

## Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant

### TEXAS APPLICATION

**Introduction:** The goal of the Texas Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Initiative (TSRCLI) is to improve school readiness and success in the areas of language and literacy for disadvantaged students in targeted Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and their associated Early Childhood Education (ECE) providers. The centerpiece of the TSRCLI will be the implementation of the Texas State Literacy Plan (TSLP) from birth through grade 12.

The goal of the TSLP is to ensure that every Texas child is strategically prepared for the literacy demands of college and/or career by high school graduation. To achieve this goal, the plan centers on early language and preliteracy skills for age 0 to school entry and on reading and writing instruction for students in grades K–12. Texas is uniquely positioned to implement its State Literacy Plan during fiscal year 2011. Since the inception of the Texas Reading initiative in 1996, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has provided coordination and leadership for numerous entities and resources to support the implementation of evidence-based literacy instructional practices through assessment and professional development (PD) initiatives:

- Provision and use of early reading assessments in every Texas K–2 classroom (1997);
- Delivery of Texas Teacher Reading Academies (TTRAs) and Online Teacher Reading Academies (OTRAs) in grades K–5 to teachers and administrators (1999-present);
- Launch of Prekindergarten Texas Early Education Model (TEEM) and Texas School Ready!<sup>TM</sup> (TSR!) Projects;
- Approval of the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (2008);
- Delivery of the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies (TALAs) for administrators and middle school teachers of all subjects in Scientifically Based Reading Instruction (SBRI);

- Development of the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA) utilized with all 7<sup>th</sup> grade students who do not reach proficiency on the state assessment;
- Adoption of new standards for reading and writing instruction for grades K–12 (2008) and provision of statewide professional development on the new standards (2009);
- Approval of the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) (2008);
- Alignment of the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) system with the newly adopted reading and writing standards (2011) and statewide professional development for the English Language Arts (ELA) End-of-Course (EOC) assessments;
- Development of Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers (due in 2012).

The TEA has established effective partnerships with Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) for research, preservice education, PD, and implementation support. The 20 Regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) are an integral component for delivery of PD and support. Together with TEA, these leaders form the State Literacy Partnership. To further disseminate resources and research, in 2010 the TEA implemented a statewide online web 2.0 platform, *Project Share*, through which the TSLP and the PD resources will be delivered. Texas will select a group of LEA/ECE collaborative *Literacy Lines* through the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant to pilot the TSLP in order to serve as models for other local collaboratives throughout the state. The TSRCLI will insure compliance with Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA).

### **SELECTION CRITERION A: STATE-LEVEL ACTIVITIES**

#### **(i) Required State-level Activities and alignment to state comprehensive literacy plan**

**(a) Texas State Literacy Plan** is a blueprint that makes the state’s literacy goals and strategies transparent and provides a needs assessment based on implementation stages, action steps,

research, and resources that communities can use to improve their literacy outcomes. The TSLP is built around a framework consisting of five key components: **L**eadership, **A**ssessment, **S**tandards-Based Instruction, **E**ffective Instructional Framework—Response to Intervention (RtI), **R**eporting and Accountability, and **S**ustainability (LASERS). The newly developed TSLP will deliver resources, support, and guidance to educators for students from age 0 to grade 12 through *Project Share*. The online platform will facilitate continuous improvement and augmentation of the TSLP as student data are analyzed, current resources are updated, and new resources/exemplars are identified. SRCL subgrantees will implement the online TSLP in at least two ways: supported use of TSLP resources and through a facilitated 12-week online course. In addition, independent access to the TSLP through *Project Share* allows all Texas educators and caregivers to retrieve resources and supports vertical alignment to help children and students as they progress through each learning stage. Action steps, implementation checkpoints, and extensive resources, including PD, will be a click away for Texas educators. Implementation of the TSLP will be the focus of the facilitated 12-week online course for SRCL subgrantees and will be available to LEAs and ECE providers through the 20 ESCs in Texas. During the first year of SRCL, completion of the 12-week TSLP online course will be required for all SRCL subgrantees and ESC PD providers. Information gleaned from the SRCL implementation of the TSLP will be used to scale the implementation of the TSLP across all LEAs and ECE providers in Texas during subsequent years.

During the subgrant process, each applicant must identify a *Literacy Line*, a vertical collaborative of leaders among feeder-pattern LEAs (including prekindergarten, elementary, middle, and high schools) and their associated ECE providers (which may include community-based non-profit childcare and healthcare providers, librarians, and prekindergartens). The goal

of this vertically aligned professional community is to provide instructional and programming alignment for language, preliteracy and literacy development and to ease transition for children across their entire learning career. Each *Literacy Line* will address the entire age 0 to grade 12 learning continuum; more specifically, each must determine the literacy needs of students and the entire community through a needs assessment. SRCL-funded Center/Campus-based Leadership Teams (CbLTs) composed of directors, principals, lead teachers, special education teachers, literacy coaches, and other leaders from each entity within a *Literacy Line* feeder-pattern cluster will enroll in the TSLP online course comprised of the following modules: (1) *Literacy Line* and the SRCL Grant Overview; (2) *Project Share*; (3) TSLP Overview; (4) Leadership; (5) Assessment; (6) Standards-based Instruction; (7) Effective Instructional Framework/Response to Intervention; (8) Reporting and Accountability; and (9) Sustainability. At the onset of grant activities, the TEA and State Literacy Partnership will host a 2½-day Strategic Leadership Summit for each funded *Literacy Line*. During the Summit, CbLTs from funded sites will complete the first four modules in a face-to-face, facilitated environment. State Literacy Line Liaisons (LLs) will facilitate subsequent modules online. TSLP course participants will complete a customized data-based Literacy Instructional Plan (LIP), inclusive of a Language and Preliteracy Development Plan (LPLD Plan) for ECE settings that will serve as the *Literacy Line* blueprint for implementation, based on the five components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension; multiple sources of data; and evidence-based practices to improve student achievement. The LIP will include a plan for PD sessions and subsequent embedded, onsite follow-up based on student needs and an evaluation process to determine efficacy. These PD sessions may be delivered through technology via the *Project Share* online PD portal.

**(b) Alignment of Federal and State Funds:** The TEA will align the use of federal and state funds and programs [Title I, Title II-A, and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA), and, as appropriate, under the Head Start Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006] at the state level and will provide guidance to the *Literacy Lines* for alignment at the local level to support a coherent approach to funding and implementing effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students. During the subgrant process, each LEA/ECE provider applicant will designate a Grant Implementation Team for its *Literacy Line*. This team will be composed of LEA superintendents, early childhood center directors, and coordinators of other non-profit partner programs that receive federal and state funding. The TEA will generate funding reports specific to each *Literacy Line* that will be discussed during the initial meeting with the Grant Implementation Team and conducted during the Strategic Leadership Summit. Teams will participate in activities to determine how to leverage coordinated funding sources to move their entity toward the goal of implementing effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students.

**(c) Publication of Process and Results of Subgrant Application Reviews:** The TEA will publish the list of approved subgrantees on the TEA website as well as the procedures used to review and judge the evidence base and alignment with state standards for curricula and materials proposed by the LEA/ECE subgrantees.

**(d) Comprehensive Literacy Program for Students from Age 0 through Grade 12 as Determined by a Needs Assessment:** The TEA will require subgrantees to ensure the participation of a fully articulated *Literacy Line* including participants from age 0 to school entry, kindergarten to grade 12. The goal of the *Literacy Line* is to provide significant growth in

children’s language and preliteracy, intellectual, and social development in the early years, and effective literacy teaching practices and opportunities for students in their school-age years. The cumulative effect of quality programs is future academic and career success. To meet this goal, the TSRCLI funded *Literacy Lines* will implement a comprehensive system of language and preliteracy, reading and writing programs, including PD, to serve students from age 0 through grade 12, and evidence-based instructional programs for children of every age through high school graduation. The Grant Implementation Team will create an LIP for the overall *Literacy Line* which will serve as an implementation blueprint. The *Literacy Line* LIP will include the selection of evidence-based programs and PD to meet the specific needs of their community as determined by a needs assessment, such as in-school, after-school, social service, health, and/or community-building programs.

