

## Reducing Educational Achievement Differences in the District of Columbia, READ-DC

**Significance:** According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a pervasive achievement gap has existed across the United States' education system since the 1990s, in the realm of literacy. NCES assessments, from 1992 to 2011, demonstrate nationwide achievement gaps linked to race and socio-economic status.<sup>1</sup> While one would expect the nation's capital to be a shining example of educational equality and achievement, the District of Columbia (DC) ranks lowest in the United States in both literacy and math proficiency. DC's average reading proficiency scores in 2011 were the lowest in the nation for both 4th and 8th grade students.<sup>1</sup> In addition, within DC, significant achievement gaps exist between white and minority students, gaps that are nearly double that of other urban locations around the country.<sup>1</sup>

While the significant achievement gaps, poverty, and unequal access in DC are disheartening, a research-based and innovative literacy project remains a positive option for progress if it can: 1) improve parent and family engagement, 2) support effective teachers and administrators, 2) improve early learning outcomes, 3) support the needs of students with learning disabilities, 4) increase teacher and school knowledge and productivity, and 5) provide access to tools which improve home/school instruction and coordination among stakeholders. Voluminous research proves that high-quality early education programs including training and increased access to materials can help at-risk students build effective skills, achieve success in school, graduate, and become productive citizens.<sup>2,3,4</sup>

Eagle Academy Public Charter School (EAGLE) is located in and serves high need DC students from the most poverty stricken ward in DC (Ward 8). EAGLE includes high percentages of at-risk students (**minorities**—96% African American, 1% Indo American or Pacific Islander, 3% Caucasian; **special education students**—17% of students have IEPs; and **high poverty students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch**—66% of students qualify for free

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and reduced price lunch). Ward 8, has long been the poorest and most under-served ward in DC. Analysis of the most recent available Census and US Bureau of Labor statistics data indicates that Ward 8, compared to the other 7 wards in DC, has the highest level of child poverty in the capital (47%), the largest percent of families receiving food stamps (38%), and the highest unemployment rate (29%).

Reducing Educational Achievement Differences in the District of Columbia (READ-DC) is a collaborative partnership that is eager to address the literacy achievement gaps currently plaguing DC and the nation. READ-DC will address literacy achievement gaps with a research-based Innovative Approaches to Literacy project that will improve school engagement, family and community engagement, school environment, teacher knowledge, and access to materials. The READ-DC team is a diverse partnership including: key local organizations (D.C. Public Libraries), a not-for-profit evaluation agency with experience evaluating federal grants (Youth Policy Institute), a District of Columbia LEA serving at-risk students from birth to third grade (Eagle Academy Public Charter School), an experienced training company that has implemented previous federal literacy projects such as Early Reading First (Educational Solutions, LLC), and a wide range of community partners providing volunteers (General Dynamics, Washington Navy Yard, DC Public Schools--Ballou High School, and the U.S. Department of Transportation).

The lead applicant for the READ-DC project, EAGLE, is committed to supporting literacy development and has initiated several positive initiatives to that end including: a volunteer tutorial program where adults or high school students tutor at-risk students, a school library which allows parents to take out books, and a parent training program where parents can learn about developing home literacy routines. Funding for READ-DC through Innovative Approaches to Literacy will help EAGLE improve and expand beyond these programs to better

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serve EAGLE families and the Ward 8 community as a whole, helping support the purchase of additional materials and the implementation of key project activities which are outlined below. The collaboration with D.C. Public Libraries will be a key aspect of expanding programs to the Ward 8 community as a whole.

Experts agree that reading aloud to young children can promote a variety of literacy skills related to oral language and vocabulary development.<sup>5,6,7,8,9</sup> Additional studies suggest that merely reading books aloud is not sufficient for accelerating children's development in these areas; instead, it is the *way* books are shared that matters.<sup>10</sup> The most effective read-alouds are those where children are actively involved in asking and answering questions and making predictions, rather than passively listening.<sup>10</sup> Recent studies have shown that parent involvement positively impacts student achievement<sup>11</sup> and that teacher literacy knowledge impacts student literacy outcomes.<sup>12</sup> As a part of a recent teacher quality study, it was determined that student literacy outcomes were directly affected by teacher knowledge in the realms of literacy (from decoding practices to explicit literacy instruction).<sup>12</sup> Due to the above body of research, the READ-DC project includes a high quality plan to distribute books and other literacy support materials, as well as an extensive plan to train parents, teachers, administrators, and volunteers to incorporate childhood literacy activities, meeting Absolute Priority #1. The below numbered summary briefly outlines components of the READ-DC project, including the ways in which the project adheres to ***Absolute Priority #1*** as well as ***Competitive Preference Priorities #2 &3***: 1) Thematic lending libraries which target key vocabulary and concepts from the literacy curricula at each school will be available at EAGLE, 2) Literacy related technology materials will be available on-site at the school computer labs/libraries and at home through a check out program, 3) Scientifically motivated, on-going

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literacy training for teachers and parents will be provided {covering emergent literacy skills such as oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge as well as early literacy skills such as phonics, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and vocabulary}, 4) Community programs will be made available to parents, families, and students {such as the Sing, Talk, and Read program offered through DC Public Libraries as well as an adult literacy program developed by the READ-DC team in collaboration with DC Public Libraries}, 5) Literacy curriculum supplements that are appropriate for learning disabled students and/or English language learners will be provided, 6) Scientifically motivated, on-going literacy training for program volunteers to support implementation of tutoring for at-risk students will occur, 7) Skilled mentoring and oversight of teachers, administrators, parents, and volunteers will be provided to ensure high quality home and school literacy routines.

