

**(a) SIGNIFICANCE:** Reading Is Fundamental respectfully submits to the U.S. Department of Education a proposal for [REDACTED] for an innovative summer reading intervention targeting 33,000 unduplicated children in 200 elementary schools, in 38 school districts in 17 states across the country. Based specifically on the research of Kim and White (2008) and guided by findings from Wilkins et al. (2012) this innovative approach seeking to stem summer learning loss includes a two-year treatment of book distributions guided by student interest and lexiles, high-quality literacy activities and materials, weekly communication and a midsummer touchpoint with families, and a randomized control trial (RCT) that examines implementation and reading achievement. This study is significant because of its design and scope.

Over its 46-year-history, RIF has been the national leader in book distribution to children—the oldest, largest, non-profit children’s literacy organization in the country, having given over 400 million books to children who need them most. Long a supporter of children’s access to print, RIF has also worked with the family to provide activities that motivate children to read and families to read together, based on research that indicates motivation plays a major role in learning (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dweck & Elliott, 1983; McCombs, 1989, e.g.). Reading motivation, as Morrow (1992) and Wang and Guthrie (2004) found, has been linked to the development of lifelong readers. Choice, too, has traditionally been emphasized in RIF’s philosophy and is supported by research underpinning the Universal Design for Learning framework, which values choice as beneficial to student motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Patell, Cooper, & Civey Robinson, 2008; Biggs & Collis, 1991).

However, as reading scores have not improved nationally and as subgroups on the National Assessment of Educational Progress show great gaps across socio-economic status (SES) lines, researchers have taken a hard look at innovative strategies to help close the gap in

reading achievement. One way to address the issue is to tackle summer learning loss. This phenomenon—the decline in student skills and school year gains over summer vacation—has been well documented for over a century (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2003; Heyns, 1975; Luftig, 2003; Malach & Rutter, 2003; White, 1906). More recently, a number of researchers have posited that the stark contrast between the typical summer experiences of upper-or middle-class children and their lower-class peers might explain the persistent achievement gaps between privileged and underprivileged students (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007; Allington et al., 2010; Cooper et al., 1996). Cooper et al.'s (1996) meta-analytic review of existing research about summer reading loss examined data from over 40,000 students, finding that students of high SES retained or gained knowledge over the summer, but students of low SES consistently demonstrated significant knowledge loss (see also Alexander et al., 2007).

The steady losses among underprivileged students are due to a number of factors, chief among them limited summer reading activity (Storch & Whitehurst, 2001; Vernon-Feagans et al., 2001); limited access to prohibitively expensive or time-consuming summer enrichment programs of cultural activities (Grossman, Lind, Hayes, McMaken, & Gersick, 2009); and a lack of stimulating, educational material in the home to while away the long summer hours (Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Neuman et al., 2001).

Building on its extensive record of service to children, families, schools, and communities across the country, RIF 's overarching goal is to boost the reading achievement of elementary school children, especially low-income and rural students, by stemming summer learning losses in reading. RIF now has a unique opportunity: to participate in a large, national study, with a randomized control trial, the results of which will add to the body of knowledge nationally.

As the national leader in children’s book distribution, RIF’s deep and long-standing relationships with schools serving large numbers of at-risk children position it to move rapidly and sensitively to work with teachers and principals as a familiar and trusted resource. This project will provide RIF the resources to collaborate with high-need local education agencies (LEA) to implement a robust, highly-targeted set of promising, evidence-based literacy development strategies that will support student achievement in reading. And, RIF can take advantage of its national stature and brand, as well as its extensive geographic reach and penetration to leverage substantial volume discounts on the purchase of children's books from the nation's leading publishing houses.

Book ownership provides a strong motivation to read; however, recent research suggests that book ownership *alone* is insufficient to ensure significant increases in children's literacy development leading to enhanced reading achievement. The early results of the Kim and White model (2008) as well as the very recent Wilkins et al. results (2012) suggest that book ownership needs to be supplemented by a systematic, targeted set of strategies and activities to ensure that literacy *development* proceeds apace. According to Kim and White (2008), *access* to books, *scaffolded* activities and motivators, and parental involvement are especially important over the summertime to ensure that a child's reading ability does not decay due to lack of regular engagement with text at an appropriate level of difficulty.

Kim and White (2008) found that a voluntary summer reading intervention program in concert with specialized instruction by teachers and directed scaffolding by parents produced gains of 1.7 to 5.1 months of additional learning, enough to offset the “summer slide” so often manifest in this population. Though Krashen (2002, 2001), Carter (2000), Fresch (1995) and

others have argued against the use of lexiles in book distributions, Kim and White (2008) used books based on student interest AND lexile levels.

