

ARKANSAS COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY STATE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PROGRAM NARRATIVE

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Reading and literacy skills are vital for success in the classroom and life in general. For students looking toward a degree or new career path, high-level literacy skills are essential.

– Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson

(a) Need for Project

Consistently low literacy rates across the board, lack of prepared graduates to enter the workforce, and low college attainment have had a devastating impact on some rural communities in Arkansas. The potential impact statewide, if a significant change did not occur, inspired the Reading Initiative for Student Excellence - otherwise known as RISE Arkansas. This movement is anchored in evidence-based research about how children learn to read, referred to as the science of reading.

The state of Arkansas is well positioned to ensure that the goals of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program are met. In 2017, Arkansas began an aggressive literacy campaign, leveraging state resources to address literacy in a comprehensive manner. As a result, the state has received national attention for its work around literacy, and was recently featured in several Education Week articles and a PBS Newshour.

The successful launch of RISE Arkansas, supported by Governor Asa Hutchinson, the Arkansas General Assembly, the Arkansas Dyslexia Support Group, teacher and administrator organizations, as well-local media and non-profits has readied Arkansas for the next steps in effecting dramatic changes in literacy education and outcomes for the state's children. This grant would provide the needed resources to capitalize on the foundation that has been laid.

During the 2019 legislation session, Governor Hutchinson combined several agencies under the Arkansas Department of Education, including Arkansas Better Chance (state-funded preschool) and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education. As of July 1, these agencies will be unified, with a common mission of transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education. This only adds to the state's capacity to effect positive changes in literacy instruction and intervention for children birth to grade 12.

RISE Arkansas encourages a culture of reading by coordinating a statewide reading campaign with community partners, educating parents about the importance of reading, and increasing access to books in the home. Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and AR Kids Read are two examples of partners who are supporting RISE Arkansas by promoting a culture of reading. However, creating and sustaining a culture of reading on a statewide scale, will require schools, churches, city councils, non-profits, and business partners to come together to promote reading and family engagement in all Arkansas communities. Establishing a State Literacy Team comprised of various stakeholders to develop, review, and revise the comprehensive state literacy plan as well as setting criteria to recognize communities who strive for excellence with a RISE Community Award will be among the first milestones addressed. RISE Communities will have to meet criteria established through the State Literacy Team and sustain literacy efforts to qualify for such an award.

A critical component of RISE Arkansas is professional development. Current scientific evidence shows that many of the state's core instructional practices were ineffective in comparison to other strategies. Arkansas educators were confronted with

evidence-based research that had been heavily ignored by those in education, and decades of ineffective practices based on the state's balanced literacy model. In collaboration with nationally recognized experts, the state began the heavy lift of revamping professional learning in literacy that followed the science of reading.

Two years ago, Arkansas launched the first K-2 RISE Academy focused on aggressively closing the knowledge and skill gap around the science of reading among Arkansas educators. The following year, ADE Specialists developed a 3-6 RISE Academy aimed at meeting the needs of educators teaching in intermediate grade levels. The state has dedicated substantial resources to the provision of literacy coaches and training to adequately prepare educators to make a shift in long-standing reading practices. However, the work is far from done, and the opportunity this grant provides for LEAs to apply for competitive grant funds to support the new learning is undeniable. Arkansas is committed to the continued support of the K-6 RISE Academies. However, the opportunity to expand RISE to include intensive coaching for rural Arkansas and a RISE Pre-K Academy, with an emphasis on phonological awareness, oral language acquisition, and parental literacy engagement, offers an avenue to accelerate positive changes in literacy outcomes for Arkansas children.

As a result of legislative support, every district in Arkansas is expected to shift to an instructional model based on the principles of RISE Arkansas, but the demand for high-quality professional development for educators and schools, supported through real application in the classroom through a coaching model, is difficult to meet. The state has identified 80 districts based on 2018 ACT Aspire data in which more than 40% of students scored, "In Need of Support" the lowest category on the assessment. Many

of these same districts have unacceptably low levels of proficiency, within their disadvantaged populations, including children living in poverty, minorities, English learners, and children with disabilities.