**Quality of the Project Design:** READ-DC will employ a research design which derives from Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI utilizes a multi-tiered, systematic approach which includes: assessing and enhancing the quality of instruction, individualizing instruction, scaffolding learning experiences for multiple skill levels (targeting struggling learners).<sup>13</sup> RTI models target the early identification of children who are at risk for learning disabilities and require “effective instruction and progress monitoring” designed to “provide a starting place for educational accountability”.<sup>14</sup> Research findings suggest that “RTI is a promising approach, particularly because of its focus on sound instructional principles such as effectively teaching all children, intervening early, using research-based interventions, monitoring student progress, and using assessments to inform instructional decision-making.”<sup>15</sup> RTI models are multi-tiered and based on ideas outlined in IDEA (2004) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) which require “effective

instruction and progress monitoring” designed to “provide a starting place for educational accountability”.<sup>16</sup>

The underlying foundation for RTI is the premise that teachers, parents, administrators, and volunteers can learn to **recognize** (through screening, assessment, and monitoring) and **respond** (based on research) to children’s needs.<sup>17</sup> This foundation is critical in that it challenges stakeholders to carefully evaluate each student, and consequently plan effective instruction. In the READ-DC model, Tier I consists of the high quality instructional program and learning environment delivered by teachers to all children as a part of their everyday classroom experience at EAGLE (accomplished through high quality school literacy curricula and teacher training/on-going support from mentors). Supplementary support in Tier 1 will be available through the lending library and on-site technology materials that will be available to ALL students and families at EAGLE. Tier II includes differentiated instruction to support at-risk students identified by all baseline and progress monitoring data administered to students in Tier I. Tier II students have access to differentiated support in a number of different contexts including: A) from teachers in the classroom as they utilize literacy supplements geared for differentiated instruction for learning disabled, limited English proficient, or gifted students; B) from parents who receive training and materials that will enable the establishment of home literacy routines, C) from highly trained program volunteers that perform small group or one-on-one literacy tutoring with at-risk students before or after school. Tier III includes students that do not make progress in Tier II; these students will be evaluated for eligibility for special education.

The READ-DC project has identified the following overarching goal: **to build an innovative and sustainable literacy program based on scientifically based reading research**

(SBRR) which enables a Ward 8 school and the community as a whole to close literacy achievement gaps by identifying at-risk students as early as possible, training teachers and parents in key literacy realms, providing supportive materials, using technology, implementing volunteer programs to support needy students, and differentiating instruction for diverse learners. READ-DC has outlined six supporting goals which will result in accomplishing the overarching goal. The supporting goals are outlined in Table #1 along with related objectives and outcomes measures:

<b>Table #1: Linking Supporting Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcome Measures</b>	
<b>Supporting Goal #1</b>	
A wide range of literacy materials (books and technology) are made available for home usage through book distribution in collaboration with DC Public Library as well as a school lending library program (items will also be available for on-site usage at school library and computer lab).	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Outcome Measures</b>
Identify themes and key vocabulary from school literacy curricula at EAGLE and PREP for the purpose of selecting thematic lending libraries for each site	-Completed review of school literacy curricula including table outlining the theme list and corresponding <i>Book Express</i> thematic lending library kits
Purchase <i>Book Express</i> thematic lending library kits and additional books for each school site to expand the number of resources available for home and on-site usage	-Purchase orders -Budget spreadsheets -Check out logs for lending libraries
Purchase technology materials for on-site libraries/computer labs at EAGLE and PREP	-Purchase orders for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] -Budget spreadsheets -Check out logs for technology in school/home use
Get books for distribution at local DC Public Libraries through free programs such as First Book and Reading is Fundamental. Books will be distributed at READ-DC trainings and/or literacy programs at DC Public Library	-Training or event sign in sheet -Book give-away logs -Packaging slip lists from First Book and Reading is Fundamental
<b>Supporting Goal #2</b>	
All parents extend literacy learning, supporting mastery of key skills to promote successful transition between grades.	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Outcome Measures</b>
-Parent kiosks including literacy resources and information are developed	-Purchase orders for parent kiosk materials -Parent kiosks present at each site