In Wilkins, Gersten, Decker, Grunden, Brasiel, Brunnert, and Jayanthi (2012) very recent study “Does a Summer Reading Program Based on Lexiles Affect Reading Comprehension: A Final Report,” they note that the treatment group of third graders for a large-scale, multi-district study was sent eight books matched to reading level and interest area during the first part of the summer, with a weekly reminder postcard. Though they conclude that the treatment was not effective, they note that, in contrast to previous studies cited above, the program did not include parent involvement, teacher support, or instructional components. Also, this program lasted a year, as opposed to the Allington et al. (2010) three-summer program.

Long believed that parental involvement is key to a child’s educational success, evidence supporting this notion had been anecdotal. The last decade’s stronger body of empirical evidence now reaffirms this. A number of meta-analytic reviews (Fan & Chen, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2005) reveal that students from all backgrounds, income levels, and racial demographics perform significantly better in school when their parents are actively engaged. The importance of this has also been proven by the failure of interventions or summer programs that lack this involvement as a component (Wilkins et al., 2012). As Epstein (2001) and others (e.g., Lareau, 2003) have found, programs must address barriers and find ways to involve parents as welcomed partners in their child’s learning.

**(b) QUALITY OF THE PROJECT DESIGN:** RIF's proposed project responds to the U.S. Department of Education's single, absolute priority for the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) program: *RIF will implement a high-quality, research-based plan for an innovative approach to improve childhood literacy that includes book distributions, literacy activities,*

***teacher support, parent involvement, and a randomized treatment, reaching children and families in high-need LEAs during the summer.*** RIF proposes to address all four competitive preference priorities: Priority 1: Turning Around Persistently Low-Achieving Schools; Priority 2: Technology; Priority 3: Improving Early Learning Outcomes; and Priority 4: Serving Rural LEAs.

*Goal, Objectives, and Performance Outcome Measures:* To reach this goal, RIF proposes a project using--what Dr. Thomas White calls in his letter of support--a “promising” literacy development model aimed at stemming summer learning losses in reading, based on the recent research of James Kim, Thomas White, and colleagues (Kim, 2006, 2007; Kim and Garyan, 2010; Kim and White, 2008) and Butler (2010) while incorporating the very recent findings of Wilkins et al. (2012) related to parent involvement, high quality instructional materials, professional development and on-going support for teachers.

Thus, RIF’s proposal, informed by the above recent research as well as an independent meta-analysis about book distribution programs (Lindsay, 2012) seeks to achieve the goal of producing gains in reading ability by a carefully designed, research-based, summer reading program. RIF will accomplish four key objectives: (1) Increase access of low-income, elementary-aged students to a range of high-quality books that focus on science, technology, engineering, the arts, math, (STEAM) and multicultural themes as well as to parent-friendly literacy activities appropriately developed and designed to reflect best practices regarding instructional scaffolding as described in the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (2008), teacher support, integration of content areas and language domains; (2) Strengthen the literacy development of low-income elementary students; (3) Increase and strengthen parental involvement in their children's literacy development; (4) Build the capacity of elementary school

teachers to use literacy resources to support reading, writing, and academic achievement. RIF will evaluate the outcomes of these objectives on a range of performance measures, most notably, using a randomized controlled trial to measure changes in student performance on the ITBS administered in the spring and fall to all participants and control group members. The evaluation also measures participation and implementation by teachers, students and parents.

Project Activities: RIF will implement a two-year program for low-income children in urban and rural communities, targeting the following primary constituencies for intervention and treatment: (1) all 11,000 second and 11,000 third graders in 200 schools in 38 high-need LEAs in 17 states in Year 1; in Year 2, a new cohort of all second graders along with the previous two student cohorts; (2) their parents or guardians; and (3) all professional teaching staff and principals in these schools.

Year 1: October 2012 - September 2013: RIF's skilled professional development team (university faculty with different licensure areas, including special education and English As a Second Language) will meet for two days to familiarize themselves with the grant, prepare a professional development template, and agree on methods and materials. They will deliver professional development to all teachers and principals in the project's 200 schools before the second semester begins. Using a collection of 40, specially-selected, STEAM-themed books as concrete examples, sent to each teacher and the media center in the 200 schools, as well as professionally scaffolded teaching sheets, RIF's training team will provide instruction and support for: content literacy; tier 1-2-3 vocabulary, scaffolding, adaptation, and modification as indicated in UDL framework; teacher modeling; "interactive" reading; empowering parents as their child's first teacher; summer learning, "summer slide" research; children's book selection using lexiles and interest areas; common core, exposition and narration. The training will

introduce Moodle as a vehicle for online learning communities to provide on-going support to teachers year-round. Each trainer will meet with the principal and the local designated RIF coordinator regarding the logistics and expectations of the summer learning intervention. All local RIF coordinators will be site-based, chosen by the particular school, with their own Moodle support. (The technology-based professional development elements thus address **Competitive Preference Priority 2: Technology**).

