinating with teachers and students. Undergraduate research assistants will also be recruited for data collection in schools and data entry. We also budget for a web programmer who will develop both a researcher and a district web portal to access our format readability matching assessment.	296,510



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2023-2024

LFIR # 1442

Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other	Includes individual student licenses to administer a standardized measure of students' reading skills, a classroom set of Chromebooks, and beta development of a set of on-site mobile reading laboratories, which allow the deployment of eye tracking and electroencephalography capabilities in the classroom. Funds will also cover costs of participant research incentives, a summer professional development seminar, and indirect costs incurred by UCF.	594,398
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study	Funds are requested for website management to maintain the research infrastructure of the digital platform for our format diagnostic matching tool software and data.	25,000
<b>Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:</b>		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering		0
<b>Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)</b>		<b>1,000,000</b>

#### 14. Program Performance

##### a. What specific purpose or goal will be achieved by the funds requested?

The funding will provide for the development of tools capable of bringing our research and resultant technology to populations in K-12 settings in Florida. The education community will gain understanding as to how individualized format readability can boost reading performance across childhood and into adolescence. This will include assessing impact for students of varying ages and levels of reading ability, and documenting examples of implementation, showing how personalized readability can support the development of reading skills. The Readability Consortium at The University of Central Florida (UCF) will engage in A) expanded format readability research and B) the development of open source tools to be used by researchers and educators, and C) proof-of-concept implementation of these tools in the classroom.

##### b. What activities and services will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds?

Students in our work will utilize our format readability matching assessment which matches students with their optimal text formats. Teachers in our work will receive data on their students. Educators in the classroom across Florida will gain access to a platform designed to deliver format recommendations for students, and provide teachers with options to build this capability into the classroom activities. To develop initial materials for this purpose, we will hold a 2-day summer 2024 professional development seminar on how educators can support students through format readability in the classroom. Invitees will be selected to represent stakeholder communities across the state of Florida, and to reflect the diverse needs of Florida students. All research partners and participating teachers will be invited to attend this summer 2024 collaborative event hosted at UCF.

##### c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?

This project aims to improve reading performance for children through the use of individualized format readability and to develop tools that will deliver this technology to educators to implement directly in the classroom. Floridians will benefit from novel, low cost, classroom tools to help children overcome challenges with reading.

##### d. Who is the target population served by this project? How many individuals are expected to be served?

The research will involve 900 students and their teachers in Florida schools, with 300 elementary school students, 300 middle school students, and 300 high school students. Students will be recruited through public schools. Tools created will be built and delivered with the expectation that they could be used by many millions of students and readers of all ages.

##### e. What is the expected benefit or outcome of this project? What is the methodology by which this outcome will be measured?



# The Florida Senate

## Local Funding Initiative Request

### Fiscal Year 2023-2024

LFIR # 1442

Expected benefits for this project include (1) knowledge of how personalized text formats can support more optimal reading speed and comprehension for children by creating a more engaging, personalized, and accessible digital learning environment, and (2) the development and release of open-source tools and materials to be used by schools and for future research. Deliverables include results to be shared in both journal publications, research partners, and schools. All software will be designed to be used at scale by researchers and educators. Documentation for our tools will be made available online. Data on these outcomes will be analyzed by PhD-holding statisticians, through machine learning, item analysis, individual differences, and hierarchical linear modeling techniques. Impact in terms of use of these tools will be tracked and transparently reported through the number of downloads, and the number of districts using the outcome of this project.

**f. What are the suggested penalties that the contracting agency may consider in addition to its standard penalties for failing to meet deliverables or performance measures provided for the contract?**

If we are unable to fulfill or complete the proposed project, the funding will be returned to the state of Florida.

**15. Requester Contact Information**

a. **First Name**  **Last Name**

b. **Organization**

c. **E-mail Address**

d. **Phone Number**  **Ext.**

**16. Recipient Contact Information**

a. **Organization**

b. **Municipality and County**

**c. Organization Type**

- For Profit Entity
- Non Profit 501(c)(3)
- Non Profit 501(c)(4)
- Local Entity
- University or College
- Other (please specify)

d. **First Name**  **Last Name**

e. **E-mail Address**

f. **Phone Number**

**17. Lobbyist Contact Information**

a. **Name**

b. **Firm Name**

c. **E-mail Address**

d. **Phone Number**