2026–2029 Strategic Plan

UF | Lastinger Center
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Setting the Course for Impact

This strategic plan affirms the University of Florida Lastinger Center's commitment to three milestones predictive of quality of life: **kindergarten readiness, third grade reading, and algebra proficiency**. Anchored by our strategic goals, we are charting a path to expand opportunities that improve educational outcomes for learners across the state of Florida.

Strategic Goals

- **Impact** - Optimize educator impact
- **Scale** - Grow our reach
- **Sustainability** - Build for the future

The Lastinger Center is emerging as a national leader in developing and implementing state-level systems in a technology-rich, rapidly shifting landscape.

To meet the demands of tomorrow, we will:

- **Leverage system-level data responsibly** to elevate instructional quality and unlock stronger learner outcomes.
- **Strengthen our organizational capacity** to serve Florida's educators and students with excellence, clarity, and purpose.

Honoring the Lastinger Commitment

> *We founded the UF Lastinger Center for Learning because we believe education is the foundation of a thriving society. Helping teachers teach and students learn is how we build a better future for all of us.*
>
> *Our vision was to play an active role in supporting an education system that opens doors for every child and is led by respected, well-supported educators whose impact is understood and celebrated.*
>
> *The Center is a reflection of our hope. It's a place where innovation meets need, and every learner is set on a path toward lifelong success.*
>
> **– Allen & Delores Lastinger**

Turning Insight into Action

Since its establishment, the UF Lastinger Center has served Florida in transformative ways:

- Delivering high-quality Lastinger Learning programs in **early childhood, literacy, and mathematics,**
- Leading two ambitious statewide initiatives, **New Worlds Reading** and the **Florida Tutoring Advantage**, and
- Developing the **Data Lagoon** to provide secure, reliable data that accelerates analysis, research, and innovation.

Now, by connecting enterprise-level systems to practical insight, we are modernizing how educational evidence is generated and used to inform research, evaluation, products, programs, and systems. Supported by the University of Florida's gold-standard technological ecosystem and strong statewide partnerships, we are building the infrastructure, capacity, and relationships needed to transform trusted data into better teaching, smarter decision-making, and stronger learner outcomes.

Strategic Imperatives

To deepen our statewide impact, our strategic imperatives guide the systems, insights, and innovation required to strengthen educational outcomes.

Elevate the center's capacity to manage large-scale, data-driven operations	**Leverage integrated data systems to generate practical insights & rigorous research**	**Translate insights and research into program and product development and delivery**

Guiding Principles

Achieving this vision requires greater efficiency, focus, and agility. Our guiding principles ensures that our structure, processes, and culture evolve to meet our mission.

