

A Synopsis of the 2007 Early Reading First Project Grantees

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Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
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U.S. Department of Education
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Summary of the 2007 Early Reading First Program

The ultimate goal of the Early Reading First Program, authorized by *No Child Left Behind, Title I, Part B, Subpart 2*, is to improve the school readiness of our nation's young children, particularly those from low-income families, by providing support for early childhood education programs serving preschool-age children so they may become centers of educational excellence. This goal supports *Good Start, Grow Smart*, the President's Early Childhood Initiative to improve early childhood education and strengthen early learning for young children.

The Early Reading First Program brings a unique and bold approach to improving preschool programs for our nation's at-risk children, including children with disabilities and limited English proficiency. Early Reading First provides funding and support to turn preschool programs into centers of excellence by improving instruction and classroom environments through scientific research-based practices in language, cognition and early reading skills.

Many of America's children face daunting challenges as they enter kindergarten lacking the necessary skills to learn how to read. Early Reading First offers an exciting opportunity to meet this challenge by helping to ensure that children are provided with a high-quality preschool education.

Eligible applicants for Early Reading First include local educational agencies (LEAs) and public and private organizations that meet the following criteria:

1. One or more local educational agencies (LEAs) that are eligible to receive a subgrant under the Reading First program (*Title I, Part B, Subpart 1, The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended (ESEA)*).
2. One or more public or private organizations or agencies (including faith based organizations) located in a community served by an eligible LEA. Unless the public or private organization is a preschool program applying on its own behalf, it must apply on behalf of one or more programs that serve preschool-age children (such as a Head Start program, a child care program, a family literacy program such as Even Start, or a lab school at a university).
3. One or more of the eligible LEAs, applying in collaboration with one or more of the eligible organizations or agencies.

Specifically, Early Reading First grants will provide funds to:

- Support local efforts to enhance the early language, cognitive, and early reading development of preschool-age children, particularly those from low-income families, through strategies and professional development that are based on scientifically based reading research;
- Provide preschool-age children with cognitive learning opportunities in high-quality language and print-rich environments so that they can attain the

fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for optimal reading development in kindergarten and beyond;

- Use language and literacy activities based on scientifically based reading research to support the age-appropriate development of oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness and alphabet knowledge;
- Use screening assessments or other appropriate measures to identify preschool-age children who may be at risk for reading failure, and to determine whether those children are developing the language, cognitive, and early reading skills they need for later reading success; and
- Integrate instructional materials and programs based on scientifically based reading research into existing preschool programs.

Through multi-year awards to eligible LEAs with at-risk children, and public and private organizations located in communities served by those eligible LEAs, the Early Reading First Program is intended to ensure that preschool-age children have the instruction, experiences, and environment that they need to ensure that they enter kindergarten prepared for continued learning. These grants complement the Reading First State Grants Program, which provides support for high-quality, scientifically based classroom-focused reading instruction for kindergarten through grade three.

Alabama

Project Name: Project BEYOND

Project Director: Rochelle Dail (.375 FTE)

Funding: \$3,512,166

Number of teachers/assistants served: 16

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 148 (year 1)/222 (years 2 and 3)

Grantee: University of Alabama –
Department of Education, Curriculum
and Instruction

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Tuscaloosa, AL 35487

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Project BEYOND is a unique partnership between The University of Alabama and private, public, and parochial early childhood centers in Southern Mississippi. In year one, Project BEYOND will transform eight classrooms at Adams Jefferson Frankly Community Action Agency, Inc. Head Start, Holy Family Catholic School, and Prince Street Day Care and Learning Center into language-, literature- and print-rich environments with high-quality programs. Four classrooms will be added after year one. Annually, Project BEYOND will serve up to 222 African American children from low-income families. Children identified as most at-risk will receive additional services from intervention teachers. A seven-week transition summer program will extend the number of weeks some children are served from 36 to 43. One classroom targeted for Project BEYOND is a half-day afternoon/evening class at Prince Street Day Care and Learning Center. Targeting this class will insure that children who attend evening daycare only receive a high quality language and literacy rich instruction.

Project BEYOND will integrate multiple strategies, activities, and materials to increase both quality and intensity of instruction. Daily, teachers will provide language and literacy whole and small group instruction through the implementation of *Opening the World of Learning (OWL)*, a program shown to improve literacy skills of diverse preschool children. Additional support for children's oral language and comprehension development will be provided through the inclusion of Classroom Book Club in all project classrooms that will be staffed by parent and community volunteers who receive specialized training in conducting read alouds. Formative and summative evaluations will be completed. Measures will include PPVT, PALS Pre K, Get Ready to Read Screener (GRTR), Developing Skills Checklist (DSC) – Auditory Skills Subtest, and EOWPVT. Professional development will be ongoing, systematic, intensive, and classroom-focused and include job-embedded demonstrations, in-class coaching, mentoring, and analysis of monitoring data.

Arizona

Project Name: Mohave Desert Early Literacy Coalition

Project Director: Alisa Burroughs (1.0 FTE)

Funding: \$4,428,916

Grantee: Southwest Institute for Children and Families

1004 Hancock Road

Bullhead City, AZ 86429

Tel. # (928) 758-3961

Number of teachers/assistants served: 28

Number of school districts served: 2

Number of children served: 280

The *Mohave Desert Early Literacy Coalition* will improve the school readiness of 280 culturally-diverse children in 14 classrooms located at two Head Start and two Reading First public school district sites. The Coalition is located in a remote and rural area of the Mohave Desert. This area includes the cities of Bullhead City and Mohave Valley, Arizona, as well as the Ft. Mohave Indian Nation. This area is a federally-designated rural empowerment zone/enterprise community, which exhibits pervasive poverty, unemployment and well documented educational challenges. Approximately 90% of children are eligible for free/reduced lunch and 50% are English language learners.

The Coalition will use a multifaceted, science-based approach to help children learn these skills. This approach is driven on best practices, founded on scientific reading research and driven by ongoing assessment and progress monitoring. The approach will feature seven strategies: a) increased time-for-learning opportunities, b) scientifically-based literacy curriculum (*Houghton-Mifflin: PreK: Where Bright Futures Begin*); c) print- and language-rich classrooms; d) scaffolded, multi-tiered learning support; e) continuous progress monitoring; f) intensive professional development programs using an instructional effectiveness (IE) model with literacy coaches; and g) home-school linkages to the curriculum. Coalition professional development, communication, assessment, and curriculum planning will be organized electronically using desktop videoconferencing. A thorough formative and summative evaluation will determine program efficacy, cost effectiveness, and changes to teaching practice. Measures will include ELLCO, PPVT, IPT, Get Ready to Read, PALS Pre-K, CBDM, and OWEPVT. DIBELS scores of participating children will be analyzed for up to two years after preschool exit to determine project impact on early reading.

Arkansas

Project Name: Little Rock Centers of Early Literacy Excellence

Project Director: Glenda Nugent (no ERF funds)

Funding: \$2,978,707

Grantee: Little Rock School District

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Little Rock, AR 72206

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Number of teachers/assistants served: 33

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 440

The Little Rock School District (LRSD) is the largest public school district in Arkansas with a K-12 enrollment of 25,312 students and a pre-k enrollment of 1,379 students as of October 2006. LRSD includes 81% students of color (68% African American, 3% Hispanic and the remainder Asian and other minority backgrounds) and 29% white. Through the Early Reading First project, LRSD will transform two Head Start and one school-based early childhood centers into early literacy model sites which will serve a total of 440 three and four-year-old children each year. These *Little Rock Centers of Early Literacy Excellence (LRCELE)* are in a rural area on the southwestern edge of the LRSD boundaries. Currently in these early childhood programs, at least 96% of the children are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program; the limited English proficiency (LEP) population ranges from 8-21%; and the three programs have large numbers of students with special needs. An extensive English language acquisition plan will be implemented to respond to the growing Hispanic population in the LRCELE area.

The LRCELE program goals include: 1) participating children will improve their oral language skills; demonstrate progress in developing phonological awareness, print awareness and alphabet knowledge; and demonstrate growth in background knowledge and cognitive skills that support listening comprehension and expressive language; 2) participating children will be immersed in print-and language-rich classroom environment; 3) LRCELE staff will develop expertise in the following areas: content and pedagogy of teaching preschool children foundational skills; administering early literacy assessments and using data to inform instructional decisions; implementing the scientifically research-based curriculum; creating a print rich classroom environment; and meeting the needs of a diverse student population; and 4) participating parents will increase their understanding of the oral language and literacy skills needed to be successful in school and to understand the importance of and how to be engaged in their child's education.