As the ADE was introducing RISE Arkansas across the state in 2017, the Arkansas legislature, acknowledging the necessity of effective teachers for a successful, comprehensive literacy program, passed Act 1063 of 2017, known as the Right to Read Act (Attachment 1 – Right to Read). This legislation targets educators, in the pivotal role of reading instructors, to be appropriately trained in the knowledge and skills of the science of reading and requires the following:

- Teachers in the K-6 core content areas of English, science, math, social studies; and K-12 special education teachers must show proficiency in the science of reading by the 2021-2022 school year; and
- All other teachers must demonstrate awareness of knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction by the 2021-2022 school year.

Proficiency in the knowledge and skills of the science of reading is not the only educator quality concern identified in Arkansas. As outlined in the Arkansas Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan (Attachment 2 – ESSA Plan, Section D) through data analysis, the ADE identified the following statewide equity gaps:

- Students in high-poverty and high minority schools are more likely to have inexperienced teachers than students in low-poverty and low-minority schools;
- Students in high-poverty schools are more likely to have out-of-field teachers than students in low poverty schools;

- Students in high-poverty and high minority schools are more likely to have unqualified teachers than students in low-poverty and low-minority schools;
- There is a higher rate of turnover (as measured by the occurrence rate of inexperienced teachers) in high minority schools;
- Attrition data show teachers leave high-poverty and high minority schools at a higher rate than teachers at low-poverty and low-minority schools.

A key consideration in annually assessing teacher quality across the state, the equitable access data, is published on My School Info, the ADE public repository for the state, district, and school data. ADE staff aid districts in using this data to recruit, assign, and retain a quality, equitable educator workforce and to provide technical assistance as districts plan and complete applications for federal funds. The Arkansas State Board of Education reviews data on teachers teaching out-of-area for more than 30 days at monthly meetings and considers equitable access to quality instruction in evaluating district requests to hire non-licensed teachers.

Based on the fall administration of the state's K-2 assessment system, 41.7% of entering kindergarten students are considered at-risk of not meeting end of year reading expectations without intervention, and only 37.8% of third-grade students on the 2018 ACT Aspire assessment met reading readiness levels. This is of particular concern based on the research around outcomes for students who are not reading on grade-level by third grade. Grade level student data over time shows that Arkansas students have not made sufficient gains to close the achievement gap, and half of the state's student population continues to fall below grade level in literacy. Only 41% percent of the combined student population in grades 3-10 met the state's criteria for reading

readiness on the statewide assessment in 2018, and only 36% of graduating seniors met reading readiness benchmarks as outlined by the ACT that same year. Nationally, these results correlate with the state’s ranking in the lower third on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

The statewide ACT Aspire data is used to identify state, district, and school needs. Analyses of the 2018 ACT Aspire scores for grades 3-10 (**Table 1**), indicate that students’ combined English/Language Arts (ELA) scores are higher than reading scores, with the exception of grades 4 and 8. The combined score of English/Language Arts (ELA) includes English, reading, and writing components. However, when reading scores are isolated from the other ELA components, reading scores are lower than English or writing.

Table 1

Grade	Reading % Met Readiness Benchmark	ELA % Met Readiness Benchmark
3	37.8	41.4
4	44.1	42.3
5	38.1	40.8
6	45.1	46.7
7	39.8	44.5
8	51.1	48.2

9	38.1	44.0
10	33.9	43.4

Further analyses of student subgroups throughout the state demonstrate a significant gap in combined grade 3-10 reading achievement levels as compared to the *all students* population. The most significant areas of concern are students with disabilities and the state's African American population with 8.4% and 20.9%, respectively, meeting reading readiness benchmarks statewide on the 2018 ACT Aspire as shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2

Subgroup	Reading % Met Readiness Benchmark
African American	20.9%
Hispanic	33.7%
Economically Disadvantaged	31.7%
English Learner	28.7%
Students w/Disabilities	8.4%

Grade 10 had the lowest percentage of students (33.9%) meeting reading readiness benchmarks on the ACT Aspire in comparison to other grades. The state continues to be gravely concerned about the lack of direct literacy support in grades 7-

12 and the gap in literacy proficiency between the *all students* population compared to subgroups as shown in **Table 3**. The percentage of grades 7-10 African American students meeting reading readiness benchmarks ranged from a low of 14.8% at grade 10 to 28.5% at grade 8. Likewise, the percentage of students with disabilities meeting reading readiness benchmarks ranged from 4.3% (grade 10) to 11% (grade 8).