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-Parents attend regular workshops on home activities that support language and literacy development	-Training sign-in sheets -Training evaluations
-Parents attend regular events publicizing resources of lending library and on-site library/technology lab	-Event advertisements -Training evaluations
-Parents of at-risk students identified by RTI model receive information on student strengths and weaknesses and information on support resources available for take-home use.	-Database outlining RTI tiers of students -Logs for resource usage -Attendance logs
-Parents of at-risk students receive on-going professional development from literacy mentors and teachers in the form of home visits	-Completed home visit logs
-Parents of at-risk students encouraged to sign their children up for literacy tutoring to be delivered by program volunteers during either the before or after school program	-Student tutoring attendance logs -Tutor sign in sheets -Tutor session notes
<b>Supporting Goal #3</b>	
All project teachers, assistants, and librarians improve instructional skill through high quality, on-going professional development (PD) focused on language and literacy instruction.	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Outcome Measures</b>
-Staff attend yearly workshops on language and literacy instruction	-Training sign-in sheets -Training evaluations
-Staff attend yearly workshops on response to intervention models and differentiating instruction for at-risk as well as advanced students	-Training sign-in sheets -Training evaluations
-Staff receive on-going PD from literacy mentor on emergent, early, and advanced literacy instruction	-Mentor feedback reports -Mentor coaching logs
-Teachers, assistants, and librarians coordinate language and literacy learning throughout content areas and during library visits.	-Teacher/Librarian coordination logs -Classroom library visit logs
<b>Supporting Goal #4</b>	
All school administrators improve their understanding of literacy curricula implementation and increase their ability to evaluate, support, and develop high quality teachers.	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Outcome Measures</b>
-Administrators attend yearly workshops on language and literacy instruction	-Training sign-in sheets -Training evaluations
-Administrators attend yearly workshops on implementation of response to intervention models	-Training sign-in sheets -Training evaluations
-Administrators receive ongoing PD from literacy mentors on evaluating classroom literacy environment and instruction	-Mentor feedback reports -Mentor coaching logs
-Administrators use learning tools to evaluate teachers and support teacher professional development	-Administrator checklists -Teacher professional goal portfolios
<b>Supporting Goal #5</b>	
Students successfully transition from grade to grade with appropriate language and literacy skills necessary to achieve success in core curricula areas.	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Outcome Measures</b>

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- Take pre- (September) and post- (May) test student data to identify student strengths and weaknesses, determine at-risk students, and assess progress over the course of the year	-EAGLE current testing, required project assessments, curriculum based measures, and standardized testing
-Use pre-test data to assess students in the bottom quartile, identifying at-risk candidates to track and receive additional support if needed	-Database summary of bottom quartile students -RTI tier lists submitted to teachers and administrators -Individual testing summaries submitted to parents of at-risk students
-Formulate individual literacy plans for at-risk students that progress to Tier 2 in the RTI model	-Individual literacy plan records -Teacher lesson plans for differentiated instruction
-Train program volunteers in literacy programs and techniques to be used with at-risk project	-Training sign in sheets -Training evaluations
-At-risk students that sign up for before or after school tutoring are linked up with a volunteer literacy tutor	-Student tutoring attendance logs -Tutor sign in sheets -Tutor session notes
<b>Supporting Goal #6</b>	
All families and school staff become informed and gain access to community events and services which support healthy child development and effective parenting.	
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Outcome Measures</b>
-Market literacy programs available through D.C. Public Libraries (such as Sing, Talk and Read and adult literacy programs) to families and students	-DC Public Library event sign in logs
-Key community partners provide information to schools about community events or services that benefit families	-Copies of school bulletins or newsletters
-Free books are distributed to parents from Ward 8 at D.C. Public Library events	-Book give-away logs

The READ-DC project will be coordinated with similar or related community, state and federal programs and resources in a number of ways. First, the READ-DC project will coordinate both the project design and training services with previous federal grant projects focused on literacy, such as Early Reading First and Reading First. READ-DC will accomplish this alignment through a transition training for teachers, whereby they are exposed to the appropriate emergent literacy skills identified by Early Reading First (phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print awareness, and oral language) and early literacy skills identified by Reading First (phonics, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and

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vocabulary). Additionally, the READ-DC program will support this alignment by providing the teachers, administrators, and schools with a chart which aligns the Common Core Literacy Standards (utilized by EAGLE) with both their literacy curricula and the relevant key Early Reading First and Reading First skills.

In May 2008, the District Council in DC enacted the Pre-K Enhancement Expansion Act. This act requires DC preschool and pre-k programs to create policies for using data to improve educational outcomes for students. READ-DC's use of an RTI model (along with the intensive PD surrounding this model) will help teach preschool, pre-k, and kindergarten-3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers at EAGLE how to use data to assess needed improvements for classroom environments and instruction, identify at-risk students, plan differentiated instruction, and help students with special needs.

Finally, the READ-DC program's collaboration with a number of private companies, government agencies, schools, and public organizations will benefit participating students and families. DC Public Libraries has signed on as a partner, and plans to work with READ-DC to publicize, implement, and offer literacy programs to parents at neighborhood libraries in Ward 8 (Anacostia Public Library and the William O. Lockridge/Bellevue Library). The collaboration with D.C. Public Libraries will be an essential component to the project, with the library providing space for meetings, resources for parents, literacy programs for children and adults, marketing of programs, and encouragement of parent engagement in home literacy routines. Local partners such as General Dynamics, Washington Navy Yard, U.S. Department of Transportation, and Ballou High School have committed to provide volunteers who can serve as literacy tutors for the students at EAGLE.

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The READ-DC program represents a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support for rigorous academic standards through: intensive professional development for all stakeholders in education (parents, teachers, administrators, & volunteers), alignment of literacy curricula with Common Core Standards and key literacy research, on-going mentoring support to ensure programs sustain, and curricular supports which enhance school and home instruction. The READ-DC project design includes seven research-based components linked to successful intervention programs. Each project design component supports key project stakeholders including: students, teachers, families, administrators, community partners, and volunteers.