To carry out its program goals, LRCELE selected *Houghton Mifflin Pre-K: Where Bright Futures Begin*, a comprehensive, integrated pre-k program was selected because of its extensive research base and its alignment with goals of Early Reading First, Arkansas Early Childhood Education Frameworks, and Head Start, International Reading Association (IRA), and National Association Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards. Data will be collected to measure each program goal and associated set of achievement indicators and performance targets. Measurements will include PPVT, PALS Pre-K, EGIBA, QELI, and ITBS.

California

Project Name: Merced Early Reading First

Project Director: Lori Slaven (1.0 FTE)

Funding: \$3,127,301

Number of teachers/assistants served: 18

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 210

Grantee: Merced School District

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Merced Early Reading First (MERF) is a model Early Reading First project that targets children and families who live below the federal poverty line in Merced, California. MERF is a scientifically-based instructional program that intentionally addresses the development of a) oral language and vocabulary skills, b) alphabet knowledge, c) phonological processing, d) print awareness, and e) emergent writing skills. Additionally, MERF provides high quality, intensive professional development to teachers, as well as parenting programs that promote parental involvement in the early reading and language development of their children.

How effective is MERF? MERF instituted a randomized experimental design to determine the impact of its research-based strategies. Results demonstrated that children in MERF's "Centers of Excellence" outperformed ($p < .05$) children in regular state preschool classrooms, after controlling for initial language and literacy levels, on measures of oral language, phonemic awareness, concepts of print, and letter knowledge. Similarly, parents of children in MERF classrooms showed higher levels of involvement in home literacy activities in addition to higher levels of satisfaction with their child's preschool experience. MERF's peer-reviewed study was presented at the 2006 American Educational Research Association's Annual Conference.

MERF is building upon its existing validated program by proposing four new research based components at five additional sites. They include: a) afternoon enrichment sessions that provide small group and one-to-one intentional instruction; b) Online Assessment Reporting System (OARS) connected to the district's Reading First program; c) Integrated Child Assessment System; and d) accredited professional development program. The new enhanced MERF with its additional components promises to further increase literacy and language gains of children, make a measurable impact in the instructional skills of teachers, and engage parents even more in the education of their children.

MERF uses the *Houghton Mifflin's Where Bright Futures Begin (HM PRE-K)* – a comprehensive integrated Pre-K program that is based on scientific research and aligned with key critical Pre-K learning goals, including those defined by Early Reading First, Head Start, NAEYC and California's Preschool Foundations. The project utilizes multiple forms of evidence for screening each of the early reading skill areas. Measurements will include ELLCO, PPVT/TVIP, PALS Pre-K, and DRDP-R.

California

Project Name: Early Success for Children's Achievement of Language and Early Reading Acquisition

Project Director: Lorrie Hoggard (.375 FTE - no ERF funds)

Funding: \$3,499,494

Number of teachers/assistants served: 12

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 184

Grantee: Newport-Mesa Unified School District

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The *Early Success for Children's Achievement of Language and Early Reading Acquisition (ESCALERA) Program* will provide preschool-age children with the early literacy skills needed for kindergarten preparedness. The program will serve 184 impoverished, at-risk children who reside in Costa Mesa, California, and attend the Newport-Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) Pomona Preschool and Whittier Preschool. The program will provide: fully aligned and integrated, research-based curricula with instructional support; supplemental strategies and materials to ensure that the needs of English Learners - - 96.1% of the participating children - - and students with special needs are appropriately and adequately met; strategies designed to provide specialized support to students who are at-risk of developing reading difficulties; high quality, ongoing, and intensive professional development; print rich classroom environments; and a progress monitoring and assessment system that will inform instruction and identify individual student needs. Measurements will include ELLCO, PPVT, PALS Pre-K, and DRDP-R.

Specific program strategies and materials are based on a wealth of Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) and recognized best practices. The program utilizes a combination of two (2) curricula that meet the unique needs of the participating children. *Houghton Mifflin's Pre-K* curriculum is the foundation for early literacy skills development. *Hampton Brown's Avenues* curriculum provides additional oral language development support for English language learners. Specific intervention strategies will provide additional support to students who are at-risk of developing reading difficulties. Program goals are comprehensive, intensive, and focus on: age-appropriate improvement in oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge among students served; creating print rich classroom environments; and improving instructional practices through effective professional development. The program will coordinate with the NMUSD Reading First Program to ensure that students are prepared for a successful transition into kindergarten.

California

Project Name: Project LLEAPS (Language, Literacy, Early Intervention and Parent Support)

Project Director: Deb Merchant (.40 FTE)

Funding: \$3,000,000

Number of teachers/assistants served: 43

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 334

Grantee: San Juan Unified School District

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Project LLEAPS (Language, Literacy, Early Intervention And Parent Support) is a comprehensive Early Reading First program model that is multidisciplinary, well integrated, and provides high-quality services to all children. It will be implemented in five centers of excellence in the San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD) representing full and part day preschool services for low income children, including English Language Learners and children with disabilities and other special needs.

Project LLEAPS' goals are: (1) to provide early and effective developmental and health screenings and referrals; (2) to create high quality language and literacy rich environments; (3) to improve all children's language and literacy skills; (4) to increase the capacity of well trained early childhood team members through professional development; (5) to integrate all project elements, involving children, parents, staff, and the classroom environment for improved language/literacy outcomes; (6) to increase parents' skills in facilitating language and literacy development.

Highlights of the project include tools and strategies reflected in current research and effective practice to fill in the gaps of most early childhood programs. These include the *Houghton Mifflin Pre-K* English Language Arts curriculum; the Hanen Program for early childhood educators (*Learning Language and Loving It*) and for educating parents (*You Make the Difference*); a comprehensive system to regularly review and improve the learning environment, including ECERS and ELLCO; a professional development system with multiple, connected layers that mirrors the Literacy Environment Enrichment Program (LEEP); and assessment measures, including PPVT, PALS Pre-K, Pre-LAS, DRDP-R, and EGIBA.

Delaware

Project Name: Opening Doors to Literacy

Project Director: Carol Vukelich (.25 FTE)

Funding: \$3,621,606

Number of teachers/assistants served: 36

Number of school districts served: 2

Number of children served: 210

Grantee: University of Delaware –
Delaware Center for Teacher Education

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Newark, DE 19716

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The *Opening Doors to Literacy* project will serve 210 children in three New Castle County Head Start centers (11 classrooms, 36 staff) in northern Delaware. The area to be served borders the city of Wilmington, an enterprise community. The partnership will be led by the Delaware Center for Teacher Education at the University of Delaware in cooperation with colleagues from the University's Department of Individual and Family Studies and New Castle County Head Start, Inc. All but three of the children to be served who attend these centers come from families living below the poverty line.

The project's approach, grounded in SBRR, involves the implementation of a comprehensive system including the use of (a) an assessment system (ELLCO, PPVT, PALS Pre-K, CLASS, and Fluharty 2, IGDI and PWPA) applying the scientific method, an Assess-Plan-Teach model, to monitor children's progress and adjust instruction, within the classroom and in Tier 2 small group and Tier 3 one-on-one support provided to the children identified as not evidencing appropriate progress; (b) a research based and standards-based early literacy program, *Doors to Discovery*, with modifications made by the project leadership to ensure explicit instruction in the essential elements of language and early reading; (c) extended learning opportunities, through Tier 2 and 3 instructional support, extended summer programming, and a parent program, in the essential language and early reading areas; (d) a powerful professional development program where teachers and paraprofessionals will participate in group sessions to build their knowledge base and classroom-based coaching to support their use of their newly-acquired knowledge in their classrooms, linking 'theory to practice'; and (e) a strong transition plan to link NCCHS with the Reading First districts in which the project centers are located to ensure the bridge between preschool and public school.

Florida

Project Name: REACH II (Raising Expectations for All Children)

Project Director: Marsha Hill (interim)/ Jo Hudson (proposed) (.50 FTE)

Funding: \$4,081,677

Number of teachers/assistants served: 34

Number of school districts served: 4

Number of children served: 220

Grantee: Putnam County School District – Northeast Florida Educational Consortium
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The North East Florida Educational Consortium (NEFEC, a support organization serving 15 small, rural school districts) received their first ERF Grant in 2004—REACH: *Raising Expectations for All Children*. REACH preschool teachers quickly learned that young children, including children with disabilities and from rural, impoverished homes, were capable of entering kindergarten better prepared to learn to read. REACH II will continue the work that has begun in rural north Florida to increase preschool teacher knowledge and skills so that they may send students to kindergarten better prepared to learn to read. REACH II will serve 16 new preschool classrooms in four Reading First eligible school districts. The REACH II classrooms are housed in public schools and will serve 220 students per year including, 78% free/ reduced lunch, 30% students with disabilities, 55% African-American, and 5% non-English speaking.