Table 3

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
All Students	39.8%	51.1%	38.1%	33.9%
African American	18.8%	28.5%	27.9%	14.8%
Hispanic	34.5%	45.3%	22.4%	26.4%
Economically Disadvantaged	30.2%	41%	28%	24.3%
English Learners	28.2%	38.4%	22.4%	17.8%
Students with Disabilities	6.08%	11.0%	5.6%	4.3%

Due to the predictive nature of the ACT Aspire, students in grade 10 are predicted to score an average composite of 19.6 on the ACT in grade 11. The ACT reading readiness benchmark is 20. Students who meet the readiness score have a 75% chance or better of making at least of C or above on college entry-level course work for social studies. As part of the state's assessment system, Arkansas provides the ACT to all grade 11 students; the average composite score for 2018 graduating seniors was 19.4, below the expected college and career readiness score.

In 2010, Arkansas ranked 44th nationally for adults with a high school degree and 49th for those with college degrees. According to the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture 2017 Rural Profile, 42% of the state's population resides in a county considered rural compared to 15% of the population nationwide in rural counties. The profile stated that 81% of rural Arkansans had a high school diploma, and only 14.4% of adults living in rural areas had a college degree. More than 65% of local education agencies (LEAs) have been identified as eligible for rural grant funds by the U.S. Department of Education (163 districts). It is an ongoing struggle to support the large numbers of Arkansas rural communities with the direct coaching support necessary to transition ineffective literacy practices to an instructional model based on the science of reading. Assisting rural communities, a priority outlined in the grant, is a recognized need in Arkansas.

The competitive grant for Cohort 1 would be offered to schools in districts identified as having more than 40% of students scoring “In Need of Support” on the 2019 ACT Aspire and meeting at least one of the following criteria: be identified as rural, or identified as needing Additional Targeted Support (ATS) for special education or English learners based on the state’s ESSA Index. Based on 2018 ACT Aspire data, 67 districts identified as high need, would meet the criteria to apply for a competitive grant and technical assistance for Cohort 1 (Attachment 3 – Identified Districts). Attachment 4 – Cooperative High Needs LEAs, reflects Cohort 1 consortia (Educational Cooperatives) to be identified based on the number of high needs schools and districts served, as well as the number of students served within those LEAs. Cohorts 2-5 will be opened statewide; however, the rubric will include preference for districts

demonstrating needs in each area used to identify Cohort 1. The amount distributed to each district, school or consortium will be based on the number of students served and the overall plan to guarantee a successful implementation. Final decisions and priority will go to LEAs that serve a high percentage of families with income levels at or below 200 percent of the Federal poverty line.

The established Office for Comprehensive Literacy State Development, in collaboration with other ADE units such as Standards and Support, Curriculum Support Services, Special Education, ESOL, and the Office of Coordinated State Support will provide direct technical assistance to selected LEAs. The goal is to ensure that the school or district is provided support to write a viable literacy plan that will be effectively implemented, considering each individual LEA's needs assessment. An example of a specific consideration would be to determine if equitable access to highly qualified educators is a factor, and if so, the district may choose to explore a digital option.

Due primarily to the state's investment in pre-K services for 3- and 4- year olds, the National Institute for Early Education Research ranks early childhood in Arkansas education as follows:

- 5th in the nation for 3-year-old access,
- 17th in the nation for 4-year-old access, and
- 19th in the nation for per-pupil funding.

Although more than half of pre-K 3- and 4-year-olds in low-income families receive services through Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) which is a state funded pre-K program, Head Start (HS), and federal child care development funds (CCDF), far fewer

infants and toddlers receive services, as indicated in **Table 4** below. Arkansas is one of the few states participating in Early Head Start, and the Department of Human Resources Division of Early Childhood Education staff work jointly with Head Start and Early Head Start grantees on the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership to layer full-day child care funding with Early Head Start. This expands birth-age 3 services to more of Arkansas's youngest children, and the state requirement for all providers receiving federal child care funding to participate in the Quality Rating and Improvement System emphasizes a focus on quality of services. Still, many of Arkansas's most fragile infants and toddlers lack access to high quality comprehensive early childhood programs.

