

**Louisiana Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program**

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**(a) Need for the Project**

Louisiana's children are among the most disadvantaged in the nation. In Louisiana's public schools, charter schools, and publicly funded child care centers, 69% of children are economically disadvantaged, a figure even higher than the state's exceptional child poverty rate of 28%, which is 10% higher than the national average. Additionally, 12% of children enrolled in Louisiana's public schools, charters, and child care centers have disabilities, and the percentage of English Learners has more than doubled, increasing from 1.8% to 4% over the past two years.

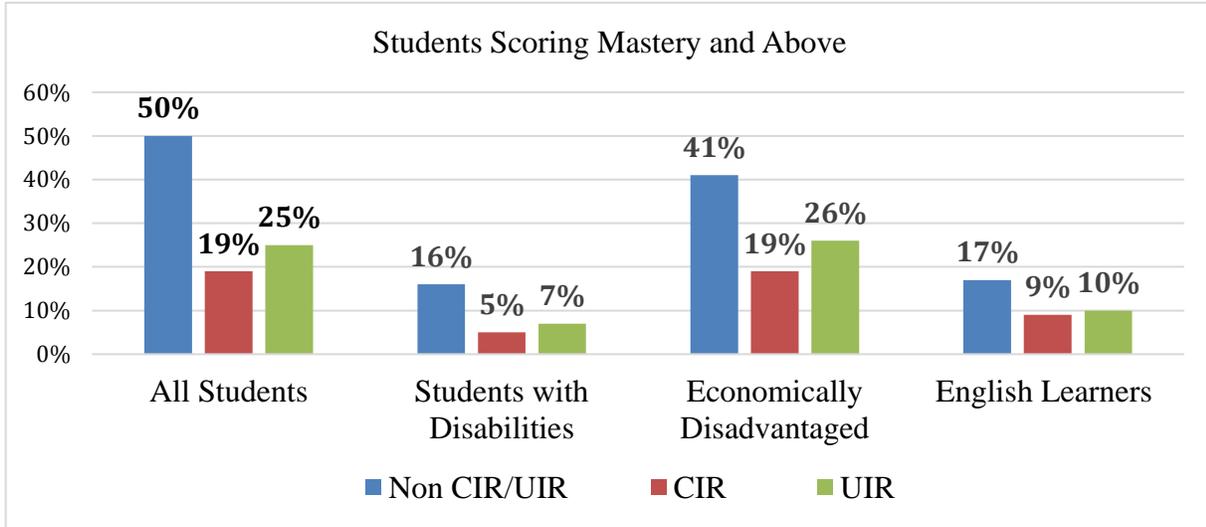
While Louisiana's student population is highly disadvantaged, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) has increased achievement in English Language Arts (ELA) through innovative literacy efforts and its Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan focused on continuous improvement that is regularly updated. Highlights include:

- 10% more four-year-olds achieved *significant* pre/post gains in oral language skills on the Teaching Strategies *Gold* assessment in 2018.
- The percentage of students in grades 3-8 scoring Mastery or above increased 65% on the English Language Arts portion of the LEAP assessment over the past five years.
- The state graduation cohort rate increased by 8% since 2012.

Despite overall growth, Louisiana's needs assessment data demonstrates **significant achievement gaps exist for the most disadvantaged populations**: students with disabilities, English Learners, and economically disadvantaged students. A data-based needs assessment revealed that while more than 43% of students in grades 3-8 achieved Mastery on the state's 2018 English Language Arts assessment (called LEAP), only 13% of students with disabilities, 15% of English Learners, and 34% of Economically Disadvantaged students achieved Mastery. For disadvantaged students in Louisiana's highest-needs schools, Comprehensive Intervention

Required (CIR) and Urgent Intervention Required (UIR) schools, this achievement gap is even wider. Figure 1 compares achievement data in schools that are not classified as CIR or UIR with those that are not, demonstrating how wide the gap is for the most struggling schools and how these high-need schools are impacting the state's overall achievement rates.

Figure 1: 2018 LEAP ELA Results Grades 3-8



From 2003 to 2017, Louisiana's average reading scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) increased by 7 points in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and by 4 points in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. However, this NAEP data also demonstrates significant achievement gaps. For example, in 2017, 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading scores were between 8-32 points lower, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading scores were between 8-27 points lower for disadvantaged students than the state average.

Contributing to academic achievement gaps, Louisiana students also experience **significant gaps in opportunity, service, and infrastructure**. While overall, 34% of students attained **college or career credentials** during high school in 2018, only 26% of economically disadvantaged students, 14% of students with disabilities, and 10% of English Learners achieved these same credentials. Moreover, 29% of students access accelerated learning through **Advanced Placement courses**, but this is only true for 23% of economically disadvantaged

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students, 7% of students with disabilities, and 13% of English Learners. Further, nearly 50% of economically disadvantaged students are taught by **uncertified and/or out-of-field teachers**, and 32% are taught by **ineffective teachers** based on state-approved teacher evaluation tools.

Studies demonstrate that children are more successful in school when their parents are actively involved in their learning and show an interest in their progress<sup>i</sup>. Needs assessment data reveal **disparities exist in the types and frequency of family-child interactions** between children who are disadvantaged and those who are not<sup>ii</sup>. Research data illuminates that children living in poverty or whose home language is a language other than English are even less likely to regularly engage in literacy activities with a family member<sup>iii iv</sup>.