<b>Table #2: Research-Based Components that Address Needs in Washington, D.C.</b>		
<i>Project Design Components</i>	<i>Supporting Research</i>	<i>Project Activities</i>
1. Response to Intervention model to identify needs of all learners	Advantages include early identification, a strong focus on prevention, and assessment with clear implications for academic programming <sup>18</sup>	Students are assessed via pre- and post-assessments and ongoing progress monitoring; data is shared with parents, teachers, administrators, and volunteers for planning
2. Innovative technology to maximize effectiveness and engage all stakeholders	“Data systems and the technology that supports them, allow teachers, administrators, and...students to ‘see’ the evidence of their learning.” <sup>19</sup>	Students and families will have access to technology (including iPads and literacy applications) on-site at each library/computer lab and for take-home use. Project database available for easily tiering students.
3. Ongoing PD for teachers, parents, volunteers, and administrators to promote high quality instruction	“In-service professional development for teachers results in higher achievement for their students.” <sup>20</sup>	Regular workshops will be held for teachers, assistants, librarians, parents, volunteers, and administrators. Additionally, a literacy mentor will provide on-going support.
4. Differentiated instruction to increase achievement for all (including LD, LEP, gifted).	“The use of single-paced lessons delivered through a singular... approach disregards the different learning styles and interests present in all classrooms.” <sup>21,22,23,24</sup>	Literacy curriculum supplements will be made available to teachers, including activities which are appropriate for LD, LEP, and gifted students. Additionally, program volunteers will be made available to work with at-risk students in one-on-one or small group settings

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<p>5. Family support to enhance parenting skills, involvement, and student transition</p>	<p>“Although most parents do not know how to help their children with their education, with guidance and support, they may become increasingly involved in home learning activities and find themselves with opportunities to teach, to be models for and to guide their children.”<sup>25</sup></p>	<p>Parent training, home visits, parent informational kiosks, take-home materials, and adult literacy programs will all be made available to project parents.</p>
<p>6. Assessing student, teacher and school achievement to determine success and enable continuous improvement</p>	<p>“There is considerable evidence that assessment, when practiced effectively, can improve student learning.”<sup>26</sup></p>	<p>Project evaluator will make student and teacher data readily accessible through a user friendly database. Database will be capable of identifying students that are at-risk, proficient, or advanced.</p>
<p>7. Developing community partnerships to support student, school, and family needs</p>	<p>“Family, school and community can collaborate in ... key ways to foster a caring community that children need to maximize their potential in school and in later life.”<sup>27</sup></p>	<p>A partnership with DC Public Libraries will increase access to literacy programs for participating families. Additionally, volunteer program partnerships with Ballou High School, General Dynamics, Washington Navy Yard, and the U.S. Department of Transportation will enable individualized literacy tutoring for at-risk students.</p>

To ensure continuous improvement over the course of the two year project, READ-DC project will adopt a Continuous Improvement Process which is outlined below.<sup>28</sup>

**Table #3: Continuous Improvement Process**

<p>1. Plan (meet as team, determine objectives, set steps towards objectives, establish a schedule)</p>
<p>2. Train (train all implementers on objectives and steps of activities, check understanding through guided and independent practice)</p>
<p>3. Implement (conduct activities, monitor implementation, support implementers)</p>
<p>4. Evaluate (conduct formal/informal assessments, score and record results, check fidelity of administration)</p>
<p>5. Analyze (analyze results of evaluations, determine if changes to design are needed, cycle back to planning phase)</p>

**Quality of Project Services:** READ-DC (EAGLE, DC Public Libraries, Youth Policy Institute, Educational Solutions, LLC, General Dynamics, Washington Navy Yard, Ballou High School, and the U.S. Department of Transportation) has not identified any barriers to program access or participation by parents, students, teachers, administrators or other program beneficiaries based upon gender, race, national origin, color, disability or age. A requirement for selection of partners was that the entities have non-discrimination policies in effect that make it possible to effectively serve people of all genders, races, national origins, colors, disabilities, or ages. In addition, READ-DC is taking steps to ensure that barriers do not arise, such as:

- 1) Ensuring that all project partners specify their status as equal opportunity employers that encourage diverse applicants to apply in all employment advertisements.
- 2) Standing ready to prepare alternative instruction manuals, handbooks, or literature (in the form of audio tapes or Braille) for any parents, teachers, students, school staff, company employees, or parents (that require such implements due to language barriers, blindness, deafness, learning disabilities or illiteracy).
- 3) Asking for parent, teacher and other project staff input regarding content of program materials and appropriateness and sensitivity to gender, race, national origin, color, disability, age and cultural factors.

In the event that any barriers arise during the course of program implementation, READ-DC will work hard to address them in an equitable fashion.

Research on urban locations such as Washington, D.C. indicates that children from low income families have unequal access to high quality language and literacy experiences, a factor which is likely at least partially responsible for the significant literacy achievement gaps in Washington, D.C. As mentioned in the *Significance* portion of the application, the participating

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school (EAGLE) is located in the highest need Ward in Washington, D.C. The school serves the students with the greatest risk of educational failure and most significant literacy achievement gaps in the nation. EAGLE currently serves preschool through third grade students, meaning many of the students are already significantly behind in their language and emergent literacy skills by the time EAGLE receives them at age three or four (or later if students enter EAGLE in grades K-3). For this reason, it is extremely important for EAGLE to provide exceptional language and literacy programs for its student population through high quality literacy curricula, teacher training, parent training, home literacy materials, and technology. READ-DC and EAGLE plan to utilize Innovative Approaches to Literacy funding to continue to further improve the literacy services for its preschool to third grade students, in addition to birth to two year olds (which EAGLE will begin serving during the 2013-2014 school year). Research indicates that literacy programs that include access to books, teacher training, and parent support at an early age result in achievement of greater academic success by students.<sup>29,30,31,31, 20</sup> Thus, the READ-DC project services are not only appropriate to the needs of the at-risk students being served, but will also help to close achievement gaps existing among these populations.