For second semester, teachers and media centers having already received the STEAM books and the teaching sheets to accompany each title (200 sheets total), teachers will be expected to use a book from the collection each week in read-alouds to their classes during the semester, using the lesson plans and activity sheets, modeling best practices and showing students how to use the scaffolded materials. This whole-school approach provides the foundation that RIF aims to lay to help turn around partner schools classified as persistently low-performing (**thus addressing Competitive Preference Priority 1: Turning Around Persistently Low-Achieving Schools**).

In the spring, too, targeted students (second and third graders) will be administered a short standardized assessment to determine reading levels. At the end of the school year (May/June 2013), each participating school will host a high-energy "Summer Reading Kick-off" for second and third grades and their parents/guardians. Using the results of the spring reading assessment, second and third grade classroom teachers, the RIF local coordinator, and the school library media specialist will guide students and their parents/guardians to make informed choices based on interest and lexile levels in choosing five books to *own* and *read* over the summer. These books will reflect Common Core's emphasis on narrative and expository texts and span

several STEAM topics, thus insuring tier-three vocabulary. At the Kick-off, teachers will also assist children and their parents in signing up for public library cards.

The Kick-off is a key point of contact with parents, whose engagement is vital to the RIF model. In the meeting with parents, the RIF local coordinator will (a) provide an overview of the summer reading program, (b) review the materials accompanying their book selections (e.g., activity sheets and daily literacy calendars), (c) discuss in an open forum parent engagement with their children in reading and completing the follow-up activities, (d) ask for preference in mode of weekly contact from the local coordinator over the summer (text message, email, or phone). The messages will encourage, remind, and suggest ways parents can support their child's reading during the summer. (The use of cellular text messaging and email communication venues to remain in regular contact with parents/guardians and promote family engagement in literacy addresses **Competitive Preference Priority 2: Technology**).

Children and parents will return to the school during a designated week in mid-summer to choose, based on lexile and interest, three more books to read/own. This midsummer visit serves as a check-in between families and teachers to help further promote active family engagement during the summer reading program and to reenergize children about their book selections.

Complementing the books for summer reading, students will also receive extension/teaching materials - similar to those their teachers had used that semester- intended to motivate and scaffold literacy development by addressing active learning, vocabulary, research skills, expressive and expository writing, comprehension, application, cross-content connections, to name a few, all reflecting best practices and current research and in a parent-friendly format. The summer reading instructional kit includes a book bag; a notebook with directed journal prompts; thematic stickers; a bookmark and bookplates; and literacy calendars.

In the fall of 2013, 7,000 randomized control trial students (as detailed in the Evaluation section) promoted from second and third grades will take a post-test to assess reading ability, with data used to measure whether reading ability has improved, remained constant, or decayed over the summer. The project evaluators will thus be able to determine the impact of the summer reading program on students' reading achievement.

In addition, target students, now in the third and fourth grades, will engage in debrief back-to-school activities. In addition to a Back-to-School celebration, each local RIF coordinator will work with teachers to host Summer Reading Discussion days in the classroom, where students share experiences, journals and activities with one another and teachers. RIF has budgeted [REDACTED] for each principal to offer an enrichment program related to reading and/or STEAM content areas to enhance the student learning experiences through activities such as a guest children's author or illustrator, a scientist, mathematician, or engineer across the many STEAM fields (botany, zoology, environmental science, chemistry, robotics, ecology, etc.).

Year 2: October 2013 - September 2014: In Year 2, a new cohort of second graders will enter the project, joining the existing cohorts of former second and third graders, now in third and fourth grades. The school-based activities will be repeated during Year 2, including: (1) professional development for all teachers and principals in the 200 schools, using a new STEAM collection (40 titles) and related activities; continued Moodle-based discussion and support, (2) the classroom teachers' use of the STEAM collection in their read-alouds, using the activities with the children and parents, weekly during spring semester; (3) a late spring standardized assessment of second, third, and fourth graders' reading ability; (4) a "Summer Reading Kick-off" in May/June 2014, where students select five new books, based on interest and lexiles, to own and read over the summer, with a new set of related scaffolded literacy materials; a parent

briefing and collection of contact information for the weekly outreach from the local coordinator; and public library card sign-up; (5) families return to the school mid-summer to choose three more books to read before school starts; (6) a post-test of 7,000 randomized control trial students in fall 2014; and (7) other follow-up, back-to-school activities with the students.

*Corollary Activities:* A national advisory panel of high-profile literacy and summer learning experts will be convened to provide guidance to the project. This group, including Dr. James Kim and Dr. Richard Allington, will meet in person three times during the life of the project: fall 2012, 2013, and 2014. Dr. Thomas White will serve as consultant to the project.

Policy Studies Associates' extensive data collection activities will support a rigorous evaluation of the project, the analysis of which will regularly provide RIF project directors and managers nationally as well as local and state program coordinators, teachers, and principals with robust information on implementation efforts and on the effectiveness and impact of project strategies and activities. These various sources of data will inform on-going implementation decisions and will drive mid-course, formative modifications.

