



Lexia
Florida

STATE IMPACT REPORT

Impact of Lexia®Core5® Reading on Underperforming Florida Schools

Key Insights

- Underperforming schools in Florida whose students used Core5 had **English Language Arts FAST scores that were 1.5 points higher** than similar schools whose students did not have access to Core5.
- The **strongest effect occurred in grade 5**, with Core5 schools scoring an average of 3 points higher than non-Core5 schools on FAST.

Introduction

Florida public schools are given ratings each year by the FL Department of Education, which summarize their overall success. These ratings (A-F) are based on students' performance and learning gains on state standardized assessments. Schools that are given D or F ratings are classified as "unsatisfactory" and are characterized by lower overall reading scores than successful schools. Importantly, elementary reading skills are highly predictive of overall academic success, including high school graduation rates ([Hernandez, 2012](#)), so it is essential to improve reading scores at underperforming schools through effective interventions.

Programs such as Lexia®Core5® Reading (Core5) may accelerate growth of students' literacy skills, with recent research showing that students in grades 3-5 exhibit greater reading achievement gains than students from matched schools ([Pane et al., 2023](#)). Given the critical need to improve reading skills in underperforming schools, this study focused on the impact of Core5 on students' ELA achievement in Florida's unsatisfactory schools in the 2022-23 school year. The 2022-23 school year marked Florida's first year implementing a new standardized assessment, the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST). Unlike the previous assessment, the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA), which was administered once per year in the spring, the FAST is administered three times per year to provide more frequent and up-to-date information about students' achievement. This study is one of the first to evaluate the impact of Core5 on the new FAST assessment.

Study Design

Lexia researchers merged publicly available school- and grade-level FAST assessment data from Spring 2023 and FSA assessment data from Spring 2022, together with school-level demographic data and school ratings from the 2022-23 school year. All data were obtained from the Florida Department of Education (FL DOE) website. The FL DOE reports schools' mean scale scores in ELA achievement by grade for each school. Lexia researchers merged grade-level Core5 usage data with 2023 FAST, 2022 FSA, demographics, and ratings data. We restricted our analyses to grades 3-5, as grade 3 is the earliest grade tested on the FAST, and we considered any schools that had at least 25% of their 3rd – 5th grade students using Core5 with fidelity in the 2022-23 school year to be a "Core5 school" and removed schools that used Core5 with low fidelity.

Characteristics of Underperforming Schools in Florida (2022-23).

	Core5 School (n=22)	Non-Core5 School (n=136)	Overall (n=158)
Avg. School Total Enrollment	522	457	466
% Free/Reduced Price Lunch	94	97	97
% White	27	7	10
% Black/African-American	34	51	49
% Hispanic/Latino	23	29	28
% Other Race	15	14	14

The sample for this study consisted of 33,209 3rd – 5th grade students across 158 elementary schools and 26 districts in Florida (all those with a D or F rating in the 2022-23 school year). Of these, 22 schools used Core5 and 136 schools did not use Core5 in the 2022-23 school year. Additionally, 153 of these schools were Title 1 schools and considered economically disadvantaged. The above table presents school-level characteristics for these schools. On average, schools had a total enrollment of 466 students and 97% of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. Schools in this analytic sample included 10% White students, 49% Black students, 28% Hispanic/Latino students, and 14% students of another race. 14% of schools (22/158) were categorized as Core5 schools that served 3rd – 5th grade students. During the 2022-23 school year, 25% of students scored at or above grade level on the Spring 2023 FAST ELA assessment. The table also summarizes school-level variables for Core5 schools (n=22, supporting 5,059 3rd – 5th grade students) and non-Core5 schools (n=136, supporting 28,150 3rd – 5th grade students) separately. On average, Core5 schools are larger, have more White students, have fewer Black/African-American students, and have fewer students qualifying for free/reduced-price lunch than non-Core5 schools. However, Core5 and non-Core schools are similar in the percentage of students who are Hispanic/Latino or of other races.

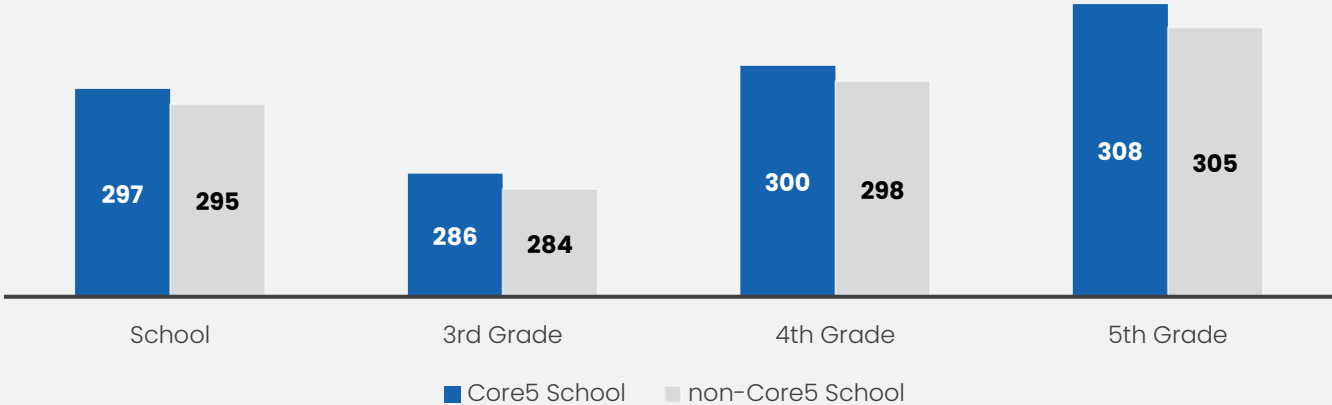
Lexia researchers evaluated relationships between schools' use of Core5 and schools' 2022-23 school-level and grade-level ELA achievement (mean scale scores) using multiple linear regression. Each regression controlled for school-level characteristics (see table) and schools' prior ELA achievement on the Spring 2022 FSA assessment.

Results

Underperforming schools in Florida whose students used Core5 had English Language Arts FAST scores that were 1.5 points higher than similar schools whose students did not have access to Core5.

At the school level, students at underperforming Florida schools that used Core5 scored 1.5 points higher on the Spring 2023 FAST assessment, on average, than students at similar non-Core5 schools. This difference is particularly significant for underperforming schools that have invested in strategies to improve their ratings because a 1.5 difference in school achievement can elevate the performance ratings for schools near the threshold between D and C school accountability ratings.

Underperforming Schools' Mean Scale Scores for FAST ELA (2022-23)



The strongest effect occurred in grade 5, with Core5 schools scoring an average of 3 points higher than non-Core5 schools on FAST.

Fifth grade students in Core5 schools scored 2.9 points higher on the Spring 2023 FAST assessment, on average, than 5th grade students at non-Core5 schools. The difference between fifth grade scores at Core5 and non-Core5 schools is statistically significant. However, results for 3rd and 4th grade scores were not statistically significant. One potential reason for the lack of significant effects at the third and fourth grade levels is that the fifth grade Florida state literacy curriculum transitions students from foundational reading skills (e.g., phonics) to more advanced reading comprehension skills (e.g., textual analysis; Florida Department of Education, 2022). For fifth grade students still struggling to master foundational reading skills, Core5 may help them to fill in skill gaps that are not being fully addressed in the schools' primary curriculum. Future research should examine how students' master of foundational and more advanced reading skills predicts reading proficiency measures.

Want to learn more?

For additional information or updates on research related to Core5, please contact research@lexialearning.com.



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