Louisiana early childhood data also reflects overall progress while still demonstrating gaps as the state strives to increase high-quality early childhood programs for its disadvantaged birth to five population. While 86% of the state's economically disadvantaged four-year-olds are served through public funds in sites rated proficient or above by LDOE's Early Childhood Performance Profile scorecard, only 21% of three-year-olds and less than 5% of children younger than three are served through public funds in sites rated as proficient.

Louisiana has strived to professionalize the field of early childhood education by defining a minimum expectation for child care teachers. In 2014, when Louisiana was in the process of unifying its early childhood system, a review of the system revealed that too few teachers in child care were attaining higher credentials that would prepare them for the classroom. In 2017-2018, 52% of early childhood teachers in the state had a traditional **teacher certification or Early Childhood Ancillary Certification**. This represents an increase from 46% in 2015-2016 but shows **Louisiana has a long way to go to ensure teachers of our youngest learners are prepared** to guide developmentally appropriate learning that promotes kindergarten readiness.

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The needs assessment data exemplifies Louisiana is making overall improvements in literacy, but the most disadvantaged students attend schools that struggle most. There remains much work to be done, and the proposed CLSD project provides an opportunity to address the needs. LDOE is proposing a project that builds upon the systemic improvements made over the past decade and advances quality services to those who are not yet benefiting from literacy advancements.

Louisiana's project will target the state's most disadvantaged birth to grade 12 populations – specifically, students with disabilities, English Learners, and economically disadvantaged children – in the highest-needs schools and early childhood education sites. To eliminate the gaps for the most underserved, it will focus on three main areas:

- 1. Building capacity in the most struggling schools and systems to accelerate ELA achievement**
- 2. Ensuring every child has access to a highly effective teacher or child care provider**
- 3. Implementing high-quality evidence-based practices, interventions, materials, and opportunities to support children and families**

This coherent strategy will ensure all students are ready for the next level of study by providing full support for struggling schools, increasing the number of disadvantaged students benefiting from opportunities, and supporting families to help their children with literacy.

### **(b) Quality of Project Design**

Louisiana's School Improvement Strategy is currently focused around the nation's *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) requirement that states identify their most challenged schools, approve or reject plans for the improvement, and ultimately intervene if school improvement efforts fail. In Louisiana, this list includes 276 schools identified as in need of Comprehensive Intervention Required (CIR) and 224 schools identified as Urgent Intervention Required (UIR),

with CIR struggling school-wide and UIR only in certain subgroups. LDOE requires all CIR and UIR schools to make foundational changes, including adopting evidence-based curriculum and student assessments, providing high-quality teacher professional development to every teacher on the curriculum, and identifying a strategy for building effective teachers.

**The proposed CLSD project works in lockstep with these required changes and will add a layer of comprehensive literacy instruction support.** Combining the school improvement strategy defined through the ESSA plan with the state's Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan creates a perfect pathway to directing literacy support to the state's most disadvantaged students.

### **Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes**

LDOE has designed its CLSD project to advance the literacy skills, through the use of evidence-based practices, activities, and interventions, for children from birth to grade 12. The **goals of the project** are designed around a logically sequential premise:

**Build system capacity** to support teachers → With that support, **teachers improve their practice** → When teachers are effective, children **achieve better literacy outcomes**.

Based upon this premise, LDOE's CLSD project includes **3 goals**, measured by the number of stakeholders impacted over five years:

1. **Build the capacity** of local leaders to support **600 high-need schools** and early childhood sites to implement evidence-based literacy practices, including the use of evidence-based literacy interventions and opportunities with students and families.
2. **Improve the practice** of **9,600 teachers** in these high-need schools to implement evidence-based literacy practices, including the use of evidence-based literacy interventions, and opportunities with students and families.
3. **Increase the literacy outcomes** for **240,000 children** in these high-need schools.

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These goals are centered around the following **6 measurable objectives** LDOE will achieve over the five-year grant period, **which are explained in detail in the Project Services:**

1. Provide 60-80 annual subgrants to each age/grade band that are of sufficient size, scope, and duration to carry out high-quality literacy efforts for children from birth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
2. Train 2,000 local leaders within the most struggling schools to implement a local comprehensive literacy instruction plan, including evidenced-based practices, interventions, multi-tiered reading supports to improve literacy instruction in English Language Arts, and educational choice opportunities for disadvantaged students.
3. Provide ongoing, high-quality, intensive professional development and support to 9,600 teachers to increase effectiveness and strengthen application of evidenced-based practices, interventions, and activities to support for children and families.
4. Create and maintain a catalog of evidenced-based reading intervention programs, arranged by specific skill(s) deficits and age/grade level appropriateness, to help educators more easily identify the interventions that best meet their students' needs.
5. Compile and promote evidenced-based tools and information that parents and families use to support their children's literacy development and growth across the age bands, birth through grade 12.
6. Coordinate with 20 institutions of higher education to strengthen and enhance pre-service courses in evidence-based literacy methods and to advance rigorous State licensure and certification standards in the area of literacy instruction in early education through grade 12.