Table 4

Total Low Income Arkansas Infants & Toddlers Receiving Services Compared with Total Pre-K Children Receiving Services in Early Childhood State Funded Programs		
	Total Population Under 200% FPL Served	Total Number Actually Served
Infant/Toddler	31,428	5,666 served
Pre-K	33,506	32,424 served

While 2017-2018 pre-K assessments of language and literacy demonstrate growth in proficiency within the year, programs are limited for birth-age 3, and Arkansas children lack opportunities to be fully prepared to enter kindergarten.

The following data in **Table 5** below is from the required statewide assessment (Work Sampling System) for state funded pre-k Arkansas Better Chance for the P-3 (preschool 3 year-olds) and P-4 (preschool 4 year-olds) that participated in 2017-2018

program year. Children are assessed with the Work Sampling System (WSS) formative assessment tool three times during the program year. WSS is a curriculum-embedded observational assessment. Only 8.2% of the three year-olds were proficient in Period 1, but by the end of the year, 56.2% were proficient. 16.9 percent of the 4 year-olds were proficient in Period 1, but by Period 3, almost 80% were proficient. This data indicates the incredible gap that low income children have when entering pre-k and the potential to improve language and literacy skills through sustained intervention, as well as the need to continue to improve young children’s outcomes through education/professional development of classroom staff and families.

Table 5

Arkansas Preschool Percentage Proficient Language and Literacy Outcomes 17-18		
	PreK- 3 Year-Olds	PreK - 4 Year-Olds
Period 1	8.2%	16.9%
Period 2	24.4%	42.5%
Period 3	56.2%	77.6%

As a subset of the State Literacy Team, an Early Childhood Literacy Team developed in partnership with the Department of Human Services Division of Early Childhood Services, will be tasked with coordinating state efforts to provide books, early literacy training for parents, and high-quality professional learning to early childhood educators that aligns with the K-2 RISE Academy to address a current deficiency within the state’s literacy efforts.

Overall student performance data, gap data for subgroups, educator equity data, and geographic challenges, as well as the impending deadline for compliance with the Right to Read Act, demonstrate the need for the Arkansas Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program (CLSDP). Grant funds are needed to supplement state resources in addressing challenges and ensuring:

- 1) each child PK-12 in Arkansas receives high-quality literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading, utilizing intervention programs that demonstrate strong evidence on improving student outcomes, for traditionally underserved students;
- 2) families of traditionally underserved populations not only have access to literacy resources, but are also engaged in high yield literacy activities, and;
- 3) students and families representing underserved populations have access to educational choice through digital platforms as well as the many charter school opportunities.

(b) Quality of the Project Design

Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

The Arkansas Comprehensive Literacy State Development Plan (CLSDP) will advance literacy skills, through the use of evidence-based practices, activities, and interventions, including pre-literacy skills, reading, and writing, for children from birth through grade 12, with an emphasis on disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities.

Objective 1 To strengthen Arkansas literacy instruction

Outcome 1.1 To improve annual student performance in combined English Language Arts (ELA) and reading on State assessments in grades 3-10 by reducing the number of districts from 80 to fewer than 20 in which 40% or more of the students score "In Need of Support"

Outcome 1.2 To improve annual student performance and growth data outlined in the Arkansas ESSA plan in English/Language Arts (ELA) and reading on state assessments in grades 3-10 as determined by the State Literacy Team for each of the following:

- (a) All students
- (b) Economically disadvantaged students
- (c) English learners
- (d) Students with disabilities
- (e) Students in foster care

Outcome 1.3 To decrease the percentage of students considered at risk in literacy from 41.7% to 35% upon entering kindergarten

Outcome 1.4 To increase the number of students by 30% who enroll and complete the identified reading courses in high school