**(1) Professional Development Activities:** The TSLP defines PD as “intensive, job-embedded, ongoing activities that focus on increasing the effectiveness of center/school leaders and staff. Furthermore, PD is collaborative, aligned to site/campus initiatives, and based on student data.” The TSLP links and aligns PD across age/grade levels and offers customized, data- and research-based PD opportunities to subgrantees. To provide linkage across age/grade levels, the TEA will require subgrant *Literacy Lines* to create a coherent, data-based Literacy Instructional Plan (LIP) for the entire *Literacy Line*. The LIP will include a schedule of PD based on student data. The State Literacy Partnership will provide support for the creation of the *Literacy Line* LIP during a Strategic Leadership Summit at the onset of the grant. The *Literacy Line* subgrantee, supported by its State LLL, will monitor and revise the LIP at the middle and end of each funded year. There are over 200 PD options and resources on *Project Share* to meet the PD needs identified through the LIP. These resources are for teachers of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students,

students with disabilities, classroom teachers in all content areas, ECE providers, and administrators in Scientifically Based Reading Instruction (SBRI). These PD resources will be available to funded *Literacy Lines* in both a face-to-face and via an online environment as they develop their customized data-based LIPs.

The dissemination network for technical assistance (TA) and PD to funded subgrantees in Texas includes: the 20 ESCs, the State Literacy Partners, *Project Share*, and State LLLs. Subgrantees will identify resources and providers to accomplish specified literacy goals. To ensure that high quality PD opportunities are available to individuals working in early care and education, the State will provide training on the use of the Texas Early Care and Education Career Development System (TECECDS) for subgrantees during grant preparation webcasts. During the grant review process, the State will review PD resources and providers selected by subgrantees to ensure PD is evidence- and data-based and aligned with the accomplishment of identified *Literacy Line* goals.

**(2) Standards-based Curriculum and Instructional Materials:** Module 6 of the TSLP 12-week online course is *Standards-based Instruction*, which is composed of multiple action steps essential to the implementation of standards-based instruction. This module provides PD on the age/grade-level appropriate set of guidelines or standards which are available online and are described in the TSLP. In addition to ECE and prekindergarten guidelines, Texas implements four sets of integrated state standards that clearly set forth learning expectations for students in grades K–12 (listed below). Used together, these guidelines and standards create a rigorous curriculum to help students become college/career ready and academically successful:

- ***Infant and Toddler Early Learning Guidelines:*** provide milestones for development between age 0 and age 3.

- ***Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines***: promote children’s language and preliteracy skills.
- ***Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) and Spanish Language Arts and Reading (SLAR)***: two distinct sets of standards have identical student expectations in the writing, research, and listening and speaking strands. Slight wording and content differences (based on language) occur in the reading and the oral and written conventions strands; however, student expectations are equally challenging regardless of primary language.
- ***English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)***: outline English language student expectations and proficiency-level descriptors for students whose primary language is not English and provide a framework for meeting the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs).
- ***College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS)***: represent the intellectual skills students must possess in core and cross-disciplinary academic subjects to be successful beyond high school, whether in college or career.

To ensure alignment with all standards, the State Board of Education (SBOE) has established a vetting process that critically reviews literacy instructional materials and educational technology for prekindergarten–grade 12 using objective and in-depth analysis. All instructional materials provided by the state must be examined to ensure state standards have been included at least five times. TEA compiles a list of instructional materials and educational technology conforming to this requirement; subsequently, LEAs may select materials from that list at no cost to the districts. Another priority action step of the *Standards-based Instruction* module of the TSLP states that campuses will “evaluate and select instructional materials including technology programs that align with standards and address the range of all learners,



including students learning two languages.” To facilitate materials selection, the *Standards-based Instruction* module of the TSLP provides access to textbook and technology analysis tools. Subgrantees will be trained to use these tools; gaps in curricula will be identified; and the curricula will be supplemented to meet the needs of all students. To meet the needs of ELLs, instructional materials and educational technology must also align with the components of effective literacy instruction and proficiency levels as described in the ELPS.

**(3) Coherent and Aligned Assessment System:** The TSLP includes the analysis of data in determining whether children have mastered milestones, expectations, and standards as evidenced by age/grade level appropriate guidelines/standards. In age 0 to school entry, there are no required federal reporting regulations, but assessments provide data that are analyzed and used by the local programs. “For more than 25 years, Texas has had a statewide student assessment program that is aligned to support the implementation of the state-adopted standards and to meet state and federal reporting and accountability requirements” (TEA website). At the site/campus level, assessment results provide a wealth of information needed to inform instruction, monitor academic progress, and evaluate the effectiveness of the program of instruction.

Thoughtful use of data (e.g., screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome) combined with effective delivery of instruction is essential for all students including disadvantaged students. Skillful utilization of assessment data forms the basis for goal setting in the LIP including instructional decision-making, PD, and resource allocation (budget, personnel, and time). In Texas, state law requires the administration of the following assessments:

- Early Reading Assessment (Screening and Diagnostic)—Screening and diagnostic instruments to assess reading development and comprehension in English- and Spanish-

language kindergarten–grade 2 selected from the Commissioner’s List of Reading Instruments for Texas Public Schools and Charter Schools.

- Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)—Designed to measure the annual progress English Language Learners (ELLs) make in learning academic English; aligned to the ELPS;
- Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA)—Administered to students in grade 7 who do not demonstrate reading proficiency on the grade 6 state reading assessment;
- State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR)—Beginning in 2012, Texas will implement the STAAR outcome assessment in reading (3–8) and writing (4–7) and end-of-course (EOC) reading and writing in high school, replacing the previous assessment system, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), in phases.

Through the completion of the *Assessment* module of the TSLP 12-week online course, *Literacy Lines* will be able to create a coherent assessment plan that facilitates transitions and informs instruction from age 0 to grade 12. One of the first action steps for the *Assessment* module is “Create and maintain a literacy assessment plan for reading and writing across all grades for different genres and content areas that: identifies literacy assessment timelines; specifies which literacy assessments will be used for which purposes (e.g., screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome); includes a schedule to review literacy assessment data after each administration; and contains accurate literacy assessments of students who are learning in two languages.” Subgrantees will complete and implement this plan as part of the online TSLP course.

**(4) Interventions to Accelerate Instruction for All:** Module 7 of the TSLP 12-week online course is the *Effective Instructional Framework*, which is composed of multiple action steps that

will lead funded *Literacy Lines* to implement an RtI framework that “provides interventions to accelerate learning for all students including those students who have mastered material ahead of time.” *Literacy Lines* will identify struggling students through universal screening and other diagnostic measures for age 0 to grade 12 and will place them in appropriate interventions including tiered small-group instruction. The *Leadership* module of the TSLP identifies the use of universal screening to support the early identification of students who may be at risk of literacy failure and to provide appropriate intervention as one of the most important responsibilities of instructional leaders.

**(5) Language and Text-rich Environments:** The State will require funded *Literacy Line* preschool classrooms to earn certification through the *Texas School Ready! Project (TSR!)*. The Texas School Readiness Certification System (SRCS) awards annual certifications to ECE programs across the state of Texas that demonstrate effective preparation of their students for kindergarten. Literacy activities within the certification process include Book Reading, Oral Language, Phonological Awareness, Print and Letter Knowledge, Written Expression, and Kindergarten Reading Readiness. In the *TSR!* classroom, receptive and expressive oral language creates the foundation for children to develop literacy skills. The *TSR!* requires language and text-rich classrooms to engage children in speaking, listening, pre-reading, and writing. Young children, including ELLs, benefit from the *TSR!* learning environment, which fosters language development.

Research makes clear that the complexity levels of the texts many school-age students are presently required to read are significantly below what is required to achieve college and career readiness (Adams, 2010). Far too often students who have fallen behind are given less complex texts rather than the support they need to read texts at the appropriate level of complexity. The

K–12 *Standards-based Instruction* module of the TSLP requires implementation of the Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening strands of the *TEKS*. As students progress through the grades, the *TEKS* ensure an incremental increase in text complexity and provide multiple opportunities for students to read in many domains and for deep analysis, including summarizing orally and in writing. The *Effective Instructional Framework* module of the TSLP addresses increasing student motivation and sustained engagement through quality instruction that provides a text-rich environment with emphasis on expository and informational text. Most of the required reading in college and workforce training programs is informational in structure and challenging in content. Action Steps in the TSLP require, therefore, that ELA teachers in grades 6–12 significantly increase the amount of literary non-fiction in their classrooms.

Texas has a high percentage of ELL students in public schools. SRCL K–12 subgrantees will describe how grant funds will be used for extensive PD in the ELPS. For K–12 ELLs, the ELPS outline English language proficiency level descriptors and student expectations for ELLs. The ELPS provide a framework for helping ELLs become proficient in English as they become proficient in grade-level content. School districts are required to implement ELPS as an integral part of each subject for students in grades K–12. The effective implementation of the ELPS supports the provision of a language objective for every TEKS objective, thus creating a language and text-rich environment for ELLs.