REACH II professional development will assist preschool teachers as they develop an intense, high-quality preschool program designed to facilitate children's acquisition of essential emergent literacy skills—phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print awareness, and oral language. REACH II preschool teachers will work with early childhood/special education researchers from the University of Florida and Early Literacy Coaches to enhance the language and literacy environment of their classrooms. Early Literacy Coaches will provide on-site, intensive, individualized assistance and coaching to facilitate teacher implementation of selected published curriculums (*Open Court PreK*, *ScienceStart!*, *Everyday Mathematics PreK*) and targeted research-based emergent literacy instructional strategies. Screening assessments and progress monitoring measures will be administered regularly. Measurements will include PPVT, PALS Pre-K, Get Ready to Read, and IGDIs.

The goal of REACH II is to create five Early Reading First centers of educational excellence that will serve as model/demonstration sites for other preschool programs in the NEFEC region. It is expected that REACH II children will enter Reading First kindergartens better prepared to learn to read and more likely to perform on grade level on rigorous statewide reading testing administered in third grade.

Florida

Project Name: Linking Academic Success with Early Reading (LASER)

Project Director: Timothy Kilpatrick (.50 FTE)

Funding: \$2,995,978

Number of teachers/assistants served: 17

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 140

Grantee: The Committee for Academic Excellence

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Riverview, FL 33569

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The *Linking Academic Success with Early Reading (LASER)* project endeavors to develop five early childhood education centers of excellence in Hillsborough County, Florida. LASER will serve 140 three and four-year-olds each year (420 total) for at least two consecutive years prior to kindergarten. More than a third of the students speak English as a second language and 83% of students qualify to receive free or reduced lunches. Annually LASER will serve students year round, for at least 7 hours per day, 5 days per week.

Using scientifically-based reading research (SBRR) LASER will improve the programs by (1) creating and designing literacy, language and print-rich classroom environments, (2) implementing structured, continuous and on-going professional development programs that will be sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused and will include strategies such as using certified Bilingual, Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) instructors, mentors and coaches and progressive pedagogy in special education, biliteracy, comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing in the emphasis language, (3) fostering collaboration between home and school to advance students' cognition and early reading skill growth and development using State-aligned, SBRR curricula (*Scholastic's Early Childhood Program (SECP)*) and age/developmentally appropriate instruction that embeds literacy and language across academic experiences (4) using screening assessments and progress monitoring, including PPVT, PALS Pre-K, and curriculum-based measures to identify and work with children who may be at risk for delayed development or reading failure and design goals and objectives to meet their needs, (5) building on current preschool and elementary school transition practices by supporting and promoting continuity of instruction between these preschools and the LEA elementary schools. Two of the centers served by LASER have a direct feed into the LEA through a public elementary K-4 charter school and the two others are served by Reading First elementary schools within the District.

Georgia

Project Name: Clarke County School District Ready Readers

Project Director: Jan Stephens (.40 FTE)

Funding: \$6,473,760

Number of teachers/assistants served: 40

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 460

Grantee: Clarke County School District

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Athens, GA 30606

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Fax #: (706) 357-5293

stephenj@clarke.k12.ga.us

The Clarke County School District (CCSD) is a medium-sized urban school system with approximately 72% poverty rate overall. But among our preschool population (3s and 4s) this year, 88% live in poverty; 49% are African-American, 31% are Hispanic, 13% are Caucasian, and 6% are identified as “other.” This year at our Reading First school, Whitehead Road Elementary, DIBELS scores reveal that 25-35% of kindergarteners are at-risk. The proposed research-based, community-focused *Ready Readers Program* will serve approximately 460 children – 320 from CCSD and 140 from Little Ones Academy, a private, contractual preschool. The Ready Readers Program will provide these at-risk children with a high-quality, literacy intense preschool experience, intentionally and explicitly taught by well-prepared and knowledgeable staff of sufficient duration and intensity to develop the predictive skills needed to become fluent, motivated readers.

The goals of the program are: (1) language/literacy activities based on SBRR; (2) cognitive learning in language/literacy-rich environments; (3) systemic, ongoing professional learning based on SBRR; (4) valid/reliable screenings, diagnostic, progress monitoring; and (5) coordinate with similar efforts. Services will be offered 9 hours a day, 5 days a week, for 46 weeks a year. The Ready Readers program will provide differentiated instruction to English language learners and children with disabilities, as appropriate.

As part of the program, CCSD will (1) provide over 200 hrs of intensive, ongoing, sustainable, SBRR-based professional learning (PL) for staff and parents; (2) implement an SBRR curriculum for three-year-olds: *DLM Early Childhood Express* and for four-year-olds: *Opening the World of Literacy* and *Breakthrough to Literacy* with fidelity; (3) provide targeted literacy home visits using *Read Together, Talk Together* (in English & Spanish); and (4) provide high-quality, intentional, and explicit instruction using valid and reliable assessments and screenings to ensure student needs are met and to guide instruction. Measures will include PPVT, PALS Pre-K, IGDIs, and Pre-LAS.

Georgia

Project Name: Early County Early Reading First

Project Director: Sonja Rowland (1.0 FTE)

Funding: \$4,291,880

Number of teachers/assistants served: 26

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 240

Grantee: Early County School System

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Blakely, GA 39823

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Early County Schools (ECS), located in southwest Georgia is a one elementary system (Pre-k-5) of 1194 students (74% free/reduced price lunch). Over 37% of the children in Early County live in poverty compared to 17% in GA. Approximately 61% of children live with their mother whose mean income is \$11,292 compared to \$20,011 in the state of GA. The elementary school (ECES) is a Reading First school under NCLB and has made AYP for the last four years. Administrators, supervisors, and staff focus on student data to drive instruction. ECS has undergone a paradigm shift and increased its focus on academic skills while continuing to support social/emotional skills.

Early County Early Reading First (ECERF) will join ECES Pre-k and Head Start in serving over 200 children. The goal of ECERF is to prepare children to enter kindergarten with the strong language and early literacy skills necessary for them to become successful readers. This will be accomplished by: 1) providing high-quality preschool instruction in research based early literacy curricula (*DLM: Early Childhood Express* for three-year-olds and *Open Court Reading Pre-K* for four-year-olds); 2) using valid and reliable assessments and interventions (PPVT, PALS Pre-K, IGDIs, and Pre-LAS) to improve school readiness; 3) training early childhood staff in research-based teaching practices that target language and early literacy skills, as well as, cognitive, social, and emotional development; and 4) creating a family and community network that supports the school learning environment. Program outcomes for children will be aligned with GA's pre-k and k-12 Performance Standards. The ECERF project features a literacy team led by a coordinator, two literacy coaches and family literacy coordinator. The team will implement a research-based program of intentional instruction and professional development in which staff learn and work together and with families to engage parents in structured interactive literacy activities with their children. By unifying classroom instruction, professional development, parent involvement, and coordination with the existing k-3 program, ECERF will serve as a national model for the development of cognition, language, and literacy in children.

Georgia

Project Name: Twiggs County Early Reading First

Project Director: Carol Brown (.25 FTE)

Funding: \$3,154,865

Number of teachers/assistants served: 17

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 136

Grantee: Twiggs County Public Schools

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Twiggs County is one of the poorest counties in Georgia. Twiggs County Schools consists of 1 school-wide Title I school (100% free and reduced price lunch): 1 elementary (Jeffersonville {JE}) and 1 middle/high school, for grades pre-k-12 with an enrollment of approximately 1223 students. 318 of these students are in grades k-3. 95% of the school population is African-American, 4% Caucasian, and 1% multi-racial. 17% of our students have been identified as students with disabilities as defined under IDEA, which is a concern. Prior to consolidation in 2005/06, two schools met AYP. In 2000, an Even Start grant was awarded which provided much needed parent education, adult education, and P.A.C.T. (1 in 3 do not have an HS diploma) to help curb the downward spiral creating a cycle of poverty.

The significance of *Twiggs County Early Reading First (TCERF)* is that it will provide the foundation so desperately needed for children to succeed by giving them a solid foundation in SBRR literacy development and a blueprint for parents in the ways that they can become their child's first teacher. The goals of TCERF will be accomplished by 1) providing high-quality preschool instruction (*DLM: Early Childhood Express and Language for Learning* for three-year-olds and *Open Court Reading Pre-K* for four-year-olds); 2) training early childhood staff in SBRR practices; and 3) creating a family/community network that supports the school learning environment. TCERF's project features a literacy team at 3 sites (pre-k, Even Start, HS) lead by an expert literacy coach and family literacy coordinator that will serve approximately 136 children (9 hours/day, 5 days/week, 46 weeks/year).