Objective 2 To provide access to educational excellence to Arkansas children

Outcome 2.1 To ensure that 90% all of K-6 teachers have demonstrated proficiency in the science of reading by the end of the 2021-2022 school year as measured by existing state guidelines

- Outcome 2.2 To ensure that 90% all of K-12 sped teachers have demonstrated proficiency in the science of reading by the end of the 2021-2022 school year as measured by existing state guidelines
- Outcome 2.3 To ensure that 90% of all licensed educators have demonstrated awareness in the science of reading by the end of the 2021-2022 school year as measured by existing state guidelines
- Outcome 2.4 To ensure that 100% of pre-service teachers in Arkansas educator preparation programs demonstrate proficiency in the science of reading within 3 years of graduating
- Outcome 2.5 To increase the percentage of teachers of 3- and 4-year-olds demonstrating proficiency in the science of reading as measured by guidelines to be developed by the State Literacy Team

Objective 3 To foster collaboration among various stakeholders

- Outcome 3.1 To increase community opportunities for family engagement through literacy as measured by guidelines to be developed by the State Literacy Team
- Outcome 3.2 To include representatives from at least 6 stakeholder groups on the State Literacy Team
- Outcome 3.3 80% of educator preparation programs will have at least one instructor who has completed a RISE Academy training

Objective 4 To build a culture of reading

- Outcome 4.1 To increase the distribution of age-appropriate books to children across the state birth-age 5 by at least 15% each year

- Outcome 4.2 To annually increase the number of RISE communities by a minimum of two each year, for a total 10 or more within five years
- Outcome 4.3 To increase the number of families in targeted districts reporting positive outcomes related to family literacy activities as measured by annual survey

Additionally, on each Annual Performance Report (APR), the ADE will report data on the performance measures for the CLSDP established by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) to the extent they apply to the Arkansas project.

Project Design

Arkansas has a number of literacy-related professional development offerings as well as the RISE Arkansas initiative. Extensive stakeholder involvement, along with assistance and support from national experts on effective, research-based literacy instruction, enriched the development process and the components included in the state's current support structure for literacy instruction and intervention.

Current Support Structure for Literacy Instruction and Intervention

(See Attachment 5 – Current Literacy Efforts)

At the core of the Arkansas literacy support structure is RISE Arkansas. All RISE Academies are multi-day year-long professional learning opportunities that involve direct classroom coaching and support. Rise Academies lead participants through a deep dive into the research on how a student learns to read, based on theoretical models such as Scarborough's rope and the Simple View of Reading. Throughout the Academy, participants are actively engaged in highly effective professional development

that builds not only their understanding of how the brain works, but scientifically proven effective instructional strategies on all essential components of literacy, including phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. There are currently 85 RISE trainers in the state and more than 2,500 teachers in K-6 who have received training in two years. Additional professional learning based on the science of reading, and independent of RISE Academies, are being developed, along with multiple pathways for educators to demonstrate proficiency in and awareness of the science of reading, as required by the Right to Read Act, and posted on the ADE website at RISEArkansas.org.

Arkansas has developed a middle school strategic reading class, as well as several credit-bearing high school courses: Critical Reading I, Critical Reading II, and Academic Reading for secondary students who need reading intervention. The ADE has provided flexibility in selecting the most qualified literacy teacher for each course regardless of grade level. These new courses would allow for schools utilizing the grant to purchase effective intervention programs, provide training for teachers, and allow students to receive high school credit while improving their literacy skills.

Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program

The ADE will continue to offer K-6 RISE Academies, support its 50 literacy specialists, update and maintain web resources accessible at RISEArkansas.org, and offer and promote additional credit-bearing literacy courses for secondary students.

Grant funds will allow the state to reach program milestones and fully implement the comprehensive literacy plan outlined in Attachment 6 – Implementation Plan.

Through a partnership with the Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN), the State's PBS station, the state provides a yearly grant to create online PD through the digital platform, AR Ideas. Under development is an 18-hour online series of courses to develop awareness in the science of reading. The first six hours of the series, featuring national literacy experts, have been developed and available to all licensed educators in the state. AETN will film the additional 12 hours in 2019-2020 to complete the series and expand access to other literacy PD, as approved by the ADE.