**(6) Monitoring Program Implementation and Outcomes:** Literacy Line Liaisons will complete implementation reports that serve as the primary vehicle for identifying schools that are not meeting their obligations under their SRCL subgrant proposals and, thus, identify schools for action. Specifically, TEA will target for intervention SRCL schools that fail to implement at least 80 percent of their SRCL plan during the first calendar year and the full plan within the first two

years of funding. Additionally, TEA will target for intervention and TA those LEAs, ECE providers, schools, classrooms, and students that fail to meet the yearly criteria established in (ii) Goals for Improving Literacy Outcomes (see below): TA providers will partner with the targeted entity to review components and implementation of its LIP. The State Literacy Partnership will create and/or vet for a strong evidence base all PD provided through the TSRCLI. The Partnership will use in this process the Texas Trainer Registry, a web-based, searchable database that lists approved Texas-based trainers in the field of early childhood/child development and their courses for ECE providers. The Partnership will evaluate the delivery of all trainings in a Likert scale across the following dimensions: presentation, trainer, training content, benefit, and training turnaround.

**(ii) Goals for Improving Literacy Outcomes:** A data-based needs assessment revealed that while over 90% of students have passed the State reading assessments in grades 3-4, and 8-11, only 85-86% passed in grades 5-7. Additionally, only 86% passed the 4<sup>th</sup> grade writing assessment. On the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Texas average scores for 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading were roughly equal to the national average and were not statistically different from the scores in 1998. While Texas has begun to close the achievement gap for economically disadvantaged 4<sup>th</sup> grade students (from a 31 point gap in 1998 to a 23 point gap in 2009), there remains an achievement gap between economically disadvantaged students and their more advantaged peers in 8<sup>th</sup> grade that did not change from 1998 to 2009.

Additionally, gaps between white students and African American students and between white students and Hispanic students continue unchanged from 1998 to 2009 in 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

There remains much work to be done. Texas' school population in 2010 was 59% economically disadvantaged (as measured by the number of students qualifying for free/reduced-price lunch),

16.9% limited English proficient (LEP), and 9% of students qualified for special education services. The goal of the TSRCLI is to implement the TSLP to ensure that every Texas child is strategically prepared for the literacy demands of college and/or career by high school graduation. To achieve this goal, the plan centers on early language and preliteracy skills for age 0 to school entry and on reading and writing instruction for students in grades K–12. The stated goals of the TEA for improving student literacy outcomes throughout Texas for all students including disadvantaged students are to:

- 1) Increase the oral language and preliteracy skills of participating preschool children as measured by the CIRCLE Phonological Awareness Language and Literacy Screener (C-PALLS);
- 2) Increase the performance of participating students in K–2 on early literacy assessments;
- 3) Increase the percentage of participating students who meet or exceed proficiency on the State English Language Arts assessments in grades 3–11;
- 4) Increase the use of data and data analysis to inform all decision-making in participating LEAs, campuses, classrooms, and early learning settings; and
- 5) Increase the implementation of effective literacy instruction in participating LEAs.

The SRCL Initiative establishes the following clear and credible path for attaining the stated goals of the TEA for improving student literacy outcomes throughout Texas for all students.

- The creation of a variety of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) composed of leadership at the state, district, site, and teacher/service provider levels to guide and support the implementation of the SRCL grant. These PLCs will communicate, collaborate, and facilitate the achievement of literacy goals in face-to-face meetings and through *Project*

*Share*. They include the Center/Campus-based Leadership Teams, *Literacy Lines*, Grant Implementation Teams, and the State Literacy Partnership.

- Attendance from each entity within the funded *Literacy Lines* at:
  - A Strategic Leadership Summit at the onset of the grant. Leadership Teams complete the first four modules of the 12-Week Online Course for the TSLP, including the creation of a data-based LIP that provides transition action steps to insure continuation of literacy progress within and across all Literacy Line educational settings.
  - Strategic Leadership Meetings at middle of year (MOY) and end of year (EOY) where Leadership Teams examine data and monitor and adjust the LIP.
  - Texas Literacy Institutes where teacher and administrator face-to-face PD is provided. Instructional staff and Center/Campus-based Leadership Teams will use EOY data to determine sessions to attend. At the end of the Institute, Literacy Lines will examine and adjust the current LIP to reflect new learning from the Institute.
- The completion of the 12-week On-line Course for the TSLP by the Center/Campus-based Leadership Team of each funded *Literacy Line*. Outcomes include:
  - Literacy Instructional Plan (LIP), including PD, based on data for the entire Literacy Line and for each individual entity within the Literacy Line;
  - Extensive PD on the use of the ELPS as indicated by data and student population;
  - A coherent and aligned Assessment Plan for all preliteracy and literacy skills;
  - Identification of a systemic approach to analyze and summarize data in meaningful formats;
  - A timeline for PD on all state literacy standards;

- Identification of the achievement goals that are clearly defined and articulated for each set of standards for each age/grade-level strand of the Literacy Line; and
- Introduction to tools and methods for the evaluation of curriculum materials in order to determine if the curricula are standard- and evidence-based.
- Methods to improve the implementation of tiered RtI model for all literacy areas with a focus on differentiated instruction, based on identification and need, which is provided to all students, including ELLs and other diverse learners.
- Certification of all participating prekindergarten classrooms through the TSR! Program in order to support literacy-related development. According to TSR! researchers, many young children from disadvantaged backgrounds enter school with such low preliteracy skills that they immediately become at-risk for educational failure. “Students who graduate from TSR! certified Prekindergarten programs score more than 22 percentage points higher than the statewide average and 28 percentage points higher than students from non-certified preschools on the state-mandated early reading assessments given in Kindergarten.”  
(Assel, Landry, Swank, and Guennewig, 2006)

**(iii) Technical Assistance (TA):** To ensure that SRCL subgrant plans are being effectively implemented, Texas will establish an expertly trained and well-equipped TA infrastructure to support SRCL funded subgrantees. TA will include a combination of face-to-face and online guidance and coaching.

**Proposal Preparation Webcasts for LEAs:** The TEA regards the application process for SRCL subgrants as an opportunity to initiate substantive discussions about the components of evidence-based literacy instruction with potential SRCL subgrant LEA/ECE partnerships. The TEA will hold a series of applicant webcasts for LEAs and their ECE partners eligible to apply for



funding. These webcasts will provide detailed information on specific SRCL subgrant requirements, including an introduction to the new TSLP and research-based literacy instruction.

**Texas Education Agency (TEA):** The management and staff of the TEA are dedicated to the students, parents, and education professionals that form the Texas public education community. TEA will be responsible for the management and implementation of the SRCL grant. The staff is experienced in the supervision, coordination, implementation, communications and budget management issues required to successfully conduct the SRCL subgrant program. The TEA will also work closely with the Office of the Governor, state legislature, university research partners, and ESC providers to ensure successful implementation.

**State Literacy Partnership:** The State Literacy Partnership will assist in the continued development and provide the leadership for creating, delivering, and evaluating PD and TA for each SRCL-funded LEA. Members of the Literacy Partnership include the TEA, 20 ESC literacy liaisons, the Institute for Public School Initiatives (IPSI) at the University of Texas at Austin (UT-A), the Children’s Learning Institute (CLI) at the University of Texas Health Science Center Houston (UTHSCH), and the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (VGCRLA) at UT-A. The TEA coordinates the administration of the grant and the work of the Partners. The dissemination network for TA and PD, including site-based implementation support, to funded subgrantees in Texas includes the 20 ESCs, CLI, IPSI, and VGCRLA.

**Literacy Line Liaisons (LLs):** A cadre of Literacy Line Liaisons forms the support and sustainability mechanisms for SRCL subgrantees in Texas. These specialists will provide face-to-face and online coaching and mentoring via *Project Share*. These specialists will be the catalyst for literacy improvement efforts at the local level and will provide front-line

coordination for all state mandated SRCL activities. They will also serve as the communication bridge among the TEA, State Literacy Partnership, and funded *Literacy Lines*.

**Regional Education Service Centers (ESCs):** Texas currently provides funding for reading specialists at each of the 20 ESCs statewide. These reading specialists are skilled providers of PD and are well-versed in the principles of evidence-based literacy research. They will serve an important day-to-day role in overseeing the dissemination of training and materials under SRCL and will work with the LLLs to build capacity in districts and schools not directly funded through SRCL subgrants.

**Project Share:** *Project Share* is the portal through which teachers and students can communicate, collaborate, and access 21<sup>ST</sup> century digital content. *Project Share* leverages several technology platforms to provide multiple levels of access and flexibility for educators and students across the state. *Project Share* fosters the development of online professional learning communities as the vehicle for the delivery of the TSLP and the associated PD modules.

**Targeted Technical Assistance (TTA):** The State will provide targeted technical assistance (TTA) to monitor literacy achievement and grant implementation. The State Literacy Partnership will analyze data on a yearly basis and *Literacy Lines* that fail to show achievement gains on any of the achievement indicators established in **(ii) Goals for Improving Literacy Outcomes** (found in the Texas SRCL grant application) will be targeted for TTA. Using the LLL implementation reports, the State Literacy Partnership will identify for TTA LEAs and sites showing little evidence of implementation progress.