LDOE proposes **8 outcomes measures to evaluate the impact of these objectives and progress toward goals** in Table 1. LDOE's Division of Strategic Research and Analysis provides real-time feedback and access to data surrounding each of these outcomes allowing for

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data-driven decision making. These measures will be used to inform performance feedback and make modifications for **consistent and continuous improvement** in implementation. These goals align with and extend upon the required CLSD Government Performance and Results Act (GRPA) measures. Because the baseline scores are unknown until the cohort of subgrantees are selected, all goals are measured by annual increase over the baseline or the prior year.

The assessment tools for these outcomes are informed by strong evidence. The outcomes, with **benchmarks reflecting increases from baseline and year-to-year**, are:

*Table 1: Goals and Outcomes*

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Annual Outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment Tool(s)</b>
Build the capacity of local leaders to support 600 high-need schools and early childhood sites to implement evidence-based literacy practices, including the use of evidence-based literacy interventions, and opportunities with students and families	5% more early childhood sites achieve a rating of proficient or excellent on the Performance Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Early Childhood Performance Profiles</li> <li>● School Performance Score</li> <li>● Subgrantee-reported data</li> </ul>
	50% of schools achieve or maintain a School Performance Score of C or higher each year	on family literacy and educational choice*  (*this is the only measure that
	50% of schools demonstrate at least one additional educational choice opportunity AND at least one additional evidence-based family literacy program	is not evidence-based but requires self-assessment by the subgrantee)

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<p>Improve the practice of 9,600 teachers in these high-need schools to implement evidence-based literacy practices, including the use of evidence-based literacy interventions, activities and opportunities with students and families</p>	<p>5% increase of teachers rated Effective or Highly Effective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher Advancement Program™ (TAP)</li> <li>● COMPASS</li> <li>● Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS)</li> </ul>
	<p>5% increase in classrooms and early childhood centers that have a certified teacher</p>	
<p>Increase the literacy outcomes for 240,000 children in these high-need schools</p>	<p>80% of four-year-olds improve at least one level in oral language on the pre/post <i>GOLD</i> assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>GOLD</i> assessment</li> <li>● Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP), the state’s standardized achievement test</li> </ul>
	<p>2% increase of students in each grade (third, fifth, and eighth) that achieve Mastery or higher on the LEAP ELA</p>	
	<p>3% increase of tenth graders that achieve Mastery or higher on LEAP English II</p>	

LDOE’s Division of Strategic Research and Analysis manages and evaluates the data from all cited assessments, and it will coordinate the state’s evaluation efforts with the national CLSD evaluation. LDOE employs a value-added model for assessing teacher performance, which

includes teacher observations as part of the overall measurement of teacher success. The value-added model helps provide accurate data for how well the teacher has performed, based on multiple data points, including observation, and with consideration for the individual challenges faced by students. LDOE's Division of Strategic Research and Analysis has conversion tools that allow LDOE to review scores on each of the teacher effectiveness tools—TAP, COMPASS, and CLASS—on the same scale. By using this conversion tool, all teacher performance scores will be assessed on the same measurement framework.

### **Continuous Improvement and Performance Feedback**

Combining the state's efforts under ESSA and its CIR/UIR model, this CLSD program provides a highly-aligned opportunity to **provide additional and enhanced literacy efforts** for disadvantaged students across the entire spectrum of birth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. LDOE is the state Early Childhood Program lead agency (Louisiana one of only a few states for which this is the case), so the state not only meets the CLSD requirements for alignment with the agency responsible for early childhood education but also offers a unique commonality of standards and quality for all publicly-funded child care, Head Start, and PreK leaders in every community.

**This consolidated leadership also positions LDOE to access all performance data and feedback necessary to inform continuous improvement.**

This CLSD grant program will allow Louisiana to strengthen its early childhood education providers by strengthening support teachers through professional development and coaching, as well as to provide tools and guidance for implementing high-quality, evidence-based practices and interventions. The result is that more proficient early childhood education will be available across the full birth-5-year-old spectrum. **LDOE has collaborated with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (SAC)** in the development of Louisiana's

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Comprehensive Literacy approach and this Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program (CLSD) proposal, and this group will continue to be engaged throughout the CLSD project to inform program delivery and provide feedback.

With the subgrant competition, LDOE will prioritize UIR and CIR schools, as well as child care providers that demonstrate high levels of need, ensuring the greatest numbers of disadvantaged, **geographically diverse** children are being reached. LDOE has a **comprehensive monitoring plan** and protocol for ensuring alignment with the state comprehensive literacy instruction plan. As the Quality of the Management Plan will detail, this process is efficient and aligned with other state improvement activities, creating a unified and systematic feedback loop. The state has and will continue to make modifications and adjustments to the Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan based on feedback from monitors and data generated from literacy efforts. This monitoring plan also provides the opportunity to use data from districts for continuous improvement for CLSD program implementation.

LDOE has a robust and effective Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan in place and will work under this grant to refine the plan. The plan is centered around standards and curriculum, assessment, and high-quality, intensive professional development, the guiding elements of the *Louisiana Believes* education reform plan. The state has successfully progressed in ensuring all school systems have fundamental and evidence-based standards, assessments, and curricula as their ELA framework. With these fundamental components in place, this grant competition allows LDOE to maximize the use of high-quality curriculum while adding additional interventions and supports. The prior work of the Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan focused on system-wide evidence-based core curriculum, and this program will allow the state to

hone in on the interventions and supports for disadvantaged students with exceptional needs while ensuring all students make progress.