TCERF will implement a program of intentional instruction and a research-based design for professional development in which preschool staff learn and work together with families. Screening assessments and progress monitoring will be administered on a regular basis. Measurements will include PPVT, PALS Pre-K, IGDIs, and Pre-LAS. The chosen curricula will provide a continuous foundation for preschool to elementary school. By unifying classroom instruction, professional development, parent involvement, and coordination with the existing kindergarten program, TCERF will serve as a national model for the development of cognition, language, and literacy in children.

Georgia

Project Name: LIGHT (Literacy Generates Hope for Tomorrow)

Project Director: Sharen Hausmann (.25 FTE)

Funding: \$4,480,001

Number of teachers/assistants served: 46

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 274

Grantee: United Way of Atlanta

Smart Start Georgia

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shausmann@unitedwayatlanta.org

Under the leadership of United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta (UWMA), Smart Start Georgia formed a coalition of four Marietta, Georgia, preschools to create an innovative Early Reading First project, *LIGHT: Literacy Generates Hope for Tomorrow*. Our program will focus on 274 low-income, preschool children with limited English proficiency, special needs, and risks for reading difficulties. Over 80% of children in the targeted school attendance areas of our preschool programs qualify for free or reduced lunch. *LIGHT* will transform our existing good programs into centers that exemplify best practices and produce measurable gains in literacy for young children.

The program will incorporate the use of a literacy-focused, research-based curriculum, *Opening the World of Learning (OWL)*. To provide the foundation for future reading and school success, the program goals are to: (1) improve children's oral language skills (expressive and receptive language and vocabulary development); (2) build children's alphabet knowledge (letter recognition); (3) develop children's phonological awareness (rhyming, blending segmenting); (4) increase children's print awareness; (5) implement and maintain an SBRR, language- and print-rich preschool environment to provide abundant opportunities for children to use print and practice literacy skills; and (6) increase preschool teacher knowledge and use of SBRR to systematically address early literacy skills essential to future reading success.

Professional development methods include intensive in-class coaching, study groups, training institutes and seminars, and model classroom observation. Under the leadership of our Early Literacy Coaches, teachers will become skilled in gathering high-quality data from progress monitoring tools and using that data to inform instruction. Key assessment tools include the PPVT, PALS Pre-K, Work Sampling System, and Get Ready to Read. *LIGHT* will empower teachers to implement high-quality classroom instruction so children at risk for reading difficulties excel in early literacy development and smoothly transition into elementary school. We will "*LIGHT*" the path to brighter futures!

Illinois

Project Name: Early Language and Literacy for Danville (ELL-D)

Project Director: Jeanette McCollum (.30 FTE)

Funding: \$4,060,877

Number of teachers/assistants served: 9

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 240

Grantee: Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois – Special Education College of Education
288 Education Building
1310 South Sixth St.
Champaign, IL 61820
Tel. #: (217) 244-6178
Fax #: (217) 333-6555
jmccollu@uiuc.edu

ELL-D (Early Language and Literacy Danville) represents a collaboration among Danville District 118, Danville Area Community College, the Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative (ECAP) at the University of Illinois, and four early childhood centers (school district preK, Head Start, community agency child, community college child care). Twelve classrooms will implement the *TROPHIES PreK* curriculum to develop skills in oral language, phonological awareness, concepts about print, alphabetic knowledge, and prewriting skills, organized and sequenced within 5 units (25 themes) that teach important core content. Trained literacy coaches will assist teachers to integrate TROPHIES into the broader based early childhood curriculum in their classrooms. Children will be screened using both a broad developmental screen and emergent literacy screens, including DIAL-R, PPVT, PALS Pre-K, and TERA-3. Progress will be monitored monthly using curriculum based assessment and also bimonthly with the IGDIs. A tiered approach to monitoring and differentiated instruction will be used to provide more intensive instruction to identified children. Families will participate in many types of events designed to increase their ability to enhance their children's emergent literacy and concept development, provided by a family liaison.

The grant will be managed by ECAP faculty from the University of Illinois. ECAP's five participating faculty partners, including the two Co-Principal Investigators, will serve as Component Facilitator for designated aspects of the project design and will be actively involved in personnel development, technical assistance, and project governance. Professional development will include regularly scheduled initial and semiannual Teacher Institutes, weekly in-class coaching, and monthly coach team meetings with trained literacy coaches in each center. The comprehensive evaluation plan includes quasi-experimental research on child outcomes, with follow-up into Kindergarten and 1st grade.

Kansas

Project Name: Foundation of Literacy Activities for Geary County Children (FLAG)

Project Director: Pat Anderson (.10 FTE)

Funding: \$3,325,056

Grantee: Unified School District #475

123 North Eisenhower
Junction City, KS 66441

Tel. #: (785) 717-2724

patanderson@usd475.org

Number of teachers/assistants served: 36

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 293

Geary County USD 475 will use its ERF project, the *Foundations of Literacy Activities for Geary County Children (FLAG)*, to support early intervention literacy services for 293 three/five-year-old children attending four existing preschools, and their 36 teachers in 24 classrooms. USD 475 serves both Junction City, KS and Ft. Riley, the contiguous 13,540-member U.S. Army post that has no separate school system. Fully 66% of proposed FLAG students are children of active-duty military men and women. FLAG partners (Head Start, USD Pre-K, and two Ft. Riley Centers) will improve access to high quality preschool services for the county's impoverished, at-risk children, and will establish early intervention model demonstration sites (Centers of Excellence) that focus on language, literacy, and prereading development activities for children with the greatest need. Two of the four partners, serving 76% of FLAG children, operate at least 6.5 hours per day for 46 weeks.

The goals of FLAG include: 1) to develop SBRR-based curriculum; 2) create literature-rich environments; and 3) provide a professional development model to increase teachers' instructional and assessment competencies. FLAG will develop early reading skills through *Curiosity Corner (CC)*, a Success for All (SFA) curriculum designed for preschool. When the child transitions to kindergarten, he/she moves to KinderCorner, the SFA kindergarten curriculum. It is aligned with the five core areas from the Kansas Reading First Statewide Professional Development Initiative, which meets the Kansas Curricular Standards for Reading and Writing. All 30 full-day kindergarten classrooms in our district use KinderCorner, and most low-income K-3 classrooms use SFA, the K-3 literacy curriculum. Such integration of the SFA curricula ensures effective transitions for children. FLAG integrates the three ERF performance measures into its extensive evaluation plan. Measures will include PPVT, PALS Pre-K, and Pre-LAS. Once the child is in kindergarten, scores on district-wide assessments (DIBELS) will be collected for each child enrolled in FLAG for up to three years, in order to monitor early literacy development and overall success in school. Students identified as at-risk by FLAG assessments will receive intense remediation. Intended outcomes include improved teacher competencies in the emergent literacy area, increased parent involvement, and measurable change in reading readiness in preparation for the transition to kindergarten.

Kansas

Project Name: Wyandotte County ERF

Project Director: Mary Abbott (1.0 FTE)

Funding: \$3,425,557

Number of teachers/assistants served: 27

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 160

Grantee: University of Kansas Center
for Research, Inc. – JGCP Life Span
Institute

650 Minnesota, Second Floor

Kansas City, KS 66101

Tel. #: (913) 321-6143

Fax #: (913) 371-8522

mabbott@ku.edu

Wyandotte County ERF (Wy-ERF) will build upon an existing collaboration among two local urban preschool programs, early childhood support programs within Project EAGLE of the University of Kansas Medical Center, and early literacy researchers at Juniper Gardens Children's Project of the University of Kansas. The purpose of Wy-ERF is to substantially increase the intensity of language and literacy instruction so that children from high-risk Kansas City, Kansas families improve academically. Nine classrooms, 27 teachers, and 180 children from local Head Start and El Centro preschools will participate. The project will integrate the intensity-rich tiered model of implementation, research-based literacy materials, summer and monthly on-going professional development, and data-driven instructional decisionmaking. Each classroom will have three teachers (2 AA + 1 CDA). There will be a mentor coach for every three classrooms and sufficient assistance from an intervention coach to ensure criterion-level implementation of tier-two intervention.