EAGLE has signed an MOU with Educational Solutions, LLC (ES) to provide literacy training and mentoring (for parents, teachers, administrators, and volunteers), curricular support, development of lending libraries or book collections, and development of community literacy programs (in collaboration with DC Public Libraries). ES has extensive experience providing professional development and on-going teacher/parent/administrator/volunteer mentoring; having provided 9 literacy mentors for two different Early Reading First projects in the past 5 years (The Literacy Partnership, 2006-2009 and Helping Emergent Literacy Progress, 2009-2012). Students participating in at least one full project year of the Literacy Partnership made

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statistically significant gains in their emergent literacy skills as measured by the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS), increasing their PALS total score by 99% for an impressive effect size of 1.13. Students participating in at least one full project year of HELP made statistically significant gains in their emergent literacy skills as measured by the PALS and Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test IV (PPVT). Students participating in at least a full year of the HELP project increased their PALS Uppercase Letter Identification by 129% for an impressive effect size of 1.38, PALS Rhyming by 67% for a large effect size of 0.86, and PPVT Vocabulary Standard Score by 10.5% for a large effect size of 0.84. Additionally, ES has previous experience improving student outcomes through the Supplemental Educational Services (SES) program. District of Columbia Public School students participating in ES's SES program during the 2008-2009 school year made average increases of 2.44 grade levels in their word attack/phonemic awareness skills, 1.67 grade levels increase in sight word recognition, 1.28 grade levels increase in reading fluency, and 1.89 grade levels increase in reading comprehension. All gains occurred after only 20-45 hours of one-on-one tutoring. ES has collaborated previously with DC Public Libraries to bring the *Books and Breakfast* and *Sing, Talk, and Read Programs* to the Ward 7 & Ward 8 communities in DC. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] has also provided successful literacy curricula supplements such as *Instructional Supplements* and *Language to Literacy* to public charter schools through the Early Reading First program. Finally, ES is the creator of the *Book Express* program, a lending library and home activity kit which has been used on successful federal literacy projects in collaboration with two public charter schools and D.C. Public Library.

The National Reading Panel Report (2000) concluded that in-service PD for teachers results in higher achievement for their students.<sup>20</sup> READ-DC will provide ongoing PD for

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teachers, administrators, parents and volunteers to enhance the quality of instruction in classrooms, homes, and tutoring sessions. Current research indicates that PD is sometimes unsuccessful for stake holders because of the difficulty involved in learning and using new strategies which differ significantly from familiar techniques.<sup>33</sup> Reports by Joyce and Showers (1996) suggest that it can take educators up to 30 instances of practicing a new strategy before they utilize it in their instruction.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, successful PD programs focus on buy-in and understanding of the adult learning process.<sup>34,35,36</sup> READ-DC will provide successful and lasting PD through focus on adult learning strategies and the use of consistent, long term mentoring with a reflection-demonstration-observation-feedback cycle.<sup>37</sup> The READ-DC project will provide funds for a full-time literacy mentor who will be available to create and administer professional development workshops, develop or recommend literacy materials for purchase, and provide on-going mentoring (in-class, in-home, or during tutorial sessions for teachers, parents, administrators, and volunteer tutors).

**Adequacy of Resources:** Accomplishment of READ-DC's goals and objectives will give all students a strong foundation in emergent and/or early language and literacy skills, providing a "launching pad" for later literacy learning and enabling students to transition successfully into the next grade.<sup>38,39</sup> READ-DC is committed to coordinating efforts with EAGLE, DC Public Libraries, [REDACTED], [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to promote consistency, sustainability, and support for students as they transition through grades. READ-DC goals will be integrated with curriculum, transition expectations from grade to grade, school-wide objectives, and Core Curriculum Standards. In this way, READ-DC will provide support generating out from "internal" student needs in the classroom to "external" family and community support.

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Current research (Elmore 2002) suggests that strong literacy programs are expensive, in part due to the (justified) high cost of sustained professional development.<sup>40</sup> Successful PD requires teacher and administrator participation over an extended time, experts to train and mentor participants, and the establishment of schedules for developing teacher independence.<sup>40</sup> Children in DC, such as the ones attending EAGLE, are at the greatest risk for educational failure in the country. READ-DC's creation of a Center for Instructional Excellence (CIE) in DC will not only profoundly change the trajectory of the children directly served, but also create a positive model for educational reform in DC. READ-DC will provide high-quality and cost-effective services to 26 EAGLE classrooms, 52 teachers and assistants, 4-6 administrators, approximately 600 students per year, over 1200 family members, and countless volunteers.