(c) **Quality of the Management Plan**

**Adequacy of the Management Plan**

LDOE will invest six key staff in the implementation of the CLSD project. Education Program Consultant Brandy Brunson will serve as Program Director and Literacy Program Manager Jill Slack, PhD, will serve as Assistant Program Director, both of whom are currently on the LDOE team and have extensive experience leading large literacy projects. The CLSD project will be supported by four additional existing district personnel including:

- **Diverse Learners Director:** Melissa McConnell brings experience with special needs and English Language students along with her professional development background with be at the forefront for coordinating evidence-based intervention activities for the CLSD project.
- **Literacy Program Specialist:** Laurie Carlton has expertise in building partnerships to support evidenced-based family literacy. She will support CLSD project activities and resources related to early childhood and evidence-based family literacy work. She will also play a key role in the subgrant application and review activities, as well as Teacher and Principal events.
- **English Language Arts Manager:** Angelle Lailhengue specializes in supporting educators through professional development in literacy grades K-12. She will coordinate system capacity-building activities, IHE partnerships, and professional development for the CLSD project.
- **Researcher/Evaluator:** Joshua Posey of LDOE's Department of Strategic Research and Analysis will support assessment and data collection for the proposed project. He will provide regular reporting to the Director to ensure the project is in line with the proposed goals, including the federally required GPRA measures, and the timelines for achieving those goals.

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**Table 2: Management Plan (Objectives/tasks are detailed in Project Services section)**

<b>Obj</b>	<b>Major Tasks</b>	<b>Milestones (repeated each year unless noted)</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsibility (key staff initials)</b>
#1	Draft/finalize application	Quality subgrant application posted on website	Nov-Dec	BB, MM
	Conduct TA webinars, meetings	Applicants submit quality competitive proposals	Jan-Feb	LC, AL
	Evaluate and rank proposals	LDOE selects subgrantees based on peer evaluations	Mar	BB, JS
	Allocate subgrant funds in eGMS	Subgrantees budgets are approved in eGMS	Apr-May	BB, LC
	Review subgrantee performance	Subgrantees improve and are assessed for renewal	Jun (after Yr. 1)	JS, JP
#2	Design and provide regional role-specific <i>LETRS</i> trainings	Early childhood directors, principals, and literacy coaches complete respective <i>LETRS</i> course	Jun-Aug	BB, JS
	Create resources for leaders	Principal Support Toolbox is updated/maintained	Jun and ongoing	AL, MM

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	Administer Principal Fellowship	Principals complete year-long program	Aug-Jul	AL, LC
	Facilitate quarterly collaboratives	Leaders attend four meetings to discuss data and tools to inform improvements	Sep- Mar	BB, JP
#3	Implement Coaching Model	Each literacy coach receives all state training	Yrs. 2-5	BB, JS
	Create Coaching Learning Community	Literacy coaches convene quarterly for performance feedback and continuous improvement	Sep-Mar	AL, JP
	Design/host Summer Summits	Teachers and literacy coaches attend 3-day Summit	Jun	BB, LC
#4	Facilitate committee to rigorously reviews interventions	Intervention catalog is incorporated into LDOE’s Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan	Apr and ongoing	MM, JS
#5	Provide customizable family literacy guidance	LDOE launches and maintains online toolkit: <i>Believe and Empower, Focus on Families</i>	Jun and ongoing	LC, MM
#6	Collaborate with <i>Believe and Prepare</i> IHE partners	<i>Believe and Prepare</i> partnership implements a new accountability system that links	Jun and ongoing	BB, AL

		teacher quality with preparation program provider		
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**Adequacy of Procedures for Feedback and Continuous Improvement**

LDOE will implement its CLSD monitoring plan to ensure that subgrant activities are implemented with fidelity, as well as to supply additional data and feedback to the CLSD team to allow for continuous improvement. The CLSD team will leverage the information gained from the monitoring plan, as well as their own direct communication with subgrantees, to assess performance, upon which renewal subgrant awards are dependent, as well as adherence to the approved subgrant budget.

LDOE’s monitoring procedures for CLSD provide that each subgrantee receive an annual comprehensive desk monitoring, which includes both finances and program, and an annual on-site programmatic review, which can be conducted more often if needed. The desk monitoring includes a review of financial activities. The Division of Statewide Monitoring at LDOE is responsible for the managing the monitoring oversight and follow-up activities for all federal programs administered by the agency.

LDOE uses a Coordinated Monitoring process, which allows for the integration of targeted monitoring activities of subgrant awards like CLSD. As part of these coordinated monitoring efforts, expert program staff and experienced monitors can fold the CLSD monitoring requirements into LDOE’s existing model of coordinated federal program monitoring without compromising the integrity of the program goals.

The purpose of the Coordinated Monitoring model is to create efficiencies. By conducting Coordinated Monitoring, LDOE is able to generate significant savings in staffing because it does not have separate individuals visiting and talking with schools about each

funding allocation and program separately. By consolidating efforts, qualified monitoring staff can consolidate monitoring activities and maintain coordinated feedback to the CLSD to make data-driven decisions for continuous improvement.