**(iv) Evaluation** of the State's progress in improving achievement in literacy for children and youth from birth through grade 12 will be accomplished by an outside evaluator using a regression discontinuity design (Shadish & Luellen, 2005) similar to the federal evaluation of

Early Reading First. One sample will come from LEAs/ECEs who are funded through a subgrant in the first year and a second sample will come from LEAs/ECEs and will utilize the quantitative subgrant scale to control for possible differences in funded and non-funded LEAs/ECEs. The evaluation for preschool will utilize data from C-PALLS (Landry, Assel, Gunnewig, & Swank, 2008) in three areas of early literacy: letter knowledge, vocabulary, and phonological awareness for three testing periods—beginning of year (BOY), middle of year (MOY) and end of year (EOY)—representing data on the percent reaching criterion at each assessment as well as the percent showing improvement across the year. In the K–2 sample, the early reading assessment scores will be collected three times a year (BOY, MOY, EOY). Data from the STAAR assessment for students from grades 3–9 will be collected by the State once per year. (In 2012 and 2013, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students will take the TAKS as the EOC assessment is phased in for these grades.)

**(v) Dissemination of Project Outcomes:** At the onset of the grant, TEA will provide a parent/community friendly announcement to stakeholders about the award and purpose of the grant. This report can be distributed at meetings and posted on individual websites including the TEA website. The Grant Implementation Team (GIT) for the funded *Literacy Lines* will file reports on all evaluation activities, student performance assessments (disaggregated by student subgroup), and parent surveys with the TEA, State Literacy Partnership, and parent/community stakeholders in writing by October 1 of each year. The GIT will distribute an executive summary to all participating entities, and the full report will be posted on the Internet and/or *Project Share* by October 1 of each year. The executive summary and complete report will use special codes for identifying sites, schools, and districts so that ECE providers, school principals and LEA

administrators will be able to view the report and know how their entity was evaluated relative to others but will not be able to identify other sites/LEAs in the report.

## **SELECTION CRITERION B: SUBGRANT COMPETITION**

**(i) Selection Criteria for Awarding Subgrants:** The specific criteria that Texas will use to award SRCL funding will be explicitly defined for LEAs and ECE providers in the subgrant application. Any entity (LEA or nonprofit ECE provider) can apply as the fiscal agent, provided the spectrum (age 0 to grade 12) is represented through collaborative partnerships with other entities. Applicants must demonstrate intent to implement a comprehensive evidence-based literacy program and must agree to implement an RtI model. The TEA will require applicants to explicitly describe the literacy program that will be implemented. Adhering to the guidelines described in the following sections, each application will be reviewed to determine the capability of the LEA/ECE provider to implement the proposed program.

The TEA considers that the SRCL grant will provide a core group of LEAs and their ECE partners funding to develop as exemplars in the implementation of the TSLP in a vertically aligned system. Subgrants will be awarded annually for up to five years.

Components required by the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) SRCL grant program will serve as core criteria and will be applied during the subgrant application evaluation. Greater detail on how these components will be applied during review is provided throughout the remainder of this section.

**Subgrant Application Review Process:** SRCL subgrant applications will be reviewed and evaluated by peer reviewers convened by the TEA. These reviewers will be comprised of statewide experts and educators who have demonstrated a deep understanding of language and literacy research and knowledge of and successful experience with the following:

- Improving instructional language and literacy practices of teachers and other instructional staff in ECE programs, elementary schools, middle schools, and/or high schools through the use of high quality, intensive, and sustained PD based on research;
- Language and literacy programs developed using scientific research;
- Effective early learning or public school instructional leadership or administration;
- Screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, outcome literacy assessment instruments;
- Supervising individuals who have implemented research-based language and literacy practices.

Training for reviewers will be held prior to the application review process in order to ensure consistency in evaluating subgrant applications.

**Subgrant Application Scoring Rubric:** Awards will be considered on the basis of an applicant’s score on a 100-point scale. Members of the review panel will rate each proposal on the criteria described below. For an application to become eligible for an award, it must meet two conditions:

- 1) Each criterion must receive its corresponding minimum number of points.
- 2) The total must equal or be greater than 67. Information in the criteria that follow must be evidenced in the SRCL literacy plan submitted by eligible LEAs or ECE providers.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Number of points</b>	<b>Minimum number of points to be eligible for award</b>
Eligibility	15	10
Capacity and Need	10	7
Overall Literacy Plan Cohesiveness	10	7
Professional Development	10	7
Curriculum	12	8
Assessment	10	7
Intervention	10	7
Language and literacy-rich Classrooms	5	3
Monitoring Progress	8	5
Collaboration and Coordination	5	3
Technology Integration	5	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>67</b>

**(a) Capacity to Implement:** Applicants must demonstrate—through interest and commitment evidence of data-informed planning, and quality of management plan and budget—the capacity to implement a comprehensive and coherent literacy program, aimed at improving school readiness and success from birth through grade 12 in the areas of language and literacy development for disadvantaged students, especially those who are living in poverty, are limited-English-proficient, or who have disabilities.

**Exploration—Interest and Commitment:** Beyond demonstrating high need, applicants must describe the extent to which there is a willingness on the part of varied stakeholders to implement a SRCL grant program based on the TSLP. LEAs and ECE providers must first assess whether local needs and goals match the goals of SCRL. Applicants must describe the process that led to a decision to apply for a SCRL grant, including descriptions of interactions among stakeholders, their roles, and letters of support, if applicable. Critical in this description is the extent to which ECE providers and LEAs serve the same population within a community and the extent to which these entities have the capacity to create a *Literacy Line* and to submit a cohesive literacy plan. Applicants should also describe how staff and resources had been mobilized to prepare for the next stages of planning and implementation.

**Data-Informed Planning:** The applicant must describe a comprehensive literacy plan, including the following:

- How the applicant has evaluated policies and procedures that might become barriers to implementation of the plan;
- How the applicant uses specific strategies to ensure achievement of literacy goals at critical transition points (kindergarten, fourth grade, middle school, and high school);
- How the applicant will provide TA and tools to support site-based planning, including technology-based professional learning;
- How the applicant will provide monitoring of and support for the implementation of site-based and *Literacy Line* LIPs; and
- How the applicant will use data to inform all decision-making related to increasing literacy achievement of participating students and improving school readiness and success through grade 12.

**Significance and Need of Program:** In addition to the criteria as outlined in the Comprehensive and Coherent Literacy Program section, the following standards will also be applied in the selection of applications: 1) the magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed program; and 2) the extent to which previously specified gaps, barriers, or weaknesses have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed program.

**Quality of Management Plan and Budget:** Applicants must describe how they will manage the SRCL grant, including:

- The extent to which the Grant Implementation Team will be able to manage resources across multiple sites and agency types;
- The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed program on time and within budget, and timelines and benchmarks for accomplishing program tasks;
- Quality of program personnel, including qualifications, experience and certifications of employees and the qualifications and experience of external consultants;
- The adequacy of the procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed program through ongoing monitoring;
- The extent to which the budget includes project costs that are reasonable, realistic, justifiable, and appropriate for objectives and results stated in the application;
- The extent to which existing resources and facilities will be used and managed to maximize the effectiveness of grant funds; and
- The extent to which training costs, facility rentals, substitutes, transportation, and any incidental costs in providing PD or other grant activities will be covered and maximized through the use of grant or other coordinated funds.



**(b) Comprehensive and Coherent Literacy Program:** The long-term goal for all applicants is future academic and career success for all children. An applicant’s primary objective with the subgrant application is to develop a coherent plan to implement a comprehensive literacy program that includes best literacy instructional practices for children of every age through high school graduation and is aligned with the state standards. Applicants are required to develop and implement a plan for an effective tiered model of literacy instruction, or RtI, in PK–12 sites, including a description of procedures and how the applicant will provide sites with TA and tools for identifying curriculum, assessments, and criteria for identifying children/students at risk for reading and writing difficulties. Applicants must provide evidence of a plan to provide high-quality professional development on the delivery of instruction and intervention.