Wy-ERF will implement the *Scholastic Early Childhood Program (SECP)*. The Wy-ERF tiered model of leveled instruction that focuses on differentiated instruction through data-driven decision-making will substantially increase instructional intensity and help to prevent later reading difficulties among our young high risk/disadvantaged children. Our Wy-ERF project will implement these five goals: (1) to integrate research-based instructional materials and literacy activities; (2) to increase the use of evidence-based instructional strategies and activities; (3) to raise the level of environmental support; (4) to provide and support professional development based on scientifically-based reading research that will enhance preschoolers' language, literacy and pre-reading development; and (5) to increase the use of screening and progress monitoring reading assessments that will effectively identify children at risk for reading failure and lead to improved instruction for individual children. Measurements will include TOPEL, PPVT/TVIP, PALS Pre-K, G3 Oral Language and Early Literacy Indicators: Picture Naming Fluency, and DIBELS.

Kentucky

Project Name: GRREC Early Reading First

Project Director: Elizabeth Storey (.10 FTE)

Funding: \$4,466,755

Number of teachers/assistants served: 34

Number of school districts served: 5

Number of children served: 198

Grantee: Green River Regional Educational Cooperative

Western Kentucky University

1606 College Heights Blvd.

#21031

Bowling Green, KY 42101

Tel. #: (270) 745-2541

Fax #: (270) 745-5199

liz.storey@grrec.ky.gov

The Green River Regional Educational Cooperative (GRREC) is a member-driven service agency supporting 32 school districts in rural Kentucky. The *GRREC ERF* project will support five low-income, at-risk preschool centers in five school districts. Most of the 198 preschoolers are language/developmentally delayed; all are low-income and/or have a special need (disability). Such challenges lead to achievement deficits in the five identified elementary schools.

GRREC ERF will support teachers as they transform their preschools into Centers of Excellence. Specifically, it will: (1) implement the scientifically researched-based *Building Language for Literacy* early literacy curriculum by Scholastic; (2) double current classroom time, going from half-day to full-day and expanding to summer; (3) provide assessment-guided instruction via individual Assessment & Intervention Plans; (4) provide a 200-hour professional development and coaching model to support center staff; (5) implement a family/community literacy plan to impact each child's home environment; and (6) align preschools with existing Reading First programs (transitioning to Kindergarten). Achievement of each project goal will be evaluated through aligned objective benchmarks and indicators. Measurements will include PPVT, PALS Pre-K, G3, PAYCO, and ELLCO. In short, GRREC's ERF project will prevent reading difficulties through early, excellent, research-based instruction that will engage its three- and four-year-olds and expand their early literacy skills and abilities.

Louisiana

Project Name: Bright Futures ERF Project

Project Director: Patricia Candler (1.0 FTE)

Funding: \$3,060,535

Number of teachers/assistants served: 28

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 250

Grantee: Bright Futures Madison

Parish School District

301 S. Chestnut St.

Tallulah, LA 71282

Tel. #: (318) 574-3616

Fax #: (318) 574-3667

patricia.candler@madisonpsb.org

The *Bright Futures Early Reading First Project (Bright Futures)* is a partnership among Madison Parish Public Schools (MPPS), the Delta Community Action Association Head Start, and the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL). Bright Futures will develop three centers into Preschool Centers of Educational Excellence: two MPPS elementary school centers with six Pre-K classes serving 97 children, and one Head Start center with eight classes serving 153 preschoolers. The project proposes to provide a full day, full year early childhood program for three- and four-year-old children who are from very low-income families in one of Louisiana's most impoverished parishes.

Bright Futures is characterized by close coordination between the local schools and Head Start center, a strong set of instructional resources targeted to the needs of low-income children, a focus on providing high-quality oral language and print-rich environments, and ongoing professional development that assures effective implementation. All three centers will implement a common curriculum. The proposed instructional programs, *DLM: Early Childhood Express* (three-year-olds) and *Open Court Reading Pre-K* (four-year-olds), are well supported by current reading research. The project approach also addresses Louisiana's Pre-Kindergarten standards for early language and literacy. Professional development plans are modeled after *A Blueprint for Professional Development* and will provide a minimum of 228 hours of professional development, including extensive in-class coaching by trained literacy coaches. Screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic reading assessments will be used to ensure that instruction is scaffolded for each child. Measurements include PPVT, EOWPVT, PALS Pre-K, and Pre-CTOPP. Project coordination and oversight will be provided by a steering committee comprised of the project director and project coordinator, MPPS preschool and Reading First coordinators, the two literacy coaches, a representative from each of the three centers, and a SEDL consultant.

Massachusetts

Project Name: Chelsea Early Ready First

Project Director: Jacqueline Bevere Maloney (no ERF funds)

Funding: \$1,738,087

Number of teachers/assistants served: 21

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 117

Grantee: Chelsea Public Schools
99 Hawthorn St.

John Silber Early Learning
Center

Chelsea, MA 02150

Tel. # (617) 466-5150

Fax #: (617) 889-8425

beverej@chelsea.mec.edu

The Chelsea Public Schools currently have 5,566 students enrolled in nine schools with 85.1% of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. All schools are Title I Schoolwide programs. Chelsea is an urban district, with the highest percentage of students whose primary home language is not English (80.8%) and second highest percentage of minority students (89.3%) of any public school district in Massachusetts. The pre-kindergarten (PK) classes have existed in the Chelsea School District since 1990 and are now located at the John Silber Early Learning Center (ELC). The ELC is the largest PK provider in the city with an average daily attendance rate of 94% in the 2005-06 School Year. The *Chelsea Early Reading First (ERF)* project will focus on seven full-day, year-round classrooms and will directly impact 117 children. Through ERF, the ELC will be transformed into a center of excellence that will serve as a model for other preschools, particularly those servicing economically disadvantaged families and students' whose primary home language is not English.

Chelsea ERF will provide students with the foundational linguistic building blocks and skills (oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge), necessary to meet the challenges of learning to read and later reading comprehension in a literacy and language rich environment by: 1) implementing the *Opening the World of Learning (OWL)* early literacy program curriculum; 2) hiring two full-time coaches to model and mentor staff on the implementation of OWL; 3) providing training by the OWL author and publishers on the OWL curriculum; 4) hiring Hanson Initiative for Language & Literacy to provide professional development; 5) increasing the quality and quantity of language and print material available in all classrooms; and 6) measuring and assessing student growth and development using PPVT, PALS Pre-K, and EVT. Through focused professional development the Chelsea ERF project will create a "professional learning community" where ERF staff will be provided the necessary coaching and content to assist them in implementing OWL and additional strategies to further enhance their print and language environments in all areas of the classroom. Chelsea's ERF project will enhance and expedite the acquisition of early literacy and language skills to ensure future social and academic success for students.

Massachusetts

Project Name: RENEW – Reading Enrichment to Nurture Excellence in Worcester

Project Director: Sue Washburn (.80 FTE)

Funding: \$3,385,805

Number of teachers/assistants served: 37

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 313

Grantee: Education Development Center, Inc.

55 Chapel St.

Newton, MA 02548

Tel. #: (617) 969-7100

Fax #: (617) 244-3609

swashburn@edc.org

RENEW—Reading Enrichment to Nurture Excellence in Worcester is a partnership between the Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) and the Worcester Public Schools (WPS). RENEW is a multi-faceted intervention that will elevate five of WPS' preschool centers from programs of quality to programs of educational excellence. RENEW will institutionalize evidence-based instructional practices in 19 classrooms, reaching 313 of the district's most vulnerable children in each year of the project, nearly half of whom will receive two years of service. All of these children are low-income and face other high risk factors for academic failure prevalent in this urban community—Worcester's percentages of children with limited English proficiency exceed the state average while standardized test scores fall below.

RENEW will implement an intensive professional development program for over 50 WPS staff—supervisors, teachers, and teacher assistants—consisting of evidence-based, credit-bearing courses, instructional coaching, and adoption of a new research-based literacy curriculum, *Opening the World of Learning (OWL)*. Over the three years of the grant, each teacher and supervisor will participate in 220 hours of coursework in early language and literacy development and receive 10 graduate or undergraduate credits. Weekly instructional coaching will enhance teachers' instructional practices, with a focus on the growing population of English language learners. Screening assessments and progress monitoring will occur on a regular basis. Measurements will include PPVT/TVIP, PALS Pre-K, PLS-4, and Pre-LAS. RENEW will give WPS the resources needed to coordinate its preschool services with its Reading First initiative and align practices across preschool and K classrooms.

