DYS Initiative: Literacy

Identified Problem:
On average, youth committed to DYS read at least four years below their grade levels.

Crime and illiteracy:
♦ Students who perform below grade levels in basic skills and drop out of school are 3.5 times more likely to be arrested than high school graduates.
♦ Youth with lower academic performance, commit crime more frequently, commit more violent and serious offenses and are more likely to continue this lifestyle.

Strategy to address literacy needs in DYS youth: DYS was awarded a $14 million Striving Readers grant from the U.S. Department of Education. This grant will fund additional training for current teachers, new teaching positions and a new curriculum. A research component will be completed by the Ohio State University.

What you will see in the institutions:
Training: DYS teachers have received training on how to improve the quality of literacy instruction throughout every academic subject youth encounter.

Testing: A base-line reading score will be established for each youth entering DYS.

Teaching: From that base-line score, youth reading at least 2 years below their grade level will be randomly selected to participate in a new literacy intervention program, Read 180.
♦ This program is an intensive, daily 90 minute class, in which a maximum of 15 students rotate through various teaching stations including computer software, audio books, and one-on-one teaching for short blocks of time.

Evaluation: Monitoring will take place throughout the school year, and each student will be re-tested every quarter and prior to their release from DYS. The Ohio State University will compare the new score against the original base-line reading level.

Timing: The Read 180 program will begin in October at every facility.