Applicants must propose a comprehensive literacy plan that addresses what is known from evidence about developmental factors and instructional practices critical for all students to become readers and writers:

- Oral language development begins in infancy. Research supports the principle that speaking, listening, reading, and writing develop interdependently (Pellegrini, 2002; Walter, 1996);
- Basic receptive and expressive oral language typically is acquired with no formal instruction and provides a foundation for further literacy development (Cunningham, 2005; Nagy, 2005; Stahl & Nagy, 2006);
- Dual language learners benefit from explicit instructional techniques that work to include them in classroom social interactions and recognize the value of their home language (Ballantyne et al., 2008);
- Explicit, systematic instruction in five critical components of reading, phonemic

awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension has been shown to prevent reading difficulties that require intervention, including special education (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998):

- Explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics enables students to master the alphabetic principle and effectively apply their knowledge of letters and sounds to read text (Ball & Blachman, 1991; Moats, 2010);
- Explicit fluency instruction helps provide a bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Students must practice wide reading of various texts to read fluently with comprehension (Rasinski, 2003);
- Both direct instruction and indirect development of the structure of language and vocabulary, coupled with opportunities for exposure and learning in a variety of contexts, are an integral factor in understanding written text (Burns, Griffin, Snow, 1999); provide direct vocabulary instruction on essential and high-priority words (Kamil et al., 2008);
- Students need to be explicitly taught how to use key comprehension strategies (Kamil et al., 2008; Shanahan et al., 2010) including summarizing, clarifying, questioning, visualizing, and self-monitoring (Duke, 2002; Kamil et al., 2008, Snow, 2002, Dimino et al., 2010);
- Effective reading instruction prepares students with “enabling knowledge that reading with comprehension requires” (Hirsch, 2011, p. 32);
- Writing is integrally and reciprocally related to reading, especially when taught explicitly as a core component of language arts (Moats, 2010); and
- Effective, targeted, and increasingly intense intervention is recommended for

children/students at risk for poor reading and writing outcomes (NRP, 2000; Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009; Graham & Perin, 2007; VGCRLA, 2007; Moats, 2010).

The comprehensive and coherent literacy programs must include each of the components of effective literacy instruction, i.e.:

...developmentally appropriate, explicit, evidence-based, and systematic instruction that provides students with: 1) early development and grade-level mastery of (a) oral language skills, both listening and speaking, (b) phonological awareness, using a wide vocabulary, (c) conventional forms of grammar, and (d) academic language; 2) the ability to read regularly spelled words and high-frequency irregularly spelled words with automaticity and to decode regularly spelled unfamiliar words accurately, using phonemic awareness, print awareness, alphabet knowledge, and knowledge of English spelling patterns; 3) the ability to read texts accurately, fluently, and with comprehension, relying on knowledge of the vocabulary in those texts and of the background information that the students possess; 4) the ability to read with a purpose and the capacity to differentiate purposes and to select and apply comprehension strategies appropriate to achieving the purpose; 5) an understanding of, and ability to adapt to, the varying demands of different genres, formats, and types of texts across the core content areas in order to comprehend texts of appropriate levels of complexity and content, including texts necessary for mastery of grade-level standards; 6) the ability to effectively access, critically evaluate, and appropriately synthesize information from a variety of sources and formats; 7) the development and maintenance of a motivation to read and write, as reflected in habits of reading and writing regularly and of discussing one's reading and writing with others; and 8) the ability to write clearly, accurately, and quickly so as to

communicate ideas and deepen comprehension in ways that fit purpose, audience, occasion, discipline, and format; adhere to conventions of spelling and punctuation; and benefit from revision so as to improve clarity, coherence, logical development, and the precise use of language.

With respect to programs serving children birth through age five, the term ‘effective literacy instruction,’ means supporting young children’s early language and literacy development through developmentally appropriate, explicit, intentional, and systematic instruction, in language- and literacy-rich environments, that provides children with foundational skills and dispositions for literacy, such as rich vocabulary development; expressive language skills; receptive language skills; comprehension; phonological awareness; print awareness; alphabet knowledge; book knowledge; emergent writing skills; positive dispositions toward language and literacy-related activities; and other skills that correlate with later literacy achievement.

**(1) Professional Development:** The TSLP defines effective PD as intensive, job-embedded, ongoing and focused on teaching and learning of specific content, aligned to site/campus initiatives, collaborative, and based on student data.

Applicants must develop a system for ongoing professional learning—both to support site-based professional learning and also direct service to sites—related to the following: instructional coaching, observations and feedback, planning professional development, and budgeting. For coherence across age/grade levels, applicants must identify a *Literacy Line*, a vertically aligned professional community to provide instructional and programming alignment for language, preliteracy and literacy development and to ease transition for children and students across their entire learning career. The *Literacy Line* is a vertical collaborative of leaders among feeder-

pattern LEAs (including prekindergarten, elementary, middle, and high schools) and their associated ECE providers (which may include community-based non-profit childcare and healthcare providers, librarians, and prekindergartens). Each *Literacy Line* must address the age 0 to grade 12 learning continuum and the needs of the entire community.

Sites are expected to (a) build capacity for ongoing improvement of professional learning; (b) monitor and support the professional learning of all personnel, based on student data; (c) establish/implement hiring policies consistent with state literacy goals and state plan; (d) ensure ongoing development of instructional leaders and program directors; and (e) provide adequate resources (human, training, material, planning time, instructional time) to implement literacy plan.

Applicants must demonstrate willingness for all relevant personnel to actively participate in *Project Share*, the web-based state professional development system. Specifically, *Literacy Line* leaders will participate in an online TSLP course and develop Literacy Instructional Plans (LIPs) based on the five components of reading, multiple sources of data, and evidence-based practices to improve student achievement. In an effort to sustain improvement and accomplish goals outlined in their plans, sites must participate in ongoing professional development at the teacher level based on standards and determined by data. Applicants must allocate funds to attend a multi-day, face-to-face Strategic Leadership Summit at the beginning of grant implementation. In addition, applicants must allocate funds for teachers and administrators to attend the Texas Literacy Institute to be held in the summer of 2012.

**(2) Standards-based Curricula, Instruction, and Materials:** Applicants must describe the process for selecting standards-based curricula from the state's conforming list for K–12 textbooks, including electronic materials, and provide resources and assistance to sites with

implementing curricula aligned with the state standards. Applicants must demonstrate that eligible sites have received or will receive professional development on the state standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers, Prekindergarten Guidelines, English Language Proficiency Standards, and College and Career Readiness Standards.) Applicants must describe how they will monitor student achievement of the expected skills.

*Literacy Lines* will be expected to examine the standards-based core curricula on an ongoing basis to address alignment and effective use of instructional materials. Individuals will be able to use *Project Share* to learn more about evidence-based teaching practices, ways for students to respond or demonstrate their knowledge and skills, ways to reduce barriers, provide appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges as well as how to maintain high achievement expectations for all students, including disadvantaged students and those with diverse learning needs.

**(3) Assessment System:** Applicants must describe the selection and administration of screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments and describe their plan to ensure that teacher-administered assessments support and guide appropriate, differentiated, and targeted instruction for all children/students. LEAs and ECE providers must also ensure accurate assessments of young children who are learning in two languages. LEAs/ECEs are expected to provide to sites resources and tools addressing the selection and use of assessments. Applicants are required to select and administer the same assessments, where applicable, across sites (e.g., all early childhood education sites within the *Literacy Line* must use the same screening and other assessment measures, all elementary campuses within the *Literacy Line* must use the same

screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome measures, etc.). LEAs and their ECE partners must administer State-required assessments.

**(4) Interventions:** Applicants must develop and implement a plan for an effective tiered RtI model, including (a) instructional conditions tiered according to intensity and need; (b) rules/protocols for managing instructional intensity and efficiently allocating resources; and (c) a process for using evidence-based strategies to enhance achievement and learning for diverse populations, including students who have mastered achievement ahead of their peers and students struggling with grade-level material.

**(5) Language- and Text-rich Classrooms:** Applicants must describe how they will provide language- and text-rich learning environments and implement instruction that increases motivation and sustained engagement for students through a system of clearly stated goals, variety and choice, connection to students' experiences and real-world applications, opportunities for work in a variety of grouping formats, and instruction in multiple genres of text with an opportunity to engage in writing within multiple genres.

**(6) Monitoring Progress:** LEA/ECE applicants must adhere to state accountability and reporting policies; ensure accountability for implementation and meeting literacy goals; use and analyze data for program evaluation; establish processes for staying on track for meeting literacy goals; and provide sites with resources, tools, and technical assistance on data management system and use.

Sites must ensure accountability for implementation and meeting literacy goals; use and analyze data at different levels (classroom, school, program, progress in first and second languages and transference into English) for different purposes (daily instruction, placement, use of first and/or

second language, program evaluation); and establish processes for staying on track for meeting literacy goals.

Applicants must agree to monitor outcomes by collecting and reporting applicable data to the TEA. Specifically, the TEA will collect and report data on (1) the percentage of participating 4-year-old children who achieve significant gains on C-PALLS letter knowledge, vocabulary, and phonological awareness, and in oral language skills; (2) the percentage of participating 5<sup>th</sup>-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on the STAAR; (3) the percentage of participating 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on STAAR; and (4) the percentage of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on the STAAR EOC High School Assessments for English I and on TAKS for English II and III (2012).

