## Project Summary

Research shows that reading on grade level at the end of third grade is a significant milestone in a student's educational development. Traditionally, many K-Grade 3 programs focus on learning to read; however, at the start of fourth grade, students are expected to read to learn, using their reading skills in service of learning across the curriculum: math, science, social studies, etc. Children's Reading Foundation found that, “up to half of the printed fourth-grade curriculum is incomprehensible to students who read below grade level” (2010). In one study of roughly 4,000 students reading at grade level at the end of grade three, Donald Hernandez of Hunter College found that one out of six students reading below grade level at the end of third grade did not graduate high school on time—four times the rate of their peers who were reading at grade level (2011). Students with relatively low levels of literacy tend to have more behavior and social problems and higher grade retention rates. Ultimately, third grade literacy was a strong predictor of high school graduation, and lower literacy levels served as a barrier to employment throughout adulthood. (Fesiter, 2013; Annie E. Casey, 2010). The K–Grade 2 reading interventions and reading intervention teams recommendation addresses Strategic Priority #2 building a foundation in reading and math in early childhood education and what educators know about the significance of literacy instruction in primary grades.

**LEA Financial Commitment** (start-up and annual costs) *

### Start Up Costs

- Salaries, wages, and benefits for reading interventionists or coaches, and added part-time/hourly certified tutors.
- Extra-duty or supplemental pay for school-based intervention team planning time to review and select a universal screening tool for all students and to develop a tiered systems of reading interventions.
- Purchase of a reading universal screening / assessment / progress monitoring tool for all students
- Professional development for school leaders, teachers, and other specialized instructional staff
- Family engagement activities for families.

### Ongoing Costs

- Salaries, wages, and benefits for reading specialists, interventionists, or coaches, and added part-time/hourly certified tutors.
- Extra-duty, supplemental pay for school-based intervention team for planning time to review effectiveness of reading universal screening activities and of tiered reading interventions.
- Ongoing site licenses and/or maintenance of a reading universal screening tool / assessment / progress monitoring tool.
- Professional development for school leaders, teachers, and other specialized instructional staff.
- Ongoing family engagement about the importance of reading.
Project Description

K–2 Reading Interventionists and/or Reading Intervention Teams collaborate with other specialized instructional staff to conduct universal screening of students, detect struggling readers, and implement interventions before students fall behind. For example, all students receive high-quality classroom reading instruction, and those students who are shown as struggling either by a universal screening or because they are not making expected progress from taking part in regular classroom instruction, receive added small group reading instruction aimed at building foundational literacy skills. Students taking part in small group interventions that do not make gains in literacy are given individualized instruction, more frequent assessments, and other instructional interventions.

Primary school reading interventions and intervention teams should incorporate what research shows to be effective in improving student outcomes for literacy. A moderate level of research shows that all students should be screened for potential reading problems at the beginning of the year and at mid-year. Students shown as at risk of developing reading disabilities are regularly monitored throughout the year on a monthly, or even weekly, basis. To implement a universal screening of literacy, LEAs and schools must meet in building-level teams to facilitate implementation and monitor progress. School-level teams will select efficient screening measures that identify children at risk of poor reading outcomes accurately. School or building-level teams use benchmarks or growth rates (or combination of the two) to identify children at low, moderate, or high risk for developing reading difficulties.

LEA and school teams develop a series of tiered interventions for struggling readers, either by adopting a standard protocol scripted tutoring program that addresses all foundational reading skills, or through individualized instruction models. Small groups would typically meet three to five times per week for 20 to 40 minutes per session. Small-group reading interventions should be offered for roughly five weeks, after which students may have caught up to their peers or may need added, more frequent and more intensive interventions. For example, small-group tutoring in a 5 to 8 student to teacher ratio may be offered for 30 minutes, 3–5 times per week for 15 weeks. Students that do not make literacy gains in small-group instruction, may be given 45–120 of tutoring, 5 days per week for 20 or more weeks in a group of 1–3 students. The frequency at which students receive these intensive interventions may vary.

Instruction should be systematic, building skills gradually, introducing new concepts and incorporating new skills into the students’ current knowledge foundation. Small group instruction should be explicit, integrating more student-teacher interaction opportunities, including frequent opportunities for student practice, and frequent comprehensive and specific feedback from teachers to students.

Goals and Student Achievement Objectives

The goal of K–Grade 2 reading interventions and reading intervention teams is that all students would meet or exceed grade level standards in reading on third grade reading assessments.

Expected Outcomes

The percentage of third grade students who meet or exceed grade level performance standards on the STAAR Reading assessment will increase from X% to Y% by Z (one year).
Training and Support TEA Offers

TEA offers literacy achievement academies for kindergarten, first, second, and third grade reading teachers. Reading academies will be offered in Summer 2018. Certified, full-time teachers who work at a campus at which at least 50% of students are educationally disadvantaged and who are assigned to teach either kindergarten or grade one are eligible to attend. Eligible teachers who attend all three days of the reading academy are entitled to receive a $350 stipend.

Program Duration, Training, or Significant Milestones

Primary school reading interventions and intervention teams meet, screen students, and develop effective interventions, escalating in the frequency and intensity of interventions based on student literacy gains.

Staffing Requirements for LEAs

Consider your district's capacity for convening reading intervention school-based teams and for offering ongoing tiered reading interventions. Small districts may be able to staff K–Grade 2 Reading Interventions centrally that serve several schools. Possible staffing support may include:

- District professional development departments
- K–2 literacy coaches
- K–Grade 2 curriculum specialists
- Certified tutors

Resources

- Center on Response to Intervention at American Institutes for Research
- Early Warning: Why Reading at the End of Third Grade Matters
- IES Practice Guide: Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades
- IES Practice Guide: Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in Elementary Grades
- Learning to Read, Reading to Learn from the Center for Public Education
- Reading Rockets, Launching Young Readers
- RTI Action Network, Distinguishing Between Tier 2 and Tier 3 Instruction in Order to Support Implementation of RTI
- TEA’s Mathematics and Reading Academies

TEA Contact Information

Jacquie Porter, Statewide Director
Division of Early Childhood Education
Department of Academics
Texas Education Agency 1701 North Congress
Austin, TX 78701
Email: jacquie.porter@tea.texas.gov
Phone: (512) 463-8886

※ TEA is providing the following information or link for reference purposes only, and TEA’s provision of the information or link does not in any way constitute an endorsement by TEA.