*Dissemination Activities:* At fall 2014, the national advisory panel will review results, the project evaluation report and perspectives from project leaders and the training team. RIF will implement a dissemination plan that informs the field and supports project replication and scaling efforts across the country, including its 17,000 sites. RIF will present at national and regional conferences and publish findings, dedicating considerable capital to share information nationally to all constituents.

*Support for Related Reform Efforts:* The project has been explicitly aligned with major national school reform and improvement efforts: (1) ***Focus on STEAM:*** Books and related activities feature STEAM themes to support state and national efforts to address these content

areas. (2) ***Focus on multicultural themes***: Books include multicultural themes so all children can more readily and positively identify with characters and content, particularly in light of the achievement gap among minority students, long a concern of RIF's, and important to our nation's commitment to ensuring equal access to higher education, 21st-century careers, and preserving a democratic civil society. (3) ***Focus on Common Core standards***: The professional development training, literacy materials for teachers, and the activity sheets for students will all be aligned with Common Core standards. (4) ***Focus on expanded/out-of-school time learning opportunities***: RIF's project promotes summer reading, intentionally infusing literacy development and content-related learning objectives into the family activities. (5) ***Focus on turning around low-performing schools***: Designed to help drive efforts to turn around persistently low-performing schools, a national and local priority, the project takes a whole-school-approach, involving students, parents/guardians, teachers and principals. As all teachers will participate in RIF training, even outside the target grades, all students and families will benefit from enhanced, evidence-based instructional techniques and materials that draw on the latest research in best practices that support literacy development. Activities for participating students will significantly and positively affect their reading achievement by reducing or eliminating summer losses in reading, **thus addressing Competitive Preference Priority 3: Improving Early Learning Outcomes**. The combined effect will accelerate the transformation of persistently low-achieving schools.

**(c) QUALITY OF THE PROJECT SERVICES**: The two-year project will serve an ambitious number of children--33,000 unduplicated count--in 38 high-need LEAs across 17 states, identified on the basis of (a) existing relationships with RIF as a trusted partner and (b) large numbers of high-need students from low-income families, ranging from 25% to nearly 60% of

the student population living below the poverty line. This project will put 211,200 books into classrooms; 16,000 books into school media centers, and 440,000 books into the hands of children who need them most. Emphasizing service to rural areas, it includes 21 rural LEAs (eligible under the either the Small Rural School Achievement program or the Rural and Low-Income School program) in seven states, **thus addressing Competitive Preference Priority 4: Serving Rural LEAs**. The proposed RIF design is vital to its impact and ability to scale up; a randomized study produces results that should contribute to the national priority to turn around persistently low-achieving schools (identified as Competitive Preference Priority 1 for the IAL initiative) and to the discussion of summer learning interventions. Finally, because the whole school is involved in staff development and book distributions, the project is committed to a whole-school reform approach; RIF will build capacity of the entire instructional staff to scaffold literacy development across the entire student population. The following lists the LEAs that RIF has invited to participate as partners:

Local Education Agency	LEA Code	City	State	High Need LEA-Poverty %	CPP 1: Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools	CPP 4: Serving Rural LEAs
Bessemer Schools	100330	Bessemer	AL	48.77	N/A	N/A
Selma SD	102970	Selma	AL	58.38	N/A	Yes-RLIS
Lowndes Co PS	102160	Hayneville	AL	43.80	Jackson-Steele	Yes-RLIS
Humphreys Co SD	2802040	Belzoni	MS	57.89	N/A	Yes-RLIS
Yazoo Municipal SD	2804770	Yazoo City	MS	57.14	McCoy	Yes-RLIS
Columbia SD	2801170	Columbia	MS	35.78	N/A	Yes-RLIS
Simpson Co SD	2803990	Mendenhall	MS	31.23	N/A	N/A
Denver PS	803360	Denver	CO	26.75	N/A	N/A