The *Literacy Line* will disaggregate these data for disadvantaged students, including economically disadvantaged, students, limited-English-proficient students, and students with disabilities.

**(1) Need and Capacity-Applicant Eligibility:** LEA/ECE applicants must meet at least two of the following three criteria, based on State averages, in order to be eligible for grant funding:

- 1) At least 59% Economically Disadvantaged children/students
- 2) At least 16.9% Limited English proficient
- 3) At least 9% receiving Special Education Services

Eligibility criteria for individual sites within a *Literacy Line* are described below. Applicants will report eligibility by listing those sites that meet the following criteria as applicable to site population:

1. Percentages equal to or above the state average percentages of children/students meeting these criteria:



- 59% Economically Disadvantaged (students in Grades K–12)
  - 59% Economically Disadvantaged (children from age 0–5)
  - 16.9% Limited English Proficient (children from age 0–5)
2. Percentages equal to or below the state average percentage of students graduating from high school: 90.6% [as measured by Completion Rate II, Grades 9–12, for students who graduated, continued, or received GED certificates (2009)];
  3. Percentages equal to or below the state average passing rate on the Reading; Writing; English/Language Arts portions of the 2010 TAKS test equal to or less than the state average passing rates in grades 3–11 of 90%; and
  4. Identification as a “low-performing” campus in 2009–2010 according to the Texas Accountability System.

Applicants will be required to provide the TEA with a list of sites that meet the eligibility criteria. The TEA will verify that these sites meet eligibility criteria.

**Site Priority:** From the submitted list of eligible sites, applicants will use the following criteria as applicable to prioritize the funding among eligible sites, beginning with the sites that meet most of these criteria and working toward those that meet the least:

- Highest number or percentage of students identified Economically Disadvantaged;
- Lowest percentage of students graduating from high school;
- Lowest numbers or percentages of students passing Reading/English Language Arts and Writing portions of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) during the spring 2010 administration;
- Highest percentage of children who are Economically Disadvantaged or Limited English Proficient in ECE centers;

- Identified as an “Academically Unacceptable” campus in the 2009–2010 school year by the Texas Accountability System;
- Identified as a “persistently lowest-achieving school” by the Texas Education Agency for the purposes of the federal Title I School Improvement Grant program implementation; and
- Demonstrated willingness and capacity to implement an evidence-based comprehensive literacy program as described in the criteria included in the subgrant application.

Additionally, priority will be given to applicants whose sites meet the following criteria:

- Percentages equal to or above the state average percentages of students identified as Limited English Proficient: 16.9% (students in Grades K–12);
- Percentages equal to or above the state average percentages of students identified as receiving Special Education services: 9.0% (students in Grades K–12);
- Percentages equal to or below the state average percentages of students meeting these College readiness indicators (2009): a) 24.6% Completing Advanced/Dual Enrollment Courses; b) 82.5% Graduates Completing Recommended High School Program or Distinguished Achievement High School Program; c) 21.2% Students Taking Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exams; d) Texas Success Initiative Higher Education Component (60% in ELA); e) 61.5% Students Taking ACT or SAT; and f) 47% College-Ready Graduates.

As Texas plans to fund applicants with a complete *Literacy Line*, applicants will be required to equitably distribute funds in the following manner (in order to equal 100% of the total grant funds available for subgrantees or \$66.5 million which is 95% of the requested SEA funding):

- 16% to serve children from birth through age five;

- 42% to serve students in kindergarten through grade five; and,
- 42% to serve students in middle and high school, through grade 12.

When an applicant has multiple sites within these three age categories that meet the eligibility requirements, the applicant must prioritize the sites to be served and ensure that sites selected for participation receive an adequate appropriation of funds.

For all eligible sites, applicants will be required to ensure that the targeted population at those sites will include children who (a) have been identified as at-risk for language or reading difficulties on the basis of assessment results; (b) are at risk of being referred to special education based on these difficulties; (c) have been evaluated under section 614 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act but, in accordance with section 614(b)(5) of that Act, have not been identified as a child with a disability (as defined in section 602 of that Act) related to reading; and (d) are deficient in the essential components of reading skills, as listed in subparagraphs (A) through (E) of section 1208(3) or are identified as having limited English proficiency.

**(2) Needs Assessment:** To demonstrate capacity, need, and interest, applicants will be required to complete a needs assessment identifying (a) the need for change based on current data; (b) the extent to which a literacy plan already exists; (c) the extent to which an RtI framework is in place; (d) the degree to which evidence-based curricula are used; (e) the extent to which instructional decisions are informed by data; (f) the extent to which PD is based on data and is systematic and targeted; (g) the degree to which current literacy program implementation and outcomes are monitored; and (h) the degree to which agencies collaborate to meet the language and literacy needs of children and students age 0 to grade 12.

**(3) Community Collaboration:** Applicants must describe how they have involved (in exploring and planning) and will involve (in the implementation) other agencies, nonprofit organizations,

community-based organizations, and families in activities that promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students.

**(c) Coordination of Resources:** Competitive priorities will be awarded to LEAs and ECE providers that demonstrate evidence of leveraging existing resources, including with funds the entity receives under Title I, Title II-A, and Title III of the ESEA and, as appropriate, Head Start Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, and State and local funds, to support effective implementation of a comprehensive literacy program and to improve student achievement in core academic subjects.

**(ii) Priority: High-Poverty Schools:** The school poverty measure used throughout is the percentage of a school's enrollment that is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). High-poverty schools are those where 76–100% of students are eligible for FRPL and low-poverty schools are those where 0–25% of students are eligible. Twenty percent of public elementary schools and 9% of public secondary schools in the United States are high-poverty using this definition. The subgrant selection process in Texas will specifically require that at least 59% of students served in the selected sites are identified as Economically Disadvantaged.

**(iii) Degree of Evidence Supporting Applications:** Competitive priority will be awarded to applicants that employ effective procedures across the sites to implement a comprehensive literacy program and to improve achievement in literacy.

These competitive priorities will provide an advantage to LEAs or providers of early childhood education that have demonstrated leadership capacity, a commitment to raising student achievement, a willingness to leverage existing resources, a willingness to use valid and reliable

measures to document reading progress, and a deep understanding of a comprehensive literacy instructional plan. Funded applicants will develop and maintain:

- A method for collecting and analyzing data to document the effectiveness of activities carried out in this grant to accelerate improvement and significant gains in reading achievement;
- A method for reporting data for all students and categories of students;
- A method for using current needs assessment information based on data from the state's screening and diagnostic reading instruments, any ongoing progress monitoring assessments, classroom-based assessments and end-of-year information concerning student performance; and
- A method for using a specific assessment plan, including a timeline for what screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, outcome assessment, and classroom-based assessments will be used and how this data will be analyzed and reported.

Data must be used to inform instructional planning and define immediate, intensive intervention for students at risk for reading difficulties as well as to determine PD needs and evaluate the plan.

**(iv) Standards-Based Curricula and Materials:** The Texas State Board of Education issued Proclamation 2010 on November 16, 2007 and amended it to include the Spanish Language Arts Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in September 2008. The adoption of materials under Proclamation 2010 occurred in November 2009. The adopted materials were available for use beginning in the 2010–2011 school year. LEAs or providers of early childhood education will select the curricula and materials proposed to use in implementing their subgrants from Proclamation 2010. The State Board of Education issued Proclamation 2011 in May 2008 and

amended it in September 2008 and September 2009. The adoption of materials under Proclamation 2011 occurred in November 2010. The adopted materials are scheduled to be available for use beginning in the 2011–2012 school year.

Proclamation 2010 calls for instructional materials from the following subject areas: English Language Arts & Reading, Grades K–1; Spanish Literature, Grade 6; Spanish Language Arts & Reading Grades K–1; English for Speakers of Other Languages I & II; Reading, Grades 2–5; English Language Proficiency Standards, Grades 9–12 Teacher Editions; Spanish Reading, Grades 2–5; AP English Languages, English Literature; Reading (Elective), Grades 6–8; International Baccalaureate (IB) Language Studies, Standard & Higher Level; and Literature, Grades 6–12.

Proclamation 2011 calls for instructional materials from the following subject areas: Prekindergarten Systems; Handwriting, Grades 1–3; Spelling, Grades 1–2; Spelling, Grades 3–6; English Language Arts, Grades 2–8; Spanish Language Arts, Grades 2–6; English as a Second Language, Grades K–8, Student Material; English as a Second Language, Grades K–8, Teacher Material; Speech; and Grades 6–8 English, Levels I–IV.