Studies of literacy initiatives involving improved quality of instruction, parent training, increased access to literacy materials, and intervention at a young age are documented in their success for creating individuals that go on to succeed in school and become productive citizens.<sup>41, 42, 43, 44</sup> For every dollar spent on such programs an estimated \$7 in long-term societal costs can be saved (by reducing costs for special education, public assistance, criminal justice).<sup>4</sup> The current READ-DC budget of [REDACTED] will allow EAGLE to enhance literacy outcomes for a population that is currently 600 students per year (and growing as EAGLE adds additional 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms and a birth to two program in 2013-2014). Additionally, since program materials and training structure will remain in place after the life of the grant, programs could continue to impact this many students or more for years to come. Using the above \$7 dollars per dollar spent metric, the READ-DC project could result in [REDACTED] in savings for long term societal costs, more if the sustainability of programs is considered.

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**Quality of the Management Plan:** The management plan and project teams provide clear evidence of READ-DC’s commitment to implement a quality project by October 1, 2012. Future management plans will resemble Year 1, with Year 2 reflecting changes based on results/feedback from the previous year(s) and continuous improvement. Key participants are abbreviated in Tables: Project Director (PJD), Literacy Mentor (LM), Administrators (ADM), Teachers (TEA), volunteers (VOL), and Evaluator (EVAL).

<b>Table #4: READ-DC Project Teams</b>			
Team	Participants	Roles	Meetings (Yr. #1 Schedule)
Project Management Team (PMT)	PJD, EVAL, LM, ADM	Monitor project fidelity, ensure attainment of goals/benchmarks within timelines, hold partners accountable, supervise project teams, hire personnel, manage budget, review evaluations and data, make continuous project improvements, encourage collaboration among project teams	-Bi-weekly
Professional Development (PDT) Team	PJD, LM, ADM, TEA	Plan and develop PD workshops/courses, ensure adherence to PD model, create PD materials or monitoring tools, implement workshops, oversee and implement on-going coaching, review data to identify needs	-LM and PJD, weekly -LM and PJD, monthly
Curriculum Alignment Team (CAT)	PJD, LM, ADM, TEA	Establish goals and deadlines for curriculum implementation and fidelity, coordinate existing curricula with supplemental curricula through “roadmaps,” monitor curriculum implementation, identify mentoring needs for teachers/assistants, work with Transition Team to coordinate PS/PK curricula with K-3	-LMs and PJD, weekly -Monthly team meetings -LM and ADM/TEA, monthly
Family Literacy Team (FLT)	PJD, LM, TEA, ADM	Plan/develop parent workshops, purchase lending library books/resources, create parent kiosks, coordinate neighborhood events, collaborate with community partners, and apply for free books for book distribution programs	-Bi-weekly
Assessment Team (AT)	EVAL, PJD, LM, TEA, ADM	Coordinate assessment schedules, plan assessment timeline, complete teacher/child assessments/CBMs, discuss evaluation results, complete yearly reports, present project results	-Bi-weekly
Tutorial Team (TT)	PJD, LM, VOL, TEA	Identify at-risk students through assessment, encourage parents/students to sign up for support, develop literacy lesson plans for at-risk	-Bi-weekly

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	students attending tutoring, assess progress.	
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**Table #5: Year One Management Plan**

<b>Overarching Goal:</b> To build an innovative and sustainable literacy program based on scientifically based reading research (SBRR) which enables a Ward 8 school and the community as a whole to close literacy achievement gaps by identifying at-risk students as early as possible, training teachers and parents in key literacy realms, providing supportive materials, using technology, implementing volunteer programs to support needy students, and differentiating instruction for diverse learners.			
<b>Benchmark(s)</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Time</b>
Hold 1-2 day project management meeting to review activities, timelines, and tasks to be completed	Detailed project agenda/work plan completed	PJD, LM, ADM, EVAL	Q1
Hire candidates for unfilled positions	Qualified candidates hired	PJD, PMT	Q1
Schedule meeting timelines for all project teams	Calendar completed distributed to staff, website	PMT, PJD, ADM	Q1
Schedule training workshops and mentoring with school administrators	Project calendar completed, distributed, posted on web	PJD, ADM	Q1
Hold professional development training for project staff	Training sign-in sheets, evaluations, manuals	PJD, LM, TEA, ADM, VOL	Q1
Complete PD and curriculum supplements development phase	PD presentations and curriculum supplements available	PJD, LM	Q1-Q2
Coordinate current core curricula, supplemental curricula, and standards	Information entered into alignment document	PJD, LM, TEA, ADM	Q1
Complete contracts with personnel	Contracts on file	PJD	Q1
Identify, order parent resource materials for take-home activities	Invoices, order inventories	PJD, LM, ADM, TEA	Q1
Identify and purchase supplemental technology (computers, literacy applications/software programs, etc.)	Invoices, order inventories	PJD, LM, TEA, ADM	Q1
Complete project pre-testing for each grade (regular school assessments and case study battery)	Completed testing protocols, data spreadsheet summarizing data	PJD, LM, IE, TEA, ADM, EVAL	Q1
Enter pre-testing data from child assessments or CBMs	Child data completed, double scored, entered into database	TEA, ADM, PJD, LM, EVAL	Q1, Q2
Complete baseline teacher assessments	Teacher data completed, entered	PJD, LM, ADM	Q1-Q2
Train stakeholders (parents, TEA, ADM, VOL) on PDRI	Training sign-in sheets and evaluations	PJD, LM, EVAL	Q2-Q3
Complete project post-testing for all grades (regular school assessments and case study battery)	Completed testing protocols, data spreadsheet summarizing data	PJD, LM, TEA, ADM	Q3
Complete post teacher assessments	Teacher data completed,	PJD, LM,	Q3