Michigan

Project Name: Mesick, Marion, and Pine River TLC
(Teaching Literacy Collaboratively)

Project Director: Michael Acosta (.50 FTE)

Funding: \$3,796,400

Grantee: Marion Public Schools
1011 Lake Ridge Dr., #305
Traverse City, MI 49684
Tel. #: (230) 590-0048
mikeacostamsw@yahoo.com

Number of teachers/assistants served: 18

Number of school districts served: 3

Number of children served: 161

Mesick, Marion, and Pine River Schools will partner with Northwest Michigan Human Services Agency (NMHSA) and North East Community Service Agency (NEMCSA), Head Start grantees, to transform existing preschool programs into Early Literacy Centers of Excellence through *Mesick, Marion and Pine River TLC (Teaching Literacy Collaboratively)*. TLC ensures all preschoolers in these rural districts a high quality, literacy focused preschool experience, explicitly taught by knowledgeable staff and of sufficient duration and intensity to develop the predictive pre-reading skills to transition into Reading First/kindergarten programs. An average of 20% of the students in these communities live in poverty compared with the state average of 12%. Free and reduced lunch eligibility is at 60% compared to the state average of 38%. The socioeconomic status along with the accompanying risk factors too often sends these children to school ill prepared for educational success.

TLC will expanding seven two days per week programs and two four days per week programs to Early Literacy Centers of Excellence that operate five days per week and 46 weeks per year. Fidelity research based curricula (*Language for Learning* and *Ladders to Literacy* for three-year-olds and *Harcourt Trophies* for four-year-olds) will be implemented to intentionally and explicitly teach predictive reading skills to 161 three and four-year-olds. A research based parent mentor program that will support parents working side-by-side with TLC to provide daily experiences to develop predictive reading skills and a research based home visiting program to expand curricula exposure will be implemented. TLC will set up a lending library for families and sponsor monthly family events. Research based, sustained, intense, and ongoing professional development will be offered to all TLC staff. Professional development time will be built into the program schedule on an annual basis. The early literacy mentor/coach role will be developed through *Steps to Success* so they have the knowledge and tools to support teachers in implementing curricula ensuring fidelity to the model. Valid and reliable screening, progress monitoring, and assessments will be implemented to ensure individual needs are met, interventions are timely and are used to inform and guide instruction. Measurements will include PPVT, PALS Pre-K, IGDIs, Pre-LAS, and Denver Developmental Screen. A transition to school team with all stakeholders will be developed to create ongoing activities that reflect a shared vision and investment in reading achievement and school success.

Missouri

Project Name: Leveling the Field for English Language Learners

Project Director: Alicia Miguel (interim – no ERF funds)

Funding: \$4,478,279

Number of teachers/assistants served: 72

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 590

Grantee: The School District of Kansas City

1211 McGee St.

Kansas City, MO 64124

Tel. #: (816) 418-2603

Fax #: (816) 418-2610

amiguel@kcmsd.net

Leveling the Field for English Language Learners (Leveling the Field), an Early Reading First project from the Kansas City, Missouri School District, will upgrade five early childhood/Head Start programs to centers of Early Childhood Excellence. The five sites chosen are all schools where the students would normally enter the English as a Second Language (ESL) program when they enter kindergarten. These centers include East Elementary, which has 120 students in its Early Childhood program; Wheatley, which has 75 students in its Head Start Program and Early Childhood Special Education program; Douglas, which has 310 students in its Head Start and Early Childhood Special Education Program; Whittier, which has 80 students in its Early Childhood program, and Woodland, which has 80 students in its Head Start and Early Childhood program. Leveling the Field will focus on the language needs of these children before they enter kindergarten. About 80% of the students in the Kansas City School District qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch program. Each of the five sites chosen has an elementary school attached to them or nearby, with over 85% of their students qualifying for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch program. Over 90% of the 665 students involved in this program are minority with a majority of the students from families who speak a language other than English at home.

Leveling the Field will provide the scientifically based reading research programs, *Curiosity Corner (CC)* and *Breakthrough to Literacy (BTL)* with scientifically based research in English language development through the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). The CC and BTL curriculums include an environment rich in literature and meaningful environmental print, an emphasis on oral language production, and a daily schedule pervaded by literacy events. The program provides teachers with engaging materials and explicit strategies to teach letter names and sounds through meaningful vocabulary. SIOP uses the three principles that must be present in all second language classes: increased comprehensibility, increased interaction, and increased thinking skills combined with the instructional strategies of: total physical response, cooperative learning, academic language scaffolding, native language support, building or accessing background knowledge, and realia to teach English language development. Screening assessments and progress monitoring tools will be administered on a regular basis. Measurements will include PPVT, PALS Pre-K, and BTL Literacy Assessments.

Nebraska

Project Name: Rural Language and Literacy Connections

Project Director: Lisa Knoche (.20 FTE)

Funding: \$2,741,563

Number of teachers/assistants served: 30

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 176

Grantee: Board of Regents,
University of Nebraska, University
of Nebraska – Lincoln

238 Teachers College

University of Nebraska, Lincoln

Lincoln, NE 68588

Tel. #: (402) 472-4821

lknoche2@unl.edu

Rural Language and Literacy Connections (Rural LLC) is designed to create an intensive, literacy-based early learning program for rural, low-income children in Nebraska. Rural LLC is grounded on strong preschool/Head Start classroom curriculum instruction and rich environmental supports in literacy and language, as well as literacy supports in supplemental child care (family home or center-based) settings and children's homes to enhance children's early reading skills. The partnership involves Head Start Child and Family Development Program (HSCFDP), and Grand Island Public Schools-Early Childhood (GIPSEC) in central, rural Nebraska, and the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Annually, the language and literacy skills of 176 rural, low-income children from 11 classrooms will be enhanced as a result of participation.

The goals of Rural LLC are to (1) improve young children's oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness and alphabet knowledge via use of scientifically-based early literacy curricula (integration of *Opening the World of Learning [OWL]* and *Read Together, Talk Together [RTTT]*); (2) improve the language and print-richness of the literacy environments for preschool children enrolled in Rural LLC; and (3) improve the capacity of early childhood professionals in preschools and supplementary child care settings to support the future reading and school success of young children through systematic professional development activities, as well as supplemental literacy-based opportunities to families.

Professional development that is high quality, sustained and intensive is important for effective implementation of the curriculum components (OWL/RTTT) to support children's language and literacy development, as well as teachers' abilities to provide natural language opportunities for children and engage families in early literacy development. The training series is designed to ensure that teachers and child care providers, 1) understand the underlying principles of child language and literacy development, 2) understand how to effectively implement the OWL and/or RTTT curriculum, and 3) utilize effective instructional strategies, materials, and techniques to engage children in language learning as well as parents and other family who routinely supervise children at home. Screening assessments and progress monitoring tools will be administered on a regular basis. Measurements will include PPVT, PALS Pre-K, Get Ready to Read, WMLS, Preschool COR, and DIBELS.

New York

Project Name: Buffalo Preschool CARE (Community Action for Reading Equity)

Project Director: Helene Harris Kramer (.20 FTE)

Funding: \$4,111,507

Number of teachers/assistants served: 29

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 217

Grantee: Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo – Good Schools for All

712 Main St.

Buffalo, NY 14202

Tel. #: (716) 843-8895

Fax #: (716) 843-8899

hkramer@goodschoolsforall.org

Buffalo Preschool CARE (Community Action for Reading Equity) is a partnership of *Good Schools for All*, the Buffalo Public Schools, Bethel Head Start, and the Child Care Resource Network (CCRN). CARE partners will transform five Head Start Centers into Early Reading First (ERF) preschool centers of educational excellence through a high quality, scientifically based reading research (SBRR) program aligned with Early Reading First's statutory guidelines. The five Head Start Centers in this project serve 217 three and four-year-old children per year in 13 classrooms - 97% are eligible for free or reduced lunch, 93% are African-American, 77% live in a single parent household, and 16% have documented disabilities.

CARE will dramatically increase the language and literacy skills of the children served so they are all ready to start Kindergarten successfully. The ERF project will (1) create high quality, extended year/extended-day programs of stimulating, intensive and explicit language and literacy instruction for preschool children in a high poverty neighborhood of Buffalo, NY; (2) expose children to SBRR literacy instruction and demonstrate significant improvement in the essential components of literacy: oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge; (3) significantly improve the language and print richness of all three and four year old classrooms with high quality resources and SBRR strategies to improve cognitive learning opportunities; (4) provide continuous professional development for classroom teachers and staff, along with in-class literacy coaches, to ensure the highest quality of instructional practice in each classroom; and (5) create a seamless corridor of evidence-based reading practice for preschool through 3rd grade children by aligning ERF and Reading First funds and strategies and by tracking children's progress to ensure that progress is made and sustained.