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Harrison SD	804530	Colorado Springs	CO	34.37	N/A	N/A
LuVerne Community SD	1917880	Lu Verne	IA	50.00	N/A	Yes-SRSA
River Valley Community SD	1917880	Correctionville	IA	31.18	N/A	Yes- SRSA
Davis County Community SD	1908610	Bloomfield	IA	25.50	N/A	Yes- RLIS
Waterloo Community SD	1930480	Waterloo	IA	26.32	Cunningham School, Irving	N/A
Todd Co SD	4672090	Mission	SD	51.28	Spring Creek, He Dog	Yes- SRSA
Shannon Co65-1	4665460	Batesland	SD	43.00	N/A	Yes- RLIS
Sisseton SD 54-2	4600053	Sisseton	SD	28.69	N/A	Yes- RLIS
Chamberlain 07-1	4612000	Chamberlain	SD	28.06	N/A	Yes-RLIS
Bridgeport Bd of Ed	900450	Bridgeport	CT	25.35	Dubar, Roosevelt, Marin, Batalli aBarnum	N/A
Wapato SD	5309480	Wapato	WA	46.11	N/A	N/A
Tukwila SD	5308130	Tukwila	WA	43.06	N/A	N/A
Hidalgo ISD	4823100	Pharr	TX	49.72	N/A	N/A
Dallas ISD	4816230	Dallas	TX	37.56	N/A	N/A
Athens District	4700120	Athens	TN	35.81	N/A	Yes-RLIS
Carter Co SD	4700510	Elizabethton	TN	32.58	N/A	N/A
Haywood Co Schools	4701770	Brownsville	TN	29.37	N/A	Yes- RLIS
Hardin Co Schools	4701680	Savannah	TN	30.88	N/A	Yes-RLIS

Lexington Schools	4702460	Lexington	TN	35.20	N/A	Yes- RLIS
Owsley Co SD	2104620	Booneville	KY	48.24	N/A	Yes- RLIS
Middlesboro ISD	2104620	Middlesboro	KY	46.00	N/A	Yes- RLIS
Whitley Co SD	2105880	Williamsburg	KY	38.14	N/A	Yes- RLIS
Casey Co SD	2101050	Liberty	KY	37.18	N/A	Yes- RLIS
SW Region SD	200710	Dillingham	AK	26.76	N/A	Yes- SRSA
Flint SD	2614520	Flint	MI	47.92	N/A	N/A
Los Angeles USD	622710	Los Angeles	CA	27.20	N/A	N/A
Central Falls SD	4400120	Central Falls	RI	37.43	N/A	N/A
Somerset Co PS	2400570	Westover	MD	27.35	N/A	N/A
Chicago SD 299	1709930	Chicago	IL	30.67	N/A	N/A
Jamestown Schools	3615630	Jamestown	NY	28.99	N/A	N/A

Description of Services by Targeted Recipient or Beneficiary: RIF's project targets three major constituencies to receive services and benefits: **Students:** 440,000 books will be given to 33,000 children over two years, 22,000 choosing 16 and 11,000 choosing 8. Children and families will receive high quality literacy materials and supplies, related to the books for ownership during the summer. RIF's national office will work with local RIF program coordinators to ensure that all children in targeted grades can participate in all aspects of the project regardless of race, color, national origin, or gender, including students with disabilities and English learners. These modifications will focus on meeting the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Section 427.

Students will be beneficiaries of the training and information session for their parents/guardians at the Summer Reading Kick-off, since parents are key to encouraging summer reading, completing the associated activities, and visiting the public library. Students will also benefit from RIF's training for all instructional staff.

**Teachers, including library media specialists, and principals:** 2,640 teachers will receive 80 high-quality books for classroom use (a collection of 40 books, each year), for a total of 211, 200 books; media specialists will receive 80 books (a collection of 40 books, each year, for two years), for a total of 16,000 books to media centers. All instructional personnel will receive RIF's materials and professional development training, including strategies for full inclusion of children with disabilities, with additional support given electronically. The designated program coordinator at each school will receive an additional day of training each year, also with support online.

**Parents/Guardians:** Parents and guardians will be invited to school, where they will (a) learn about summer reading, (b) help their children and the teacher select books, (c) discuss ways they can be involved in reading and in the activities, and (d) determine how they would like to receive weekly contact. RIF and its local project coordinators will give special attention to engaging/supporting parents who are English learners, who do not have childcare and transportation to return to the school in mid-summer, and work to address concerns about students with disabilities. Each fall, parents will be invited to the Back to School Celebration to share stories of summer reading.

**Other beneficiaries of proposed project services:** Communities of the 200 schools are a major beneficiary. Rising literacy rates at the elementary level directly relate to more high school graduates, gainful employment, economic development, reduced crime and incarceration rates, reduced need for academic remediation and other services typically provided to at-risk populations. A more literate populace can better assume the responsibilities of democratic citizenship. Also, because of the study's rigorous empirical design, this project affords a major opportunity to add to the body of knowledge. Testing an extension of the Kim/White model in a

variety of settings (rural/urban and geographically diverse areas) should generate findings about its effectiveness for increasing reading achievement and stemming summer losses in reading.

**(d) ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES:** RIF requests [REDACTED] through the U. S. Department of Education's Innovative Approaches to Literacy initiative to serve 33,000 unduplicated children (55,000 duplicated) directly in 200 elementary schools in 38 LEAs in 17 states. The cost-effective, efficient delivery model, the result of the organization's five decades of expertise, ensures capacity and know-how.