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	entered into PDRI	ADM	
Evaluate project data and make programmatic improvements	Data disseminated to local public organizations, presentations	PMT	Q3-Q4
Complete intensive training workshops for stakeholders	Training sign-in sheets, evaluations, manuals	PJD, LM, TEA, ADM, VOL	Q4
Complete parent workshops to support home literacy activities	Training sign-in sheets, parent lending library log results, take home material libraries	PJD, LM, Parents, ADM, TEA	Q4
Provide regular coaching in all classrooms	Coaching logs	LM, TEA	Q4
Complete project pre-testing for Year 2 (school assessments/case study battery)	Completed testing protocols, data spreadsheet summarizing data	PJD, LM, TEA, ADM	Q4
Complete teacher pre-tests	Teacher data completed, entered into database	PJD, LM, ADM	Q4
Track parent, ADM, TEA, and VOL use of PDRI	Usage log tracking data	PJD, LM, TEA, ADM, parents	Q4
Design and establish parent informational kiosks at each site	Parent kiosk available for use, parent use records	PJD, LM, ADM	Q4
Track project budget to ensure proper use of funds/scheduled expenditures	Budget spreadsheets, yearly audits	PJD, PMT	Q1-Q4

Key project personnel (such as PJD, LM,) are full-time staff members. Each staff member's schedule has been carefully planned (based on school location, time for meetings, etc.). Each project position has been assigned a work map outlining key activities and timeline for completion. Oversight staff is included to ensure staff successfully complete project activities (ex: PJD will oversee the LM and EVAL). Teams have been created to serve as checks and balances for each other to ensure tasks are successfully completed (PMT oversees all teams).

**Personnel:** The READ-DC project director, principal evaluator, and literacy mentor have extensive experience implementing, managing, and assessing large scale federal grant projects.

*Project Director (PJD):* Nancy Mahon, who holds a Master's Degree in Early Childhood

Curriculum and Instruction as well as having passed the CPA exam in Virginia, will serve as the

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READ-DC project director. Ms. Mahon is well-qualified to serve as PJD for the proposed grant, having served as a PJD on two previous federal grant projects with budgets of over two million dollars (The Literacy Partnership Early Reading First Grant, January 2007-September 2009 and Help Emergent Literacy Progress, November 2009-September 2012). These experiences developed skills in organization, personnel management, team-building, multi-tasking, and budget administration. As the PJD she will chair the Project Management Team (PMT), overseeing the project quality, fidelity, and reporting. She will coordinate PD activities with schools and serve as the communications liaison among the school sites and project partners. Ms. Mahon and the PMT will work together to ensure efficient organization, storage, and management of data; timely completion, submission, and analysis of program goals and outcomes; program implementation; completion of required reports; and alignment with federal/state/local regulations.

Principal Evaluator(PE): Mr. Uninsky established Youth Policy Institute in late 1996. As an evaluator, academic social scientist, legislative counsel, and legal advocate for children and families at risk, Mr. Uninsky has worked extensively in the fields of education, juvenile justice, child welfare, and domestic violence. He has served as the principal investigator in multiple federal and state evaluations of students, including pre-Kindergarten and elementary school projects funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the New York State Education Department (e.g. Early Reading First, Early Learning Opportunity Act, Foundations for Learning, and Elementary Counseling).

Literacy Mentor (LM) Carolyn Stein, who holds a Masters in Teaching, will serve as the READ-DC LM. Ms. Stein is well-qualified to serve as LM for the proposed grant, having served as senior staff member on two previous federal grant projects with budgets of over two million

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dollars (The Literacy Partnership Early Reading First Grant, January 2007-September 2009 and Help Emergent Literacy Progress, November 2009-present). On these projects, Ms. Stein has developed extensive literacy curricula, mentored and trained teachers/parents/administrators, entered information into project databases, and developed evaluation and professional development tools. Ms. Stein also has over thirty eight years of experience as a director, teacher, and literacy mentor. As a LM, Ms. Stein will be tasked with creating literacy professional development workshops, mentoring teachers/parents/administrators/volunteers in the realm of literacy, development of curricular supplements, alignment of curricula and core standards, and recommendations for lending library purchases.

**Quality of the Project Evaluation:** Youth Policy Institute (YPI) is a national not-for-profit policy, research and evaluation agency that assists government, community organizations, and schools as they implement effective service systems for children and families. The agency has over fifteen years of experience in education evaluation with particular expertise in literacy programming, professional development, and the implementation of evidence-based curricula and services. Over the last decade, YPI has assessed programs in over 25 DC public charters schools, including evaluations of a federal Transition to Teaching project (2005-2008), two Early Reading First projects (DC Early Success, 2008-2011 & Help Emergent Literacy Progress, 2009-2012) and a Safe Schools/Healthy Students project (2005-2009).

YPI's evaluation plan for READ-DC will facilitate the examination of program implementation strategies within the context of specific factors that are known to influence program delivery and participant outcomes. YPI will conduct both a formative and summative evaluation, based on the premise that evaluations can do more than measure efficacy and

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promote accountability. By providing timely information to stakeholders regarding progress toward meeting READ-DC objectives, the evaluation will also act as a springboard for ongoing program improvements, sustainability, and replication.