Efficient Collaboration	**Stakeholder-Centered Quality**	**Creative Agility**

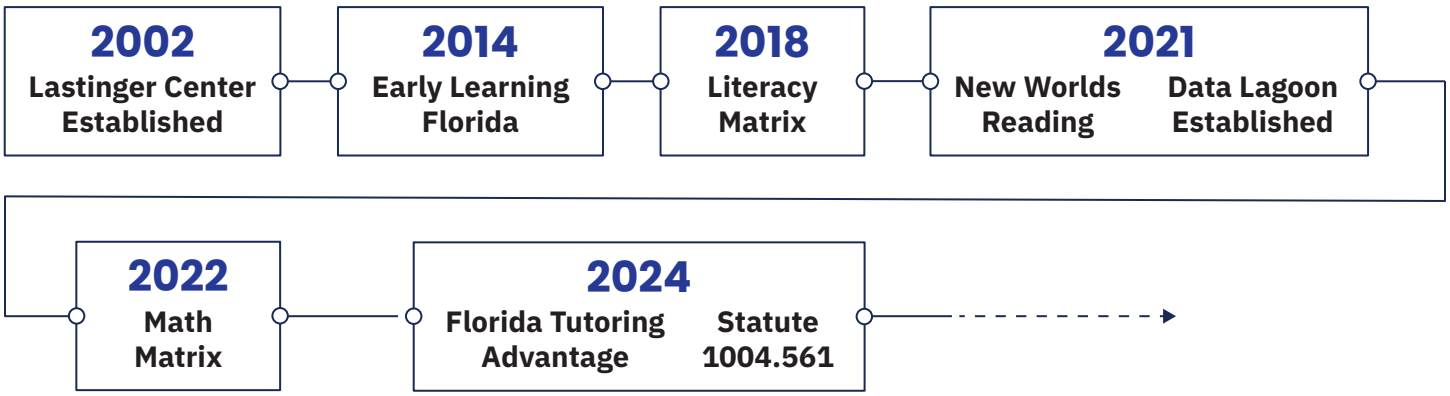
Built on Purpose and Progress

Historical Foundation

Since 2002, the Lastinger Center has been guided by core principles of access, research, collaboration, and innovation, rooted in our founders' charge to help teachers teach and students learn.

Building on the success of **Early Learning Florida (2014)**, the **Literacy Matrix (2018)**, and the **Math Matrix (2022)**, the Florida Legislature entrusted the Center with two major statewide initiatives: **New Worlds Reading (2021)** and the **Florida Tutoring Advantage (2024)**. In 2024, the Center was formally named in statute (1004.561), solidifying its statewide role in professional learning, technical assistance, and educational research for birth–12th grade educators.

As our work evolved, the importance of **data—and now AI**—became increasingly clear. Since **2021**, the Center has invested in the **Data Lagoon**, a secure system that collects, cleans, and stores programmatic data to support research, insight generation, and responsive decision-making.



Infrastructure

To support a growing portfolio, the Lastinger Center has built a multifaceted infrastructure:

Organizational	Technological	Relational	Legal
Expanded staffing and areas of expertise	Advanced enterprise platforms and systems	Strong statewide, national, and global partnerships	Formalized data-sharing agreements ensuring secure, ethical data use

Strategic Imperatives

Elevate the Center's Capacity to Manage Large-Scale, Data-Driven Operations

Build within Gold-Standard UF Data Enterprise Infrastructure

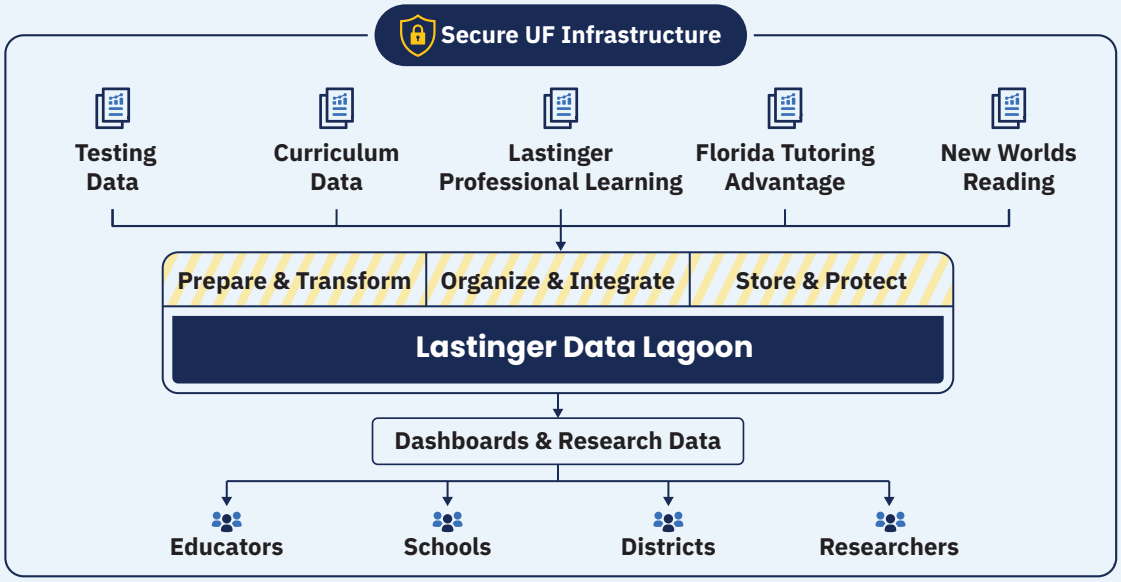
- Maintain alignment with University standards for data security and governance
- House data management platform within UFIT enterprise system
- Implement robust data intelligence system to manage, govern, and find trusted data
- Employ the processing capacity of the UF HiPerGator supercomputer for data analysis