Another essential partner is the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Arkansas is one of five states included in the CCSSO initiative for Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL), and grant funds will be used to advance AIPL objectives by embedding PD with high-leverage practices that are effective for all students, but specifically for students with disabilities. This collaborative effort will ensure educators have the knowledge and skills needed to support learning for all students in inclusive environments.

ADE will continue to fund the current literacy specialists and professional development at the 15 Educational Service Cooperatives across the state. Grant funds will be used to create consortiums to add additional literacy specialists who are highly skilled and trained to support rural districts, and promote choice options through the charter school network. Grant funds will also be used to build and implement Pre-K RISE and support collaboration between the ADE and the Department of Human Services (DHS) to drive increased literacy outcomes for all early childhood programs in the state.

ADE will continue ongoing collaborations with the Dyslexia Support Group, a parent-advocacy group, and the University of Central Arkansas Mashburn Center for Learning. The Mashburn Center, supports schools in the implementation of the Arkansas Adolescent Literacy Intervention (AALI) project, grounded in the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) from the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning, to promote evidence-based literacy instruction and intervention for students in grades 4-12. Grant funds would allow schools and consortium to receive high quality professional development in the implementation of SIM strategies and routines to increase literacy outcomes for secondary learners, specifically English learners and students with disabilities.

ADE continues to work collaboratively with institutes of higher education (IHE's) to strengthen educator preparation programs based on evidence-based practices. The ADE is currently working with the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board and 22 institutes of higher education to align educator preparation programs with the science of reading. Grant funds would allow support for literacy instructors in educator preparation programs to receive the same rigorous training to become literacy coaches that K-12 RISE trainers receive, and establish a seamless foundation in reading instruction. ADE and the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) have partnered on the UCA PROMISE Academy and Center for Excellence (Attachment 7 – UCA Promise Academy). This effort acknowledges a lack of opportunities for excellence for all children, and promotes "effective teaching, administrative, and instructional support staff who can be recruited, retained, and equitably distributed among Arkansas schools

that need them the most, with priority given to those exhibiting chronic student underachievement."

In July 2017, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson provided funds to develop the Arkansas Imagination Library (Attachment 8 - Imagination Library). To promote literacy, the Arkansas Imagination Library gifts books to children birth-age 5. As the ADE's relationship with the Arkansas Imagination Library continues, CLSDP grant funds will supplement state efforts by increasing the number of books distributed, and expanding the program to reach all Arkansas communities.

To aid in the sharing of best practices and promote community collaboration, the ADE launched the RISE Arkansas Spotlight Campaign in February 2019 and named AR Kids Read, a nonprofit that connects struggling readers with volunteer tutors, as the first partner organization to be featured through the campaign. Governor Hutchinson stated, "Community support and collaboration is essential to the success of any initiative, and never is that more important than when promoting the importance of reading. Through the RISE Spotlight campaign, ADE is highlighting partners who are doing extraordinary things to encourage reading in the community. I commend both the department and these partners for sharing best practices, and I encourage others to do the same." In 2019-2020, the ADE will continue the RISE Spotlight Campaign. CLSDP funds will allow the ADE to develop criteria for and initiate RISE community awards to showcase communities that have embraced the goals of RISE. Additionally, the ADE Family and Community Engagement Unit supports the Family and Community Engagement Coalition as it fosters partnerships among students, families, schools, and communities

across the state to minimize barriers (academic, personal, social, and health) through the creation of a birth to grade 16 framework.

Program Implementation by Grant Year

(See timeline to the right of each milestone in Attachment 6 – Implementation Plan.)

During Year 1, ADE will establish the Office of Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program along with the State Literacy Team, with a subset of that team dedicated to early childhood (EC). A Comprehensive State Literacy Plan will be developed with stakeholders, and a Year 1 competitive subgrant application cycle for early childhood programs, with a focus on family literacy activities and providing books for families to promote home literacy, will be conducted. EC Cohort 1 will implement approved activities during the second half of the Year 1 grant with technical assistance and coaching provided by Imagination Library project, the Office of Comprehensive Literacy Support Program, and the Community and Family Engagement Unit.