*Key Cost Elements-* (A) **Books:** The project will distribute 667,200 books to children, classrooms, and media centers. An RFP will be sent to publishers, of which RIF works with over 100, to identify high-quality, lexiled, STEAM books at a price of [REDACTED] each: 8 books x 22,000 students x [REDACTED]/book = [REDACTED]; 176,000 books YEAR 1; 8 books x 33,000 students x [REDACTED]/book = [REDACTED]; 264,000 books; YEAR 2

Teachers K-5 in the 200 schools will receive classroom collections each year of 40 award-winning STEAM titles, vetted by RIF's two national panels of literacy experts. [REDACTED] per STEAM Collection of 40 books x 2,640 classrooms x 2 years = [REDACTED]; 211, 200 books.

School Library Media Centers: Years 1 and 2, all school library media centers in 200 schools will also receive a STEAM collection of 40 books: [REDACTED] STEAM Collection of 40 books x 200 schools x 2 years = [REDACTED]; 16,000 books

**(B) Teaching and activity sheets and other ancillary motivational materials:** Classroom teachers, school librarians and media specialists will each receive sets of activity sheets and lesson plans, 200 pages total to accompany each book in the 40-book classroom collection each year (also available on the RIF website). RIF will also produce and distribute sets of high-quality summer reading activity sheets for the second, third, and fourth graders choosing books

for summer. Ancillary motivational items include a book bag, a notebook with directed journal prompts, a thematic sticker sheet; a bookmark and book plates; and literacy calendars. Costs to develop, produce, and distribute activity sheets and associated summer reading kit materials over two years:  $\blacksquare/\text{child} \times 55,000 \text{ children} = \blacksquare$

**(C) Professional Development for School-Based Instructional Staff:** RIF will provide on-site professional development and online support to teachers in 38 LEAs, yearly in fall and early winter. The highly qualified training team has deep understanding of 21st Century Schools concepts, Common Core standards, and UDL. Cost for professional development, including technology components over two years:  $\blacksquare$

**(E) Springtime pretests and autumn post-tests:** The brief standardized reading assessment used for the pretest will determine students' reading levels for use in the summer book selection. Both the pre- and post- test are critical pieces in the project design of the project.

Year 1:  $22,000 \text{ students} \times \blacksquare/\text{test} = \blacksquare$ ; Year 2:  $33,000 \text{ students} \times \blacksquare/\text{test} = \blacksquare$

In both falls, a randomized sample of 7,000 students will take a post-test to measure changes in reading level and ability.  $7,000 \text{ students} \times \blacksquare/\text{test} \times 2 \text{ years} = \blacksquare$

**(F) Project Management and Administration:** Dr. Judy Cheatham, Vice President of Literacy Services, will manage a senior team in the RIF national office. A national advisory panel of high-profile experts and the staff development team will provide guidance and feedback throughout the project. Locally, each school will designate a project coordinator, the first point of contact with RIF national, the project evaluators, parents and students. Local coordinators will organize the year-end Kick-off and back-to-school events, coordinate the distribution of books, and provide weekly contact with the parents/guardians of participating children.

(G) **Project Evaluation:** PSA, with a national reputation for producing scientifically valid research studies that have influenced policy development and program design, will implement a rigorous national evaluation of this two-year project. PSA will collect various types of data to assess (a) implementation and (b) project impact on reading achievement. Notably, PSA has designed a randomized control trial at the school level, involving 7,000 students, to assess the effectiveness of the RIF model in improving literacy development for elementary-age children. Total cost of evaluation over two years: [REDACTED]

(e) **QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN:** This proposal represents an ambitious undertaking in geographic scope, number of participating children, families, schools, and communities, but in a design that should prove significant to the field. Completely confident in its ability to deliver, RIF enjoys a widely-recognized, highly-respected brand identity across the country, having forged strong partnerships with teachers, schools, district officials, as well as nonprofit, business, and political leaders. Nationally, RIF maintains strong relationships within the policy and political community, professional associations of educators and literacy experts, the university community, and national child service delivery organizations and associations. RIF's President and CEO, Carol H. Rasco, a well-known national expert in child literacy and a tireless advocate for children, leads a team of deeply-knowledgeable and highly-experienced veteran educators and literacy experts, professional developers, communications and outreach specialists, evaluation researchers, and project administrators.

*RIF National Office Personnel:*

**Judy B. Cheatham, PhD, Vice President for Literacy Services:** 50% time; Project Director Author, lecturer, trainer, former college professor and national consultant, Dr. Cheatham has worked on numerous national initiatives since 1986 as well as with states, school districts, and

local schools on school improvement. Dr. Cheatham would work with all constituents of the project, have broad oversight over and leadership in delivery of services to partner schools including book selections, parent training, literacy materials, and professional development.

**Cheryl Clark, Vice President, Books for Ownership:** 40% time, Deputy Project Director

Ms. Clark has managed the annual allocation of a \$25 million U.S. Department of Education grant in recent years, working with over 17,000 program sites nationally. Ms. Clark would work closely with the Project Director to oversee program implementation, particularly book distribution, which she currently oversees for RIF's programs across the country.