The Texas Education Code requires that the TEA provide to the districts, by December 1 following the adoption, the lists of conforming and nonconforming textbooks for the next school year. Conforming textbooks include textbooks that meet 100% of the TEKS for the grade and subject, are error-free, and meet the manufacturing standards. Nonconforming textbooks include textbooks that meet at least 50% of the TEKS for the grade and subject, are error-free, and meet the manufacturing standard. Information regarding conforming and nonconforming textbooks can be found on the TEA website at: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/textbooks/materials/index.html>.

There is no difference between the eligibility and distribution of conforming and nonconforming textbooks. The state will pay up to the maximum cost for conforming and nonconforming textbooks.

The TEA must provide information detailing the reasons why adopted textbooks are not on the conforming list, including the TEKS not met by the nonconforming materials.

### **SELECTION CRITERION C: PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

The Texas Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Initiative (TSRCLI) will be managed by a State Literacy Partnership, including the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Children’s Learning Institute (CLI) at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, the Institute for Public School Initiatives (IPSI) at the University of Texas at Austin, and the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts (VGCRLA) at the University of Texas at Austin. The Director of the Texas Striving Reading Comprehensive Literacy Initiative at TEA, the Principal Investigators and senior leadership at each of the University Centers, and a representative from the ESCs will comprise the State Literacy Partnership.

#### **(i) Adequacy of management plan to achieve objectives on time and within budget:**

**Responsibilities:** The TEA will have the primary fiscal and legal responsibility for grant management. TEA will ensure, with Partner support, that the objectives of the proposed project are met on time and within budget. TEA will provide subgrants to CLI, IPSI, and VGCRLA for the creation of PD content, delivery of PD and TA to the subgrantee *Literacy Lines*, and the support of the *Literacy Lines* through *Project Share* and face-to-face visits.

The University research institutions, CLI and VGCRLA, will have the primary responsibility for creating the content for PD. CLI, VGCRLA, and IPSI will have joint responsibility for delivering PD, TA, and support to the subgrantee *Literacy Lines* through *Project Share*, site visits, and face-

to-face professional development sessions. ESC representatives will attend all trainings and will assist with support for subgrantees. They will also support non-funded LEAs in developing *Literacy Lines* with their associated ECE providers in the implementation of the TSLP.

The Grant Implementation Team for each funded *Literacy Line* will have the primary fiscal and legal responsibilities for grant management and implementation of the subgrants.

**Timelines/Milestones:**

- The State Literacy Partners will meet monthly to examine data, determine progress toward objectives, and adjust planning accordingly.
- Subgrantees, including LEAs and their ECE partners, and University Partners will provide monthly expenditure reports to TEA.
- Support will be provided to the grantees on an ongoing basis through *Literacy Line Liaisons* (LLs) who will communicate regularly with the subgrantees both face-to-face and through *Project Share*. These Liaisons will meet monthly during the first year of the grant to receive professional development for their support role. ESC representatives will also attend these monthly sessions. A professional learning community within *Project Share* will be created for internal communication, ongoing PD, and support.
- Funded *Literacy Lines* will attend an inaugural Leadership Summit at the beginning of the grant to complete the first four modules of the PD on the TSLP.
- Teachers and administrators of funded *Literacy Lines* will attend the Texas Literacy Institute each summer, beginning in 2012 for face-to-face PD.
- The State Literacy Partners and LLs will facilitate face-to-face Strategic Leadership Meetings (SLMs) three times during the first year of the grant, with gradual release of



responsibility to the *Literacy Line* leadership over the subsequent grant years. These SLMs will include:

- 1) Analyzing data to develop, modify, or change district and campus Literacy Instructional Plans;
  - 2) Developing, modifying, or changing district and campus Literacy Instructional Plans based on data;
  - 3) Determining PD needs of the instructional staff, based on student data; and
  - 4) Evaluating progress and modifying Literacy Instructional Plans accordingly.
- The LLLs will provide reports to the Partnership twice annually during the first three years of the grant, using the needs assessment tool included in the State Literacy Plan.
  - Student performance data will be collected at the Beginning of Year, Middle of Year, and End of Year for prekindergarten through grade 3 and annually for grades 4–12.

**(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience of key personnel:**

**State Literacy Partnership:** Key personnel to manage the TSCRLI include veteran leaders of state-level literacy and preliteracy initiatives, from early childhood through high school. Most served as key leaders for Texas School Ready!, the Texas Reading Initiative, and/or the Texas Reading First Initiative and are experienced in the management of comprehensive state level projects, including providing project management and budget oversight to ensure that the activities of the TSCRLI are delivered on time and within budget. Following is a list of key personnel (resumes included in attachment):

- **Kathy Stewart, Ph. D.**, Director of Special Projects, will manage SRCL at the state level for the Texas Education Agency. She will be responsible for contracted services involving our university partners and work closely with participating LEAs. She serves

as chair of the Texas Partner Literacy Team. Dr. Stewart was the Director for Reading First, as well as numerous literacy initiatives over the past 15 years. As former Coordinator of the Governor's Initiatives, she has worked extensively with Teacher Reading Academies and Title V (former Title VI) programs. Dr. Stewart has many years of experience as a public school teacher working at the elementary and middle school levels. She received her bachelor's degree from Texas State University, a master's degree in Educational Administration with a specialization in Curriculum and Instruction from Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi, and her doctorate degree in Educational Administration from Texas A&M University at College Station.

- **Waynel Sexton, Ed. D.** will serve as the Project Director for TSRCLI at CLI. Dr. Sexton is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics, Division of Developmental Pediatrics in the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHSCH). She has served as the manager of the Texas Reading First Initiative at the CLI for seven years and currently directs the writing work group for the TSLP. Under her direction, the Reading First team at CLI translates the results of current reading research into PD for teachers and administrators. As director of the writing group for the TSLP, Dr. Sexton and the writing work group are striving to create a user-friendly state literacy plan that supports the work of Texas educators and improves literacy outcomes for all Texas children. She has 32 years of public school experience with extensive teaching and administrative experience. She has published in the *Journal of Educational Research* and is the recipient of the *Teacher of the Year Award* for Houston ISD and the *Patrice Johnson Outstanding Graduate Award* for Leadership in Houston.

- **Theresa Clarke, M.P.P** will serve as Project Co-Director for TSRCLI at VGCRLA. Ms. Clarke currently serves as the Project Director of the Alice ISD Partnership Project and assistant project director of the Texas Reading First Initiative. With Alice ISD, Ms. Clarke works with a team to build local capacity at six elementary schools by implementing evidence-based and sustainable literacy practices. In her role with the Texas Reading First Initiative, Ms. Clarke collaborates with university partners to identify statewide professional development and technical assistance needs and provide support to school districts across the state. Her particular interest is in the area of using data to measure progress and in planning and achieving goals for improving student outcomes. Prior to moving to Texas, she served as a senior policy analyst at the National Governors Association, providing technical assistance to governors' education advisors. She also taught English as a Second Language in secondary schools in Guinea, West Africa. She earned a Master of Public Policy from Georgetown University and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Michigan State University.
- **Jennifer Wick Schnakenberg, Ph. D.** will serve as the Co-Project Director for the TSRCLI at the VGCRLA. Currently, she is the Principal Investigator of the Texas Reading First Initiative and Assistant Project Director of the Alice ISD Partnership Project at VGCRLA. In her role with the Texas Reading First Initiative, Dr. Schnakenberg works closely with university partners to identify statewide PD and TA needs and provides support to school districts across the state. Both projects provide Jennifer the opportunity to facilitate building capacity and implementation of evidence-based and sustainable literacy practices. In addition, she has contributed to the creation of numerous professional development materials for state-level technical assistance

partners, literacy coaches, and reading teachers and is currently involved in the creation of online PD for the Texas Middle School Fluency Assessment (TMSFA) Intervention Activities Guide. Her research interests include the impacts of professional development on teacher learning and student achievement, interventions for students with reading difficulties at all ages, how leadership influences school culture and climate, and teacher effectiveness.