To carry out these goals CARE will integrate and implement the *Houghton-Mifflin Pre-K: Where Bright Futures Begin!* and *Creative Curricula*. The CCRN will design and implement an intensive, ongoing and embedded professional development component to increase the capacity of teachers and staff to implement effective literacy instruction and practices for the low-income children in the CARE project. CCRN staff includes specialists in early childhood, child development, developmentally appropriate practices, literacy education and adult learning. Screening assessments and progress monitoring tools will be administered on a regular basis. Measures will include PPVT, PALS Pre-K, and DIBELS.

New York

Project Name: Syracuse City School District ERF

Project Director: Karen Howard (no ERF funds)

Funding: \$3,531,340

Grantee: Syracuse City School District

725 Harrison St.

Syracuse, NY 13210

Tel. #: (315) 435-5840

Fax. # (315) 435-4025

Number of teachers/assistants served: 22

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 248

Syracuse City School District ERF will transform three District Reading First elementary schools with pre-k classes and two off-site District-run pre-k programs serving a large number of English language learners into five ERF Centers of Excellence. The project will target nine classrooms serving 248 preschoolers, of whom 93% live in poverty, 15% are ELLs, 79% are non-Caucasian, and 22% have special needs.

These centers will: (1) provide preschoolers with high quality oral language and print-rich environments with adult/child ratios that support the proposed language and literacy learning outcomes; (2) provide intensive professional development to Center staff that is based on SBRR knowledge of the development of emergent literacy skills, including strategies to support ELLs and children with disabilities; (3) provide activities and instructional materials based on SBRR to support oral language development, phonological awareness, awareness of the conventions of print, and alphabet knowledge; (4) systematically measure environment (ELLCO) and children's growth in the critical domains of language and early reading development to identify at risk students and to adjust instruction and programs accordingly; (5) coordinate with Reading First activities at the targeted sites (and/or feeder schools), providing a comprehensive approach to reading instruction pre-k-3 validated by SBRR; (6) provide parents with knowledge and resources to support their children's learning; (7) utilize independent evaluators and rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods to support continuous program improvement; and (8) broadly disseminate our work at the local, State, and national levels contributing to the body of knowledge as to what works to support language and literacy learning for and with our nation's young children.

The project will provide explicit and intentional instruction for developing each child's language, cognition, and early reading skills through the implementation of *Scott Foresman Reading Street Pre-K*. The project will provide extensive and ongoing professional development with interconnecting components including coaching, study groups, small and whole group sessions, in-class modeling, and visitations to other classrooms. Screening assessments and progress monitoring tools including PALS Pre-K and PPVT/TVIP will be administered on an ongoing basis to measure children's growth in the critical domains of language and identify at risk students.

North Carolina

Project Name: HEART: Hands-On Early Assistance for Readers of Tomorrow

Project Director: David Jordan (interim)/Jessie Smith (proposed) (1.0 FTE)

Funding: \$3,367,721

Grantee: Bladen County Schools
1489 Highway 701 South
Elizabethtown, NC 28337
Tel. #: (910) 862-4136
Fax #: (910) 862-4277
dcjordan@bladen.k12.nc.us

Number of teachers/assistants served: 24

Number of school districts served: 2

Number of children served: 206

The Eastern North Carolina school districts of Bladen and Columbus Counties have joined forces to implement *HEART: Hands-On Early Assistance for Readers of Tomorrow* to ensure that students in this rural, poverty-stricken area receive enhanced learning opportunities at the heart of future academic success for two years prior to formal kindergarten entry. The five target sites, Bladen Lakes Primary, Elizabethtown Primary, Chadbourn Elementary, Hallsboro-Artesia Elementary, and Tabor City Elementary School, currently operate full-day, 3K and 4K preschool classes (6.5 hours per day, five days per week). With ERF funding, operations will be expanded to 46 weeks/year.

Through results-driven, ongoing professional development led by early literacy coaches, teachers and paraprofessionals will be empowered to implement high-quality instructional practices enabling students to acquire the essential literacy skills leading to future academic success. HEART will implement a literacy-focused, scientifically based curriculum, *Ready, Set, Leap! (RSL)* into the preschool classrooms. By embedding instructional targets in alphabet knowledge, oral language, phonological awareness, and print concepts into preschool instruction, HEART will assist students in developing essential early literacy skills shown to prevent future reading difficulties and promote academic success. *HEART* will also address the needs of our rapidly expanding English language learner population through our English language acquisition plan. Screening assessments and progress monitoring tools will be administered on a regular basis. Measurements will include PPVT, PALS Pre-K, and IGDIs. HEART's Early Reading First program will ensure that our high-risk students receive *Hands-On Early Assistance for Readers of Tomorrow*, acquiring the early literacy skills at the very *HEART* of future, academic success!

North Carolina

Project Name: The Time is Now in Pre-K
Project Director: Haven Harrelson (interim)/Cheryl
Lampley (proposed) (1.0 FTE)
Funding: \$2,940,000

Grantee: Richmond County Schools
118 Vance St.
Hamlet, NC 28345
Tel. #: (910) 582-5860
Fax #: (910) 582-7921
havenharrelson@richmond.k12.nc.us

Number of teachers/assistants served: 11
Number of school districts served: 1
Number of children served: 100

The Time is Now in Pre-K ERF project is designed to prepare children to enter kindergarten with the necessary cognitive, early language and literacy skills for success in school. The five programs selected for the project include children with “at risk” conditions such as poverty, ELL, and disability. At the same time, they each have the capacity and potential to become an Early Reading First preschool center of excellence. The fact that these centers are situated in one of the poorest counties in the country, Richmond County, North Carolina, makes them uniquely qualified to demonstrate that centers of excellence can be established and outstanding child outcomes achieved in communities with high risk.

Opening the World of Literacy (OWL), the main curriculum, is structured, systematic, and aligned to support the development of children’s oral and written language skills. The over-arching goal for the Time is Now in Pre-K project’s professional development program is to improve ALL pre-K children’s literacy learning and achievement. This goal will be achieved by: 1) enhancing adult knowledge of early literacy development, assessments, and supports as indicated by significantly higher scores of pre- and post-curriculum-based assessments; 2) enhancing fidelity of implementation of a research-based early literacy curriculum the *OWL*; 3) developing and supporting professional learning communities through “guided design” activities on effective early childhood language and literacy programs and practice; 4) helping Richmond county, other schools and districts develop high-quality comprehensive early language and literacy childhood programs through dissemination efforts; and, 5) suggesting/providing resources and research that will help meet these goals. Screening assessments and progress monitoring tools will be administered on a regular basis. The specific measurement instruments to be used are the PALS-Pre-K, the PPVT, preLAS-2, and PLS-4.

South Carolina

Project Name: Lancaster County Partners for Youth ERF **Grantee:** Lancaster County

Project Director: Sharon Novinger (interim)/Mim Boucher (proposed) (1.0 FTE) Partners for Youth

Funding: \$3,391,930

P.O. Box 1023
Lancaster, SC 29720
Tel. #: (803) 286-1465
Fax #: (803) 283-2171

Number of teachers/assistants served: 40

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 350

The *Lancaster County Partners for Youth ERF* project was derived from a county-wide strategic plan. Following a comprehensive community needs and resource assessment, and extensive review of best practice literature, a set of detailed strategies was established to improve school readiness in a small rural county in South Carolina. Approximately 350 children and families will be served in various program components. Approximately 40 childcare providers will receive professional development and mentoring.

The project will implement the *Open Court Reading Pre-K* curriculum. The professional development component includes on-site training and mentoring at the three target childcare centers, enhanced diagnostic assessments, an environmental enhancement component. Professional development is designed to start at the broad theoretical level, gradually translate these constructs into specific activities related to the classroom environment and set-up, content, focus, and duration of instruction, and strategies for interacting with children to promote pre-literacy skill development. Finally, staff training is conducted on the proposed curriculum and assessment instruments. Parent literacy support (Raising a Thinking Child) and home visitation components (Parent –Child Home) will also be implemented. The program includes an evaluation methodology to track implementation and monitor effectiveness at both the process and outcome levels. Screening assessments and progress monitoring tools will be administered on a regular basis. Measurements will include PPVT, PALS Pre-K, TERA-3, and EVT.