**Teri Wright, Senior Manager, Regional Initiatives:** 60% time, Project Manager

Ms. Wright has managed a number of large-scale regional RIF initiatives, serving nearly 750,000 students. She maintains oversight of RIF partnerships, works with publisher, and ensures excellent customer service. As project manager, Ms. Wright would be the first point of contact for the 200 local RIF program coordinators, working on book ordering and delivery, delivery of literacy activities and materials, and collection of coordinator reports on the book distributions.

**Pat Westerfield, Program Associate:** 60% time, Project Associate

Ms. Westerfield, responsible for database management and programmatic and administrative support, is a veteran teacher with 26 years experience in Kansas elementary schools. She would support the Project Manager and work with the Project Director, as needed, regarding book research and selection, and training.

**Kathryn Ross, Manager of Strategic Initiatives:** 50% time, Project Associate

Ms. Ross manages and supports RIF's current literacy services initiatives, assists in research and development, and contributes to book quality improvement in RIF Programs. Ms. Ross would

assist with the support of the logistics of book ordering and delivery, research and development related to STEAM, and literacy extension activities.

*Project Evaluation Principal Investigator:* **Rick White, Managing Director, Policy Studies**

**Associates:** 800 hours- Mr. White directs analytic and policy studies, research, and evaluation in education. Specific responsibilities include project conceptualization and design, management of data collection, data analysis, and report preparation.

*National Advisory Panel:* Seven experts will convene in person three times to provide guidance and oversight of the project; aid in dissemination of findings; and support any significant replication and scale-up efforts. Members include James S. Kim, Harvard University; Ron Fairchild, Smarter Learning Group; Karl Alexander, Johns Hopkins University; Richard Allington, University of Tennessee; Anne McGill-Franzen, University of Tennessee; Michael Levine, Joan Gantz Cooney Center; Doris Terry Williams, Rural School & Community Trust.

*Local Project Coordinators:* Implementation efforts locally will be coordinated by a part-time RIF school coordinator (teacher or media specialist) in each participating school, paid a stipend through this grant. Reporting to the principal, the local coordinator will work with school personnel to engage parents over the summer; coordinate all book distributions; work with the principal on back-to-school activities; be the regular point of contact with the national office and project manager; work with all constituents to ensure fidelity of program implementation.

*Project Responsibilities and Timeline:* Below is a Gantt chart detailing the major project activities and timeline for completion:

Activity	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept
Confirm all participating LEAs - Y1	█											
Advisory Board meets (2012-2014) - Y1&2												
Assemble training team - Y1	█											
STEAM collections & scaffold materials to LEAs - Y1&2	█											
Revise data collection plan and pilot data collection instruments - Y1&2	█											
Secure IRB approval from PSA and participating LEA IRBs - Y1			█	█								
RFP for and select STEAM titles for Summer Kick-off - Y1 & 2	█											
Production of STEAM scaffolded materials for Summer Kick-off - Y1&2			█	█								
Plan & conduct training with LEAs, in-person and via online tools - Y1&2			█									
Order & shipment of STEAM-themed titles for summer distribution - Y1&2					█							
Site visits, interviews, focus groups - Y1&2									█	█		
Summer Kick-off in all LEAs - Y1&2							█	█				
Surveys of students, parents, local site coordinators and teachers - Y1&2										█		
Mid-Summer Check-In at sites with families and select new books - Y1&2								█	█			
Weekly Communication with Parents to support summer reading - Y1&2								█	█			
Obtain LEA student-level data for RTC sites and moderate levels of data - Y1&2								█	█			
Back-to-School Celebration/ Book Discussion Day - Y1 & 2										█		
Administer ITBS (fall in RTC sites) - Y1 & 2											█	
Extract data and evaluation reports - Y1 & 2										█	█	
Synthesis of Evaluation and Research. Disseminate report - Y2												█
Y1: Oct 2012- Sept 2013; Y2: Oct 2013-Sept 2014												

**(f) QUALITY OF THE PROJECT EVALUATION:** Based on the rigorous requirements of the IAL program for evaluation design, PSA will conduct an independent evaluation determining the impact of the RIF initiative on (1) the level of implementation of the initiative framework and practices in target classrooms, (2) the impact of program participation on changes in reading proficiency as measured on a standardized test, and (3) the relationship between the levels of program implementation in a classroom and the magnitude of changes in student performance.