- **Karen Nelson, M.S., CCC/SLP**, Director of Academic Foundation Initiatives at the Institute for Public School Initiatives (IPSI) at the University of Texas at Austin, will serve as Project Director for TSRCLI at IPSI. Ms. Nelson has served as Principal Investigator for the Reading First project at IPSI for the past four years. She led the team of Project Managers and Reading Technical Assistance Specialists who provided PD, TA, and on-site support for the Reading First LEAs and campuses. In 2009, she provided leadership to the implementation of the statewide PD for the newly adopted state standards for reading and language arts (English and Spanish) for K–12 and for the End of Course Assessment for English I, II, and III in 2010 and 2011. She is a member of the writing team for the TSLP. Previously she worked with the Texas Reading Initiative from 1999–2001, implementing the Texas Teacher Reading Academies. Ms. Nelson is a speech and language pathologist who served children with language and reading disabilities, from infants to high school students, in both private practice and public school settings.
- **Cathy Gutentag, Ph. D.** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics, Division of Developmental Pediatrics in the Children’s Learning Institute at UTHSCH. Dr. Gutentag is a licensed psychologist and has both clinical and research duties in the

department. In the Developmental Pediatrics Clinic, she provides evaluations to children with various learning and behavioral disorders. She serves as a Co-Investigator and clinical supervisor for a large, multi-site preventive intervention study funded by the National Institutes of Health and headed at UTHSCH. This study is evaluating the effectiveness of an intensive parenting intervention program designed to prevent child neglect in teenage mothers and other mothers with limited resources. The home-based intervention program includes a number of different modules that teach young others about infant health and safety including early literacy and reading with babies. With her colleagues, she has developed a series of training videos for early childhood teachers on the topics of emotional support, behavioral guidance, and cognitive stimulation in the childcare classroom. She has also provided consultation and training to preschool and Head Start teachers and has presented at state and local conferences on topics in early childhood development and learning.

**Senior Leadership:**

- Project Managers will provide leadership and management for the team of Literacy Line Liaisons who will, in turn, provide PD and TA for the funded *Literacy Lines* through onsite visits and online support via *Project Share* and for the team who will be responsible for the development on online PD resources.

**Literacy Line Liaisons:**

- Literacy Line Liaisons (LLs) will provide PD and TA to the funded *Literacy Lines* who are selected to participate in the SRCL grant. LLs will be selected based on training and experience. Minimum requirements will include a Master's Degree in education or related field. In addition, experience leading teams in providing PD and TA in effective

implementation of evidence-based literacy systems on a state or district level will be required. LLLs will have demonstrated skill in coaching and communication. Experience with online course facilitation, while not required, will be preferred. Experience working with disadvantaged populations will be required. Statewide LLLs will be employed by the University Partners. In building a cohesive, collaborative, and well-balanced team, the Partnership will seek to hire experts in early childhood, K–5, middle and high school literacy as well as those with expertise in special education and bilingual and/or ELL education.

**(iii) Diversity of perspectives:** In planning and developing the Texas State Comprehensive Literacy Plan (TSCLP), a variety of perspectives were sought. The initial working group included representatives at the TEA from the divisions of Early Childhood, Curriculum, Special Education, Title 1, Assessment, Gifted and Talented Education, and Bilingual/ELL Education. Partners participated from Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs): University of Texas at Austin and the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Other members of the work group included English/Language Arts (ELA) specialists from the state ESCs and the state director for Even Start. The review panel for the TSCLP was composed of members of the State Literacy Team, research Partners from IHEs, including Dr. Sharon Vaughn, University of Texas at Austin; Dr. Reid Lyon, Southern Methodist University (SMU); Dr. David Chard, SMU; Dr. Deborah Simmons, Texas A&M University; Dr. Elena Izquierdo, University of Texas at El Paso; Dr. Susan Landry, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston; and Dr. Jack Fletcher, University of Houston. The State Literacy Plan will be shared with state and community stakeholders, including parent groups, teacher organizations, the Head Start Advisory Council, the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children, the Texas Association for Bilingual

Education, library associations, and others during the spring and summer of 2011 to garner feedback and to disseminate information. During the implementation phase, *Literacy Lines* receiving subgrants will form community-based partnerships with stakeholders to serve on advisory committees.

#### **SELECTION CRITERION D: ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES**

**(i) Costs in budget are reasonable in relation to proposed project:** The TEA will oversee the budget to provide planning, PD, TA, and evaluation support to the funded *Literacy Lines* in order to achieve the objectives of the TSRCLI. The proposed budget represents the associated costs of personnel at the TEA to lead and provide management to the Initiative. The State Literacy Partnership will be responsible for implementing the TSLP, including providing TA to the funded *Literacy Lines* as they use a needs assessment to develop a blueprint for implementation at the LEA/EC Collaborative level. In addition, the Partnership will provide PD and TA through both face-to-face and online venues. The Partnership will facilitate a Leadership Summit at the beginning of the grant implementation, in order to begin PD for implementing the TSLP, the foundation of the TSRCLI, within the *Literacy Line*. In addition the Partnership will facilitate three face-to-face Strategic Leadership Meetings (SLMs) at BOY, MOY, and EOY for each *Literacy Line* in order to provide PD in the use of data analysis to inform instruction and all related decision-making, the development of Literacy Instructional Plans, and the evaluation of the impact of implementation on student achievement. Between the SLMs, the Partnership will provide PD, TA, and implementation support through the state online system for professional learning communities, *Project Share*, and through monthly on-site visits to the funded *Literacy Lines*. In the summer of 2012, the Partnership will host the Texas Literacy Institute, presenting face-to-face professional development for teachers, instructional coaches, and campus and

district leadership, based on a needs assessment centered on student achievement data. Included in the budget are subgrants to the Partnership institutions that will be responsible for designing and delivering PD, TA, and support for the *Literacy Lines* in both the face-to-face and *Project Share* environments.

**(ii) Subgrant allocations:** Funding will be allocated in each category as follows:

- Birth through age five: \$10.5 Million
- Kindergarten through grade five: \$28 Million
- Middle and high school: \$28 Million
- SEA \$3.5 Million

The TEA considers that the SRCL grant will provide a core group of LEAs and their ECE partners funding to develop as exemplars in the implementation of the State Literacy Plan in a vertically aligned system. TEA will award subgrants annually for up to five years. After the first three years, the TEA will require that specific criteria for continued funding will be met by funded *Literacy Lines*. Each subgrant *Literacy Line* must include children served from birth through grade 12, consisting of collaborative partnerships among LEAs and service providers for children from birth through age 5. Each subgrantee must ensure that funds are allocated in each category for each budget. Each subgrant applicant must provide evidence to support the equitable distribution of funds between middle and high schools and the inclusion of the birth to school age population. Subgrantees must budget 16% of their total funds for birth through age 5, 42% for K–grade 5 and 42% for middle and high schools. These percentages will ensure that the SEA overall budgets of 15%, 40%, and 40% respectively of the \$70 million total State grant are met. For example, if an LEA/ECE Collaborative applicant’s budget is \$2 million that Collaborative should budget \$320,000 to benefit children from birth to age 5, and \$840,000 for Grades K–5,



and \$840,000 for grades 6–12. The annual budget for each *Literacy Line* may include funds each year up to amounts listed in the following table.

<b>LEA Size Category</b>	<b>Maximum Budget</b>	<b>Student Population of LEA</b>	<b>Total LEAs based on size/eligible LEA pool</b>	<b>Maximum number of children/students to be served</b>
Large urban	Up to \$11 million	80,000-200,000+	6/4	31,429
Large district	Up to \$4 million	40,000–79,999	19/10	11,429
Medium/Large district	Up to \$2 million	20,000–39,999	33/11	5,714
Medium district	Up to \$1 million	10,000–19,999	40/13	2,858
Small/Medium district	Up to \$500,000	5,000–9,999	73/16	1,429
Small district	Up to \$250,000	2,000–4,999	158/23	715
Very Small district	Up to \$200,000	<2,000	910/86	571

**(iii) Leveraging state and federal funding:** The TEA will work to leverage existing resources, including federal funds through Title I, Title II-A, and Title III of the ESEA and, as appropriate, Head Start Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. Additionally, TEA will work to integrate state and local funds, including the Student Success Initiative, which provides funding for interventions for struggling readers. Professional Development, funded from the Texas Student Success Initiative, will be used for administrators, teachers, and academic coaches, including: training on the state

standards, K–12; End-of-Course assessment for English I, II, and III; the ELPS; and the Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies. Texas will also utilize the PD developed through the Texas Reading Initiative, including the Texas Reading Academies, which were recently updated and made available online through state funding, and the PD and TA resources created as part of the Reading First Initiative. Together, federal, state, and local funding will assist in the support of effective implementation of the TSLP to improve student achievement in core academic subjects. Additionally, the State Literacy Partnership will work with the *Literacy Lines* to leverage state and federal funds at the local level for sustainability of the Initiative beyond SRCL grant funding. Texas has a solid history of providing TA for leveraging funding from all resources and was cited in the Reading First monitoring visit in 2010 for its effective planning in this area.

**(iv): Subgrants of sufficient size:** Texas will select a limited number of *Literacy Lines* to fund so that subgrants may be awarded to support projects that will improve instruction and outcomes for a significant number of students in high-need schools and/or early learning centers. The TSRCLI will provide sufficient funding to allow each selected subgrantee to comply with all grant requirements. (See table above).