YPI's data collection efforts will build on existing screening and assessment efforts, thereby ensuring that testing is neither burdensome for children and staff, nor redundant. In the following subsections, we will discuss plans for both the formative and summative evaluation, data collection plans including measures and timelines, analysis plans, and planned uses of data.

**Formative Evaluation:** The primary goal of the formative evaluation is to collect, in an ongoing manner, a wide range of program data to determine the extent to which project implementation is occurring as intended at the participating sites and the reasons for variations from expectations.

Summary results of these data will be provided regularly to both staff and the LEA's administrators to permit timely modifications and refinements, where appropriate. Formative evaluation will involve the following areas of inquiry, including the extent to which: parents have access to and are using READ-DC's literacy materials; PD activities under the grant are implemented and utilized; literacy curricula are integrated into classroom programming with fidelity; instructional and project staff and volunteers use assessment results to improve the classroom environment and to individualize instructional strategies based on children's needs; and families are engaged in the project activities and changing home literacy routines.

YPI will employ multiple qualitative and quantitative data collection activities in its formative evaluation:

- To gauge parent utilization of project materials, YPI will access kiosk data, conduct a mid-year focus group, and administer an end-of-the year parent survey (which will also provide critical insights into the types and frequency of strategies employed at home).

- YPI will assess the impact of READ-DC professional development and other activities on the literacy activities of all instructional personnel by using a range of strategies: (i) a brief mid-year instructional staff checklists gauging utilization of SBRR literacy techniques and fidelity of curricula implementation; (ii) focus groups with LEA and project staff to assess extent to which project activities have been implemented as intended; (iii) an end- instructional staff survey, which will provide critical insight into levels of experience, educational background, and implementation problems and successes, as well as reactions to and “take aways” from, professional development, SBRR knowledge, extent of implementation of key project components; (iv) structured interviews, three times yearly, with LEA and READ-DC administrators; and (v) an annual end-of-year caregiver survey to gauge levels of involvement in READ-DC, communication with instructional staff, and satisfaction with programming. All instruments and tools for the formative evaluation will be developed during the first three months of the project.

**Summative Evaluation:** The central goal of the summative evaluation is to measure and explain the outcomes of the READ-DC efforts to promote the acquisition of age-appropriate literacy skills among high-risk students from PS-3 through third grade. YPI’s outcome evaluation has four areas of concern: (1) *Outcomes:* Do children demonstrate significant growth and achieve age appropriate skills on standard measures of language and cognitive skill development (particularly alphabet knowledge, vocabulary, phonological awareness, oral language skills, and oral comprehension)? (2) *Impacts:* Is the effect of the program sustained over time? (3) *SBRR at school and home:* Have SBRR literacy practices been thoroughly integrated into classrooms? Are primary caregivers routinely accessing and utilizing proven

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techniques to promote literacy? (4) *Differential outcomes*: What are the roles of demographic variables and contextual factors, such as staff characteristics and skills and caregiver involvement, in explaining differences in outcomes among participants?

**Data Collection:** The evaluation of READ-DC will utilize both a longitudinal and level of implementation evaluation design regarding student literacy skills. It will use pre-test post-test data collection methods with measures at program entry, and in the spring. Surveys, documentation checklists, and structured classroom observations will be used to establish classroom-level implementation of the READ-DC model. The total number of children participating in the evaluation is estimated to be 575-600 per cohort year. YPI will develop a database to organize the extensive assessment data collected by EAGLE, permitting the evaluation to provide to key stakeholders, a rank ordering within the first 2 months of the school year of students by literacy skills to facilitate differentiated instruction, ongoing monitoring of student progress, and end of year summative reports that provide multi-faceted growth analyses in preparation for the following year's instructional planning. YPI will also work with the READ-DC and LEA staff to ensure they are able to access the custom-designed database to provide immediate feedback to classroom teachers and volunteers on assessment results.

READ-DC will employ a battery of tests to assess short and long-term outcomes. EAGLE will provide access on a non-nominative bases to the following validated assessment data for PS/PK students 3 times/year: Brigance reading and language comprehension and letter knowledge scores. For students in Kindergarten through third grade, EAGLE will provide each administration of four DIBELS scores: Initial Sound Fluency; Phonemic Segmentation Fluency; Oral Reading Fluency; and Word Use Fluency. In addition, to gauge oral language skills,

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READ-DC will administer the PPVT to a random sample of students twice annually (with a sample size sufficient to permit grade-level analyses).

**Analysis Plan.** YPI will employ two evaluative strategies to gauge the short- and long-term program effects of READ-DC. It will implement a multi-variate pre-test/post-test design to measure longitudinal change in student literacy skills. YPI will implement a high/low implementation design. An important consideration for the evaluation of outcomes will be the question of attribution: to what extent are gains the result, room by room, of critical variables such as intensity and fidelity of implementation. Program implementation, dosage, and fidelity will be measured by means of interviews, focus groups, checklists, surveys, and site visits.

For both evaluative strategies, YPI will use multivariate analysis techniques that track relationships between program level characteristics, mediating variables, interim and long term outcomes. The types and complexities of these analyses will depend on the numbers of cases available, i.e., the sample size and the variability within them. Qualitative data will be categorized and analyzed for patterns. Both types of analyses will be combined to produce a description of outcomes, and an assessment and explanation of program impact on participants. The evaluation plan includes ongoing feedback on findings and reports to the project stakeholders to provide opportunities for data driven program improvement.