**(d) Quality of the Project Services**

LDOE's school reform strategy for failing schools and this Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program (CLSD) proposal are built around the core belief that Louisiana students are just as capable as any students in America. LDOE continues to develop new and innovative programming to ensure each child in Louisiana receives a quality education, no matter race, disability, or creed. At the root of LDOE's reform strategy is the fact that **an effective teacher is the most critical component of academic success**, and that teachers are most effective when they have access to a **high-quality, standards-based curriculum and supports, ongoing high-quality professional development** to use that curriculum effectively, and **data from a focused set of standards-aligned assessments**.

The state has made much progress in advancing curriculum, professional development, and state standards across all school systems, and it now proposes the opportunity to strengthen services **ensuring equal access and treatment to disadvantaged children**. As the Quality of Project Design portion of this application outlined, all services planned for the project period address three main goals:

- 1. Build the capacity** of local leaders to support **600 high-need schools** and early childhood sites to implement evidence-based literacy practices, including use of evidence-based literacy interventions and opportunities with students and families.

- 2. Improve the practice of 9,600 teachers** in these high-need schools to implement evidence-based literacy practices, including use of evidence-based literacy interventions, and opportunities with students and families.
- 3. Increase literacy outcomes for 240,000 children** in these high-need schools.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) will conduct **state-level activities** to support subgrantees under the proposed grant program, as well as administer rigorous accountability for subgrantees to advance comprehensive literacy education through the use of evidence-based practices, interventions, and activities, including pre-literacy skills, reading, and writing, for children from birth to grade 12, with intensive and high-quality professional development support, including initial training and ongoing coaching. As addressed in the Quality of Project Design portion of this application, subgrantees that are classified as Comprehensive Intervention Required (CIR) and Urgent Intervention Required (UIR) for academic needs are targeted and given priority under this project as they represent the highest populations of disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities.

LDOE's rigorous literacy efforts have informed the creation of a strong Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan with elements impacting all students such as a high-quality core curriculum aligned to rigorous, evidence-based assessment tools, and ongoing job-embedded professional development that is intensive and high-quality. The proposed Project Services for this CLSD Program are specifically designed to promote effective use of evidence-based practices and to provide intensive, supplemental, accelerated, and explicit intervention and support in reading and writing for disadvantaged students. The Project Services are designed to ensure equal access and treatment for eligible participants that have been traditionally

underrepresented and create a monitoring and accountability system that demonstrates equal access.

As overviewed in the Project Design section, LDOE has outlined six measurable objectives to reach the project goals. This portion of the application addresses the detailed services to be provided under each of these objectives.

**1. Provide 60-80 annual subgrants to each age/grade band that are of sufficient size, scope, and duration to carry out high-quality literacy efforts for children from birth through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.**

As defined in this application, the subgrantees will be prioritized for schools and systems that are classified as CIR and UIR, as well as early childhood education providers that are serving high percentages of disadvantaged children. Based on current calculations of schools in CIR/UIR status and early childhood education sites with high need LDOE anticipates between 60-80 active subgrants each year, with some subgrants representing multiple age bands. LDOE anticipates an average subgrant of [REDACTED] per child. This number will vary based on the number of successful applicants and level of need for each.

Subgrantees will receive multi-year support, but renewal is also contingent upon progress. Subgrantees must demonstrate that they have carried out project activities, and the state expects that, in doing so, they will see complementary gains in literacy, as measured by the tools outlined in the Project Design portion of this proposal. This renewal process also provides an additional opportunity to collect data and feedback around performance for the overall project. Because UIR/CIR status is reassessed every year, the annual renewal process allows systems to align the most high-need schools with the CLSD program. The process will work similarly with early childhood education programs, based on the site's proficiency rating.

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LDOE has the capacity to maintain the required division of funds, as outlined in the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program regulations, including not less than 15% of funds for birth through Kindergarten entry, 40% for Kindergarten through grade 5, and 40% allocated equitably among grades 6 through 12. Subgrants will be monitored through Louisiana's electronic grants management system (eGMS), which is programmed to ensure accurate allocation, budgeting, and expenditure of funds by age distribution. This system is used to manage several of the state's funding initiatives with LEAs. eGMS prevents subgrantees from overspending in any age band, ensuring fidelity to the required funding distribution.

Subgrantee applicants will engage in a competitive application process and will be encouraged to apply for funding based upon their own needs assessment and will be required to demonstrate that they are targeting the most disadvantaged students at the highest-need schools. **Applicants may propose to serve one or more of the age bands outlined in the proposal.** The subgrant competition is designed to specifically intervene where the needs are the greatest, so applicants will be encouraged to thoroughly assess their needs data to determine what age bands require the greatest intervention. Some subgrantees may serve the full birth-grade 12 spectrum, while others may only serve a portion of this. LDOE's priority is that funding goes to the most disadvantaged students and recognizes that each subapplicant's need will be unique. The subgrant program will align with the CLSD required allocation of funds, but it is flexible and nimble to allow school systems and early childhood education program to target and address the students who need additional literacy support the most through a **comprehensive literacy program.**

The following activities, which align with the state's Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan, will be required to participate as a subgrantee:

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- Use of age-appropriate, valid, and reliable screening assessments, diagnostic assessments, formative assessment processes, and summative assessments to identify a child’s learning needs, to inform instruction, and to monitor the child’s progress and the effects of instruction.
  - Evidence-based literacy practices and intervention strategies that provide intensive, supplemental, accelerated, and explicit intervention and support in reading and writing and strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.
  - Designation of a local literacy coach to participate in state-mandated training and provide site-based intensive and quality professional development to local ELA instructors. In the case of early childhood education programs, this position could be either the center director or a lead educator.
  - A local **Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan** across the whole system that is either already in place or will be developed through subgrant activities, aligned with the state’s Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan and targeted to the most disadvantaged students.
  - Use of a Tier 1 Curriculum.
  - Robust professional development strategies using vendors from the State Professional Development Vendor catalog that are high-quality and sufficient in duration.
  - Implementing evidence-based family literacy practices and advancing educational choice.
- Additionally, LDOE will provide Competitive Preference Priority for subgrantees who promote literacy interventions for students in rural communities, with disabilities, who are English learners, and/or who are in foster care.

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Allowable expenses will include: Travel and training for literacy coaches, purchasing of intervention programs, intensive initial training and ongoing coaching for all staff to use high-quality core curriculum supports and additional interventions effectively, evidence-based family literacy programming, educational choice options that either extend existing programs or offer new opportunities, and supplies and materials related to the required activities.

Eligible early childhood education programs and consortia (which may include local education agencies, nonprofit organizations, and early childhood education programs, per the CLSD guidelines) are eligible recipients for birth-5 and may apply as detailed in the CLSD program requirements. As part of its early childhood education strategy, the state has appointed an Early Childhood Lead Agency for each parish to provide information sharing, training support, and centralized communications. This Lead Agency will be the conduit through which LDOE promotes and encourages participation in the subgrant competition for early childhood education program.

**2. Train 2,000 local leaders within the most struggling schools to implement a local comprehensive literacy instruction plan, including evidenced-based practices and interventions, multi-tiered reading supports to improve literacy instruction in English Language Arts, and educational choice opportunities for disadvantaged students.**

LDOE believes in investing in local leaders to elevate the performance of local systems, and this proposal includes several support systems designed to promote the effectiveness of principals, early childhood directors, and other executive leaders on the local level. LDOE expects leaders provide this same level of support to teachers and staff within the system, ensuring all teachers are effective.

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LDOE will support the CLSD implementation through ongoing Collaborative Meetings. Principals and LEA supervisors will participate in role-specific Collaboratives four times per year in regional settings across the state, as well as a Statewide Summer Summit. These meetings are designed to build the capacity of these educators to implement evidence-based practices, activities, and interventions and examine the impact of local interventions and activities on teacher practice and student learning. The meetings will include reviews of real-time data on teacher performance and student achievement, topic-specific tracks, strategies for observation and feedback, discussions around educational choice, and collaboration on shared best practices and activities.

The Principal Support Toolbox is a resource on LDOE's website that provides resources that will support this CLSD implementation. The Toolbox includes evidence-based, high-quality tools for instructional support, academic resources, curriculum and assessments, as well as observation and feedback tools to guide principals in supporting teacher effectiveness. The Principal Support Toolbox provides tools to help local leaders customize support, professional development, literacy strategies, and other opportunities that fit within the scope and size of their local system. Additional resources about Educational Choice and Family Literacy are also part of this Toolbox. Similar resources are available for early childhood education leaders.

LDOE will encourage local leaders to participate in the Louisiana Principal Fellowship Program, aligned with the toolbox resources. The Louisiana Principal Fellowship Program will partner with the National Institute for School Leaders (NISL) to offer an executive development program for school and district level leaders at all stages in their career. The year-long fellowship strives to help school leaders become visionary drivers of change, instructional leaders, strategic thinkers, and creators of just, fair, and caring school cultures.

LDOE will provide high-quality, intensive *Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS®)* trainings for early childhood directors, central office leaders and principals, and literacy coaches (literacy coaches are described in more detail in the next section). *LETRS®* is a professional development course that bridges deep, meaningful research into practical classroom success. *LETRS* provides educators with the background, depth of knowledge, and tools to teach language and literacy skills to every student. *LETRS* can be used with all of the curricula, assessments, and interventions identified in LDOE’s Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan. Training will include: *Early Childhood LETRS* training for early childhood leaders/center directors; *LETRS Foundations* training for literacy coaches; and *LETRS For Administrators* training for central office leaders and principals.

**3. Provide ongoing high-quality, intensive professional development to 9,600 teachers to increase effectiveness and strengthen application of evidenced-based practices, interventions, and activities to support for children and families.**

As described in the section above, LDOE has built a rigorous framework of training and supports to help local leaders advance high-quality literacy practices, activities, and interventions in their local systems. The tools above help leaders develop high-quality, intensive professional development activities for local teachers as part of their subgrant applications. Local leaders will demonstrate a strategy to ensure **all teachers**—including special education, English language, and reading interventionists—are using high-quality practices and interventions. All professional development providers must be in LDOE’s Professional Development Vendor catalog, as described in detail in the next section. Subgrantees who demonstrate alignment with additional professional development resources, along with these state-level supports, will strengthen their applications and increase their likelihood of funding.