South Carolina

Project Name: South Carolina Early Reading Collaborative

Project Director: Mary Anne Mathews (.25 FTE – no ERF funds)

Funding: \$4,150,553

Number of teachers/assistants served: 54

Number of school districts served: 2

Number of children served: 480

Grantee: South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness

1300 Sumter St.

Columbia, SC 29201

Tel. #: (803) 734-0397

Fax #: (803) 734-1431

mmathews@scfirststeps.org

SCERC (South Carolina Early Reading Collaborative), a project of South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness, proposes to study the impact of a research-based early literacy model on publicly-supported preschool programs for at-risk children in public school, Head Start, and private settings. Partnering with SC First Steps are: the First Steps partnerships of Darlington and Lee Counties, Public School Districts of Darlington and Lee Counties; Wateree and Darlington Head Start Programs; Bishopville-Lee Child Development Center; and Lynchburg-Elliott Child Development Center. The results of this project will help inform public policy and the use of federal, state, and local resources in South Carolina to remedy a court ruling that requires the state to increase access to early childhood services for children in poverty.

The project will impact student outcomes in three types of programs at six sites – one public school, three Head Start, and two center-based – in two underserved rural counties, each served by LEAs that are eligible for Reading First funding and characterized by high levels of children in poverty and educational failure. This project will impact an estimated 480 children annually, in both 3K and 4K programs, most of whom are African American and over 95% are low-income. Project sites also anticipate serving more children from Spanish-speaking families due to demographic changes in their counties. Each site has demonstrated the willingness and capacity to benefit from such a program.

SCERC will transform existing early childhood programs striving toward higher quality into “centers of educational excellence” by integrating a literacy-focused, scientifically-based curriculum with high-quality language and print environments; intensive professional development in early childhood literacy; and effective use of assessments for program accountability and informing instructional practice. *SCERC* will implement Leapfrog Schoolhouse’s *Ready, Set, Leap!*, including its supplemental modules for students having difficulty acquiring literacy skills (*The Literacy Center*) and for ESL learners (*Language First*). *SCERC* will: (1) increase teacher knowledge and use of scientifically-based reading research and practices to promote the development of students’ key early literacy skills including phonological awareness, oral language development, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge and (2) empower teachers to successfully implement high-quality curricula components, instructional materials and meaningful learning activities to positively impact student academic achievement. Screening reading assessments and progress monitoring tools, including PPVT, PALS Pre-K, IGDI, Get Ready to Read, and RSL student progress reports will be administered on an ongoing basis.

Texas

Project Name: Good Beginnings
Project Director: Catherine Davis (1.0 FTE)
Funding: \$2,166,898

Number of teachers/assistants served: 15
Number of school districts served: 2
Number of children served: 540

Grantee: Hearne Independent
School District
900 Wheelock
Robertson, TX 77859
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catie74@hotmail.com

Good Beginnings is both the name and the goal of a central Texas partnership that is led by Hearne (TX), and includes Calvert ISD, Head Start, two private preschools, professors from Texas State University, The University of Texas, and EducationNews.org who will serve as professional development and evaluation partners and project disseminators. Hearne, TX (and Calvert 10 miles away) are rural farm communities in central Texas. According to the 2000 census, the average household income in the area income was \$19,556 and a third of families were living in poverty. 86% of public school children qualify for free or reduced price lunch. Through the cooperation of Head Start, TLC and First Steps private preschools, and Hearne and Calvert ISDs, grantees will reach *every* three and four year old in the targeted geographical area.

Good Beginnings has chosen to implement *Doors to Discovery* for three-year-olds and the *DLM: Early Childhood Express* for four-year-olds because of their alignment to district Reading First components, their ease of use and comprehensiveness, appropriateness for the age, and because both are on the Texas State Adoption Textbook List. To give teachers the broadest exposure to styles, strategies and content, Good Beginnings will utilize three tiers of professional development. Tier I includes curriculum- based professional development to support the Doors and DLM curricula and will be presented by certified Wright Group curriculum trainers. Tier II is weekly support provided by two on-site, highly qualified literacy coaches who will be in each teacher's room at least four hours a week. Tier III is independent professional growth which will include keeping a reflection journal after each demonstration lesson observed; participating in an optional book study led by one of the Read Team consultants; reviewing and responding to a video of their own teaching; observing in other classrooms; and attending college classes. Screening assessments and progress monitoring tools, including PPVT, PALS Pre-K, DRA Reading Level, Woodcock Johnson, and TPRI will be administered on an ongoing basis.

Washington

Project Name: Seattle Early Reading First
Project Director: Pat Wells (no ERF funds)
Funding: \$3,974,248

Number of teachers/assistants served: 20
Number of school districts served: 1
Number of children served: 193

Grantee: City of Seattle
700 5th Ave., Suite 5800
Seattle, WA 98124
Tel. #: (206) 684-0524
Fax #: (206) 621-5033
pat.wells@seattle.gov

Seattle Early Reading First's (SERF) 2007 will prepare preschool age children who are low income and at-risk of educational failure to enter kindergarten with language, cognitive, and early literacy skills necessary for reading success. SERF 2007 will build upon the successful strategies used in SERF 2002, which transformed five early childhood programs into language and literacy rich centers of excellence for preschoolers. SERF 2007 will partner with five agencies serving 193 children annually in full-time settings: a total of 381 unduplicated children will be served during the three-year period. Since Seattle's full-time childcare system is strongly community based, all of the participating centers are closely connected to families and schools. The families of children served in these five agencies are primarily very low or moderately low income, with most earning below livable wage standards for Seattle.

Centers will use a language intensive, research based early language and literacy curriculum, *Opening the World of Learning (OWL)*, to develop oral language and vocabulary, phonological awareness, awareness of print conventions, and alphabet knowledge. Teachers and program supervisors will participate in focused language, and literacy seminars taught by a literacy specialist and college classes. These centers of excellence will be dynamic learning communities, where teachers routinely use assessments, including PPVT, PALS Pre-K, and CAP to update curriculum design, to guide instructional strategies and to identify children who will benefit from specific resource and assessment referrals. Classroom environmental and teaching assessments, including ELLCO will be used to inform the design of classroom environments and will help on-site coaches tailor interventions. Families will be engaged with literacy learning activities at the center, in the library and at home.

SERF's focus and strategies align with the strategies in use by the Local Education Agency (LEA) to reduce disproportionality: children progressing to Kindergarten in the Seattle Public Schools will be supported to continue their accelerated progress. SERF is intentionally designed to sustain and broaden the gains in early literacy in the early childhood community long after the SERF funding cycle is completed, by building internal capacity in the form of highly qualified early childhood providers and well equipped early childhood centers. The partners are committed to improving equity and outcomes for children at risk. Together, we will ensure that the most vulnerable preschool children in Seattle start kindergarten prepared to succeed.

Wisconsin

Project Name: Project EMERGE (Exemplary Model of Early Reading Growth and Excellence)

Project Director: Karen Stoiber (.50 FTE)

Funding: \$3,212,726

Number of teachers/assistants served: 30

Number of school districts served: 1

Number of children served: 300

Grantee: Board of Regents, University of Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

Dept. of Educational Psychology
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Milwaukee, WI 53211

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Project EMERGE (Exemplary Model of Early Reading Growth and Excellence) is an intensive, multi-partnership effort to transform five existing pre-kindergarten Head Start and Early Childhood centers in the Milwaukee urban community into exemplary, scientifically based early literacy programs. The partnership includes the Social Development Commission Head Start of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Head Start Delegate and Partner Sites, and the University of Wisconsin (Milwaukee and Madison campuses). The project will serve 300 urban, disadvantaged children (at least 90% are from low-income families) attending 15 full-day classrooms that provide year-round programming for two consecutive years prior to kindergarten entry. Approximately 75% of EMERGE child participants are African-American and 25% are Latino, with less than 1% White/Other. Approximately 10% of children served have identified disabilities and 20-25% have limited English proficiency.

The five purposes of Project EMERGE are: (1) to develop and implement an instructional model that integrates the use of explicit, research-based early literacy practices into existing preschool programs; (2) to provide multi-tiered, evidence-based practices to support early literacy development in children from low-income minority families and children with limited English proficiency; (3) to create high-quality, literacy-rich environments that provide cognitive learning opportunities and support the development of children's literacy and language competence; (4) to provide intensive and continuous professional development and mentoring grounded in scientifically-based knowledge of language and early literacy development; and (5) to implement screening and progress-monitoring procedures to identify children at risk of developing reading problems and to ensure that instruction accommodates children's needs. These assessments will be administered on an ongoing basis and include PPVT, PALS Pre-K, IGDIs, and Story Retelling Task. Project EMERGE will also implement the *Scholastic Early Childhood Program (SECP)*, a comprehensive, research-supported curriculum that integrates a primary emphasis on language and literacy with other learning domains, including math, science, and social studies.