Additionally, a committee will be formed during Year 1 to identify evidence-based K-12 core reading and intervention programs aligned to the science of reading that show significant increases in student outcomes. Subgrant applications, which will require a family literacy and collaborative partnership component, will be developed, distributed, and evaluated, for implementation in Year 2 for K-5 and 6-12 LEA consortia or individual LEAs. Pre-K RISE professional learning academies will be established in Year 1, and a second cohort of early childhood programs will be selected to participate in Pre-K RISE in Year 2 with preference given to EC Cohort 1. Additional Year 1 activities include RISE training for a cohort of educator preparation staff from institutions of higher education (IHE) so that pre-service teachers in the pipeline will be better prepared to

meet the instructional needs of their students when they enter Arkansas classrooms. Year 1 activities will include working with stakeholders to establish criteria for RISE Community awards, and developing a website to provide widespread access to information and resources to advance pre-literacy, reading, and writing, including family engagement activities. Finally, Year 1 will see the promotion of new literacy courses that address the needs of students with dyslexia and other struggling readers, with continued support for 11th and 12th grade students who have not met the readiness ACT score for successful college level coursework.

During Year 2 of the project and thereafter, the CLSPD Office will coordinate grant efforts and the State Literacy team will review and update the State Literacy Plan. Cohort 1 K-5 and 6-12 schools, along with early childhood grantees, will implement approved activities with technical assistance provided by educational cooperative literacy specialists. Year 2 grant funds are also requested to secure a literacy intervention component through a digital provider for students in grades 7-12, including Arkansas youth involved with the juvenile justice system (the Division of Youth Services known as DYS). It is notable that a large proportion of students in DYS facilities are identified as students with disabilities. Pre-K RISE Academies will be implemented during Year 2, and RISE training for educator preparation staff will continue with a new cohort of IHE staff. Also, during Year 2, the second cohort of schools and third cohort early childhood programs will be selected for Year 3 implementation. RISE Communities will be recognized in Year 2, and each year thereafter, and the website established in Year 1 will continue to be updated with new information and resources. Collaborative efforts between community partners and the Division of Early Childhood

Services to provide parental information and resources to support literacy development in young children will also be included in Year 2 grant efforts, and an approved list of K-12 core literacy and intervention programs will be released. Year 2 will see high leverage practices (HLPs) for students with disabilities embedded in professional development offerings along with technical assistance to grantees on the implementation of these practices. The development of professional learning that emphasizes content area reading in all courses at the secondary level will also be among Year 2 activities along with continued promotion of secondary literacy courses that address the needs of secondary students.

Year 3 of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program will include the review and revision of early childhood RISE Academies based on Year 2 outcomes, and cohort 2 schools and early childhood programs will implement approved activities with coaching and support. Pre-K RISE Academies will continue during Year 3, the secondary intervention program secured in Year 2 will be available to schools, and a new cohort of IHE educator preparation staff will be trained in RISE. Additionally, the last cohort of schools, Cohort 3, will be selected for implementation in Year 4.

Year 4 of the Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program grant will see implementation of Cohort 1-3 schools and early childhood programs. The secondary intervention program secured in Year 2 will remain available to schools, a new cohort of IHE educator preparation staff will be trained in RISE, and Pre-K RISE Academies will continue.

Coaching and support for Cohort 1-3 schools and early childhood programs will continue in Year 5. The secondary intervention program secured in Year 2 will remain

available to schools, new IHE educator preparation staff will be trained in RISE, and Pre-K RISE Academies will continue. Year 5 activities will also include a focus on efforts to ensure that sustainability of the capacity for effective literacy instruction, intervention, and family support mechanisms live beyond the funding cycle.

Throughout the life of the grant, funds will be used for national partners to assist in establishing additional evidence-based criteria for literacy instruction and on-site coaching for school teams in the implementation of inclusive practices.