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LDOE will also offer Summer Summits to teachers and leaders to extend learnings of evidence-based practices, share successes, and solve for challenges. This 3-day annual event will bring together **educators and national experts** who are focused on creating meaningful growth for every student, every day. Subgrantees will share their knowledge, learn new skills, and prepare for the upcoming school year. The Summit will include a special track for CLSD subgrantees, including family literacy and educational choice topics, feature special content for local literacy coaches, provide leadership support in comprehensive literacy instruction planning, and provide meaningful, intensive, high-quality professional development to the 9,600 teachers impacted by CLSD who participate.

LDOE is including a **literacy coach training program** as part of its CLSD model, in keeping with the application requirements this program may be implemented with funds remaining after all other required activities have been funded. LDOE proposes extensive and ongoing training for the literacy coaches that is sufficient in quality, intensity, and duration, including the *LETRS* training outlined above. The state will invest CLSD funds in developing a rigorous training program for literacy coaches in three different levels: early childhood, K-5<sup>th</sup> grade, and 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade. This program includes a **minimum of 8 days of intensive professional support each year** and quarterly collaboratives with coaches that are curriculum-specific to align *LETRS* and curriculum for coaches. Because these literacy coaches are working directly with each subgrantee site, their boots-on-the-ground work leverages the training resources of the state and brings it into the field with literacy teachers across the subgrantee districts. In this way, local literacy teachers also receive intensive, high-quality professional development for a long period of time.

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Participating subgrantees will be required to designate a local literacy coach in each subgrantee site at their own expense or from existing staff, to ensure the position is sustainable. This work will build off of LDOE's current Content Leaders initiative, which creates a cadre of local educators who have the knowledge, skills, and concrete resources to provide high-quality, content-rich, and curriculum-specific professional development to new and current teachers in their district and have a track record of success in working with these teachers. For early childhood education providers and elementary grades, these literacy coaches will also have expertise in foundational reading skills. Content Leaders are already provided with additional training and professional development, and the designation of literacy coach will be supported with additional training provided by the state as part of this CLSD project. Subgrantees can use CLSD for travel, while the state provides the training costs for literacy coaches.

The literacy coaches work at their individual sites to provide professional support to literacy teachers. Literacy coaches will observe, provide feedback, engage one-on-one coaching, and model best practices. The literacy coaches will take a triage approach, prioritizing the most ineffective teachers to meet their most immediate needs, and over the course of the subgrant period, impact all teachers who need additional coaching and support. Working side-by-side with other educators at their sites, they will identify where Tier 1 curricula built-in supports are not being maximized and also to model and teach new quality literacy intervention activities. They will coach teachers on using high-quality, evidence-based assessments to determine the most effective interventions required. Finally, they will be experts in the State Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan and provide guidance and support for the creation and implementation of the Local Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan.

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The literacy coaches will be part of a learning community that is convened quarterly through a collaboration meeting structure to review how the subgrantee implementation project are working. Quarterly convenings will also focus on alignment between *LETRS* and curriculum implementation. This learning community will be a critical resource to the state, as it continues to refine its intervention catalog. Further, it will provide an opportunity to gather feedback and real-time information on the effectiveness of implementation from those closest to the work—literacy coaches—who have been on-site and working directly with students and teachers.

**4. Create and maintain a catalog of evidenced-based reading intervention programs, arranged by specific skill(s) deficits and age/grade level appropriateness, to help educators more easily identify the interventions that best meet their students' needs.**

LDOE has implemented a rigorous Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan, which addresses standards-based curriculum, assessment, and professional development. This plan is publicly-available on LDOE's website and incorporates information about promising instructional practices to improve child literacy achievement. Included in the plan is a Curriculum Rating Scale. LDOE has conducted a full-scale rigorous review of over 100 birth-grade 12 commercial curricula that addressed literacy, ranking them in three tiers, with Tier 1 being the best, evidence-based, and includes assessment tools. These reviews are publicly-available on LDOE's website. For this project, all participant subgrantees are required to implement a Tier 1 Curriculum, as designated by LDOE. This ensures that all students have access to appropriate curricula to support literacy development.

LDOE has also created a Professional Development Vendor catalog, which is part of its Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan. The Professional Development Vendor catalog is consistently updated to provide a shortlist of high-quality vendors in reading/ELA and early

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childhood education that meet all key quality criteria. Vendors have been vetted for quality, diversity of offerings, and appropriate duration of professional development support.

Under this Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program, LDOE will add another layer of tools to advance literacy outcomes for disadvantaged students—an extensive review and an approved list of intervention programs and related training. This customized catalog will create a systematic continuum of evidence-based pedagogical approaches and high-quality teaching tools at the state level.

The intervention catalog will detail which evidence-based interventions are recommended for a specific issue with which a student is struggling, as identified by an evidence-based, high-quality assessment. This creates an intervention clearinghouse that is different than all of the publicly-available interventions because they are aligned across this continuum and incorporated into LDOE’s Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan. For example, the Comprehensive Literacy Instruction Plan identifies Core Knowledge Language Arts as an evidence-based Tier 1 curriculum for grades K-3. An educator looking to address a third grade student’s fluency deficit would be able to review this catalog for interventions for fluency that enhance the instruction provided in that specific curriculum for that grade level. The intervention catalog will be responsive to specific literacy challenges, for example interventions would be listed for a child strong with word-reading but struggling with constructing meaning or a child strong in background knowledge but struggling with reading words. By creating a catalog of evidence-based interventions, LDOE will ensure that schools are using interventions to inform their approach for students who are struggling, provide progress monitoring to measure improvement, and inform feedback to the parents to support the child’s literacy development.