Enhance Organizational Capacity for Large-Scale Data Governance, Operations, & Funding

- Launch Data Stewardship Committee comprised of internal academic stakeholders
- Engage in statewide Listening Tour and produce landscape analysis of state and local data systems
- Refine data architecture and infrastructure
- Prioritize professional learning for Lastinger Center associates that enhances professional capacity, academic expertise, and data literacy
- Cultivate and steward long-term, sustainable funding sources

Lastinger Center Data Lagoon Architecture

Since 2021, the Lastinger Center Data Lagoon has ingested, integrated, and packaged education data for analysis. The Lastinger Center is developing the secure infrastructure to generate insights into what works for Florida's learners and how that builds Florida's future.



Strategic Imperatives

Leverage Integrated Data Systems to Generate Practical Insights & Rigorous Research

Integrate Data to Inform Teaching & Decision-Making

- Establish clear data-sharing and privacy standards and protocols
- Launch data integration plan and visualizations
- Engage stakeholders in decision theaters and strategic partnerships

Build the Center's Research Agenda & Capacity for Program Enhancement & Academic Publication

- Establish the Center's academic research agenda
- Bolster the Center's capacity for data-informed program and product development
- Establish strategy for academic publication and dissemination of findings

Translate Insights & Research into Program & Product Development & Delivery

Program, Product & Process Innovation & Revitalization

- Modernize program and product development by integrating emerging technologies (including AI)
- Accelerate program and product development through process improvement
- Re-engineer Center offerings to reflect technological advances and stakeholder needs

Strengthen & Expand the Center’s Programs & Product Lines

- Expand the Early Childhood, Literacy, and Math Micro-Credential systems
- Explore viability and pilot an Emergent Literacy Curriculum and a PreK-5 Number Sense Toolkit
- Strengthen, expand, and scale high-impact programs through the use of integrated data and continuous evaluation cycles

Amplify Awareness & Engagement with Center Offerings

- Strengthen the Center's approach to recruitment
- Cultivate strategic partnerships to support program recruitment
- Define goals and refine recruitment strategies for Center products, programs, and initiatives

From Strategy to Measurable Impact

Strategic Outcomes

Engagement & Partnership

By **harnessing data to shape products and programs**, the Lastinger Center will:

- Produce modernized, responsive, user-centered offerings, including expanded micro-credential programs that **deepen practitioner support** across Florida, and
- Refine recruitment strategies and strategic partnerships that **increase awareness and participation** in programs and products.

Organizational Sophistication

The combination of **strengthened data governance, increased staff expertise, and sustainable funding models** will allow the Lastinger Center to:

- Establish a strong **UF-aligned data infrastructure**,
- Leverage the HiPerGator supercomputer for **enhanced reliability, efficiency, and speed** for effective decision-making, and
- Build a secure Florida EduData R&D Hub with state partners to **drive innovation and support evidence-based decisions** statewide.

Academic Impact

Leveraging a trusted, secure data environment for timely, actionable insights will **inform program improvement, academic research, and education policy and practice**. A coordinated research agenda:

- **Grows the evidence base** to guide design and investment in educational programming,
- **Aligns priorities** across agencies and institutions, and
- Improves communication and **return on investment**.

Organizational Commitment

The UF Lastinger Center operates as a community of **high-functioning professionals who believe in the power of systems, commitment, and relationships**. Our reputation is defined by:

- Developing **high-quality educational programs**,
- Responding to **stakeholder needs**, and
- Engaging in **ongoing cycles of innovation** in pursuit of lasting and positive change.

The UF Lastinger Center for Learning strengthens education
by developing quality educational programming
in early childhood, literacy, and mathematics.

Our research and data science initiatives connect systems,
support innovation, and improve learning outcomes.

We are committed partners
who build strong relationships
to make good things happen.

UF | Lastinger Center
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

(352) 273-4103
lastinger@coe.ufl.edu

618 SW 12th Street
0711 Norman Hall
PO Box 117052
Gainesville, FL 32611

lastinger.ufl.edu
@LastingerCenter