*Evaluation Design:* PSA will conduct a rigorous independent evaluation of the RIF project, addressing the following: (1) What are the characteristics of the students and schools participating in the RIF summer reading initiative; does the program serve low-income, elementary-aged students? (2) Does the RIF initiative increase participating students' access to high quality books and are the reading materials supplemented with literacy activities, instructional scaffolding, and teacher support? (3) Does the RIF initiative strengthen the literacy development of elementary students as measured by standardized test scores and self-reports of reading behavior and attitudes toward reading and school? Is the level of the RIF initiative implementation associated with the magnitude of student literacy development? (4) Does the RIF initiative increase parental involvement in children's literacy development? (5) Does the RIF initiative build capacity of elementary school teachers to support reading achievement?

*Evaluation Sample:* The evaluation will involve all sites in the evaluation, but the types and intensity of the data to be collected in each school will fall into one of three levels. The bulk of the data collection will be focused on 70 elementary schools where an RCT study design will be executed. In these intensive data collection sites, multiple methods of data collection will be conducted to provide a rich source of systematic information on program implementation and outcomes, summarized in Exhibit 1 at the Appendix. In the schools identified for moderate

levels of data collection, data to be collected include student level district administrative data, including state test scores, and RIF project participation data from the RIF program information system, including performance on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) reading assessment from the spring of each school year, and information on program implementation. A basic level of data will be collected from schools and students from other LEAs participating in the summer reading initiative.

The data collection plans and all study instruments will be submitted to PSA's own Institutional Review Board (IRB). PSA will also negotiate agreements with each participating LEA and comply with all privacy protection procedures specified by those agreements.

*RCT Design:* A central focus of the proposed evaluation design is the comparison of changes in literacy proficiency achieved by students participating in the RIF initiative participants versus those achieved by similar students not participating. PSA proposes a school-level randomized control trial design in a subset of the schools participating in the initiative.

Schools agreeing to participate in the initiative and in the RCT study would be randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Half would implement the RIF initiative for all second graders, but not offer the program to third graders. In these schools, the unserved third graders would comprise the control group. In the other half of the schools in the RCT study, the initiative would be implemented in all third grade classrooms, but not offered to second grade students. Here, the second grade students would serve as the control group for the third grade students. In the second year of the study, the cohorts of students would continue their assignment to the control or treatment condition for the following summer.

A power analysis for a two-level analysis clustered at the school level indicates that a sample of 67 schools and an estimated 100 students per school would provide a minimally

detectable effect size of 0.10, the estimated effect of the RIF initiative using the results of the Kim and White (2008) evaluation as the basis for projecting program effect. For this study, we propose to include 70 schools participating in the RIF initiative in the RTC study. Half (35) will be randomly selected to provide services to second graders but not to third graders, and half (35) will be randomly selected to serve third graders but not second graders.

*Data Analysis:* The data will be analyzed using a variety of methods. Analyses of focus group and survey data will provide context for understanding student performance data. Analyses of qualitative data gathered from interviews would begin with transcription and coding. Analytic codes allow for the identification and elaboration of themes, and we would explore the extent to which different categories of respondents shared or differed in these themes. Analyses of survey data would include both basic descriptive frequencies and would include the development of attitude scales and other indices that reflect the student experience of reading.

Student level data from district administrative databases and state test scores will be analyzed both to provide a descriptive portrait of the students, schools, and districts participating in the initiative as well as to provide data for creating multivariate and multilevel models of the relationship between participation in the program and changes in performance. A summary of the data and analytic approaches to be used to address each of the studies research questions is presented in Exhibit 2 at the Appendix.

*Reporting:* The reporting will be designed to address the following two objectives: (1) support the process of program improvement by providing timely information on the level and path of program implementation, and (2) present the results of analyses of the outcomes of the association between participation in the initiative.

The evaluation will produce multiple products. (1) A summary of the information collected during site visits, analysis of RIF program information system data, and school and district report cards will be prepared in summer, Year 1, and will summarize the characteristics of participating schools and districts, presenting early external feedback on progress toward implementing the initiative, including success in distributing books for summer, convening spring celebrations and attendance by students and parents, and teacher participation in training and professional development activities conducted by RIF. The pattern of barriers and challenges in program implementation observed by the evaluation staff and reported by teachers and RIF local site coordinators. The report will provide a summary of results from the first administration of the ITBS. (2) The second report, delivered in fall, Year 1, will include the results of the change in reading proficiency between spring and fall of Year 1 as measured by the ITBS in the RTC sites; an analysis of student, parent, and teacher surveys; program information system data on the secondary book distribution during the summer, and the convening and attendance at the fall ceremony. (3) The third report, completed in summer, Year 2, will focus on the success of program implementation, the spring celebration and book distribution process, and the results of the Year 2 spring ITBS. It will examine changes observed in implementation between Years 1 and 2 and explore the relationship between RIF program development activities and improvements in RIF operations in each site. (4) The final report will summarize the results of all previous reports, the results of analyses of changes in performance on the ITBS between spring and fall Year 2, and the two-year change between the initial and final administrations of the ITBS. The analyses will present the results of the analysis of whether a relationship exists between the level of program implementation and the magnitude of the impact of the program.