(c) Quality of the Management Plan

The Arkansas Department of Education recognized the need to establish a more formal Comprehensive State Literacy Plan, that goes beyond the goals of RISE Arkansas and other literacy support efforts, and reflects milestones, actions, and progress towards the long term goal of obtaining literacy success within a student focused education system from birth through grade 12. The Comprehensive State Literacy Plan Team will include representatives from the Department of Human Services Division of Early Childhood, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, RISE Arkansas Specialists, the Dyslexia Support Group, State Board of Education, Joint Education Committee, School Administrators, Educational Cooperative Directors, and Arkansas Schools. Parents will also be included in this group along with community and business partners, as well as other pertinent stakeholders.

In addition to the State Literacy Team, a subgroup will be formed to oversee the annual evaluation and progress of the CLSDP, administer new subgrants, and consult with national experts for guidance. Components to be reviewed will include:

- Grant outcomes to determine progress toward achieving the goals and

objectives of the Arkansas CLSDP,

- Evaluations completed by participants at the end of PD sessions,
- Subgrantees' annual reports, and timeliness of achieving milestones, and
- Effectiveness of partners and subgrantees, including communication systems.

The grant team will review this data and other relevant and available data to identify any areas of concern and make plans to address those concerns in an expedited manner. The team will request assistance from affected partners, and provide regular updates regarding implementation efforts, in addition to collecting feedback to inform any needed corrections. Once a plan to resolve concerns is developed, program revisions will be made or, as required by the terms of the grant, approval of the U.S Department of Education to revise the state plan will be requested. The grant team will be responsible for reporting outcomes to the State Literacy Team and make recommendations to the State Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

The Assistant Commissioner for Learning Services will oversee the Arkansas CLSDP. The initial literacy subgroup led by Stacy Smith, Assistant Commissioner will assist in creating the Comprehensive State Literacy Team appointed by Johnny Key, Arkansas Commissioner of Education.

Initial Subgroup:

Stacy Smith, Assistant Commissioner for Learning Services, ADE

Dr. Charlotte Green, University of Central Arkansas

Tonya Williams, Director of Early Childhood, DHS

Sara Drew, Arkansas Imagination Library

Kim Wright, Family and Community Engagement, ADE

Sandy Shepard, Lead RISE Arkansas Specialist

Lisa Tyler, Student Support Services Director, ADE

Kathy Mascuilli, Literacy Program Manager, ADE

Vicki King, State Dyslexia Specialist

(Attachment 9 - Resumes, Vitae)

A grant coordinator (project manager) will be hired to manage grant operations and facilitate evidence-based community engagement. The position will be housed at the ADE, and supervised by the Assistant Commissioner of Learning Services. The coordinator must have leadership experience, team experience, and strong organizational skills; must be knowledgeable about community engagement, and be willing to incorporate the principles of collaboration and continuous improvement. It is preferred that the grant coordinator have experience managing federal grants.

The coordinator will be responsible for collaboration with institutions of higher education, subgrantees, and RISE Communities. The coordinator will be a member of the Comprehensive State Literacy Team and recognized as a contributing team member to move the state forward in literacy. As the Arkansas CLSDP grant project director, an essential duty is the oversight and management of the subgrant application process.

An additional literacy specialist will be added to the RISE team due to the recognized importance of the development of early childhood literacy skills in the state. The new Pre-K position will be a liaison between the Department of Human Services, Arkansas Better Chance (ABC), and the Arkansas Department of Education to establish a seamless effort to provide access to books, develop parental resources

and design Pre-K RISE Academy for early childhood educators in the state. The position will serve on the birth-12 State Literacy Team and lead the work of the Early Childhood Literacy Team. The position will be supervised by the ADE Literacy Program Manager.

(d) Quality of Project Services

Arkansas recognizes the need to expand existing partnerships to develop a comprehensive state literacy team and is poised to effectively and appropriately use CLSDP grant funds to improve the state's literacy support structure. The focus of the literacy team will be birth to grade 12, with an emphasis on family literacy strategies, providing effective literacy interventions while increasing educational options for groups who have been traditionally underserved, and rural communities.

Advancing literacy skills for children from birth through grade 12 is paramount to the lives of all children in the state and the economic future of Arkansas. This grant will afford the opportunity to significantly expand Arkansas's K-6 RISE initiative and provide the resources needed to fully develop intervention components designed to meet the needs of disadvantaged students, specifically students with disabilities and English learners.