**5. Compile and promote evidenced-based tools and information that parents and families use to support their children’s literacy development and growth across the age bands, birth through grade 12.**

The state will create an online library for school systems and early childhood education providers of evidence-based, high-quality resources to advance literacy within school systems and for families. The subgrant competition will also encourage applicants to propose a local plan for family literacy, which may be aligned with this online resource, to create partnerships with providers in their community and create a place-based family literacy approach that responds to the individual family need. This may include providing families with access to books or other physical or digital materials or content about how to support their child’s reading development or providing family literacy activities.

Subgrantees will be allowed and encouraged to access resource products to support family literacy and engagement. For example, a text-message-based parenting program, “FASTalk” is showing early promise in addressing growing inequality in educational outcomes for low-income and struggling elementary school students by engaging families in learning. This tool helps teachers engage diverse families in learning by sending standards- and curriculum-aligned activities to parents by text message, in the parent’s home language. Another model—Providence Talks—incorporates parent supports for early learners to promote quality vocabulary for pre-literacy support. Subgrantees will be encouraged to incorporate innovative programs like these.

As part of this CLSD project, LDOE will launch an online toolkit for families: *Believe and Empower, Focus on Families*. The goal of this family-engaging, evidence-based toolkit is to shift the focus from family involvement to family engagement by providing resources, promoting

active involvement both in and out of the classroom environment, and partnering with families to set goals for their children. The toolkit will promote literacy from birth to Grade 12.

The *Believe and Empower: Focus on Families* online toolkit will focus on overall evidence-based literacy strategies and activities broken down into age spans for families to find easily: Early Childhood, Kindergarten Readiness, Elementary/Middle School, High School, and Workforce. The toolkit could include: resources to ease transition as children move between grades, recommendations for family reading materials, FAQ's and "What to Expect" for each grade level, links to information about educational choice opportunities, and pre-workforce materials for parents of high school students.

**6. Coordinate with 20 institutions of higher education to strengthen and enhance pre-service courses in evidence-based literacy methods and to advance rigorous State licensure and certification standards in the area of literacy instruction in early education through grade 12.**

Guided by a commitment to build a pipeline of highly effective new teachers, LDOE has launched the program Believe and Prepare. Believe and Prepare forges partnerships between LEAs and teacher preparation programs to provide undergraduate education for new teachers, as well as to provide an alternative certification track for professionals with degrees in other disciplines to receive a teaching certificate. This alternative certification opportunity is serving to boost the state's literacy efforts because it allows for candidates with education and expertise in English and language to become Louisiana teachers and potentially earn other certifications, such as a reading specialist endorsement. The state will also encourage add-on credentials and offers several that are literacy-related, including Dyslexia certification and a Birth-5-year-old certification.

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LDOE works with 20 Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) and teacher preparation programs to ensure Louisiana's new teachers are highly effective. LDOE has already started working with IHEs to align their programs with the state standards, and under this CLSD project, LDOE will work with IHEs to design an accountability system that will allow it to monitor program graduate effectiveness, creating a feedback opportunity for continuous improvement of the IHE program.

This CLSD project will also support preparation for early childhood educators by advancing the addition of the state's Ancillary Certificate program. More rigorous than a traditional CDA, the Ancillary Certificate program requires training from an authorized provider, including IHEs; certification are now required of any teacher working in a publicly-funded child care center. The state has developed a partnership with the University of Florida that provides an online platform for the Ancillary Certificate program, as well. By raising child care teacher expectations and increasing access to high-quality preparation, Louisiana will develop a prepared, professional child care workforce that supports all children to enter kindergarten ready.

### **Impact of the Proposed Services**

The project services and design outlined in this proposal represent a cohesive plan to impact literacy among the state's most disadvantaged students. By design, only schools and child care centers that have concentrated numbers of disadvantaged students are eligible to participate in the subgrant process. LDOE's approach not only ensures the highest-need schools, child care centers, and students are eligible, it advances upon foundational literacy excellence with specific interventions and support strategies that impact students who are still falling in the gap for academic achievement. This carefully-designed approach will reach 240,000 children and is built

around a rigorous set of ambitious goals to increase student achievement, teacher effectiveness, and school and child care system capacity.

### **Intensity of Professional Development Services**

High-quality, intensive training and professional development is woven into each component of this plan and at each level of school systems and child care education. Leaders will receive the training and support they need to implement system-wide comprehensive literacy instruction plans. Teachers will receive coaching and training of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to become highly effective in daily core instruction and the use of evidence-based interventions. All educators will receive tools to address family literacy and increase educational choice through resources and professional development. Parents will receive literacy resources to support their children. Finally, teacher preparation programs will ensure new teachers graduate with the necessary knowledge and skills in explicit, systematic, and intensive instruction in evidence-based literacy methods.

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