PROJECT NARRATIVE

The "We Love Reading!!" Book Club will engage St. Louis Public Schools students in kindergarten through 2nd grade (K-2) and their parents in a two-year project designed to develop a deep love for reading, increase access to high-quality literacy resources in the elementary library media center and the classroom, integrate digital learning technologies into the literacy curriculum, and build strong literacy-related connections among the classroom, the library media center, and the home. The project will be implemented in 16 of the district's lowest performing elementary schools, impacting approximately 2,800 high-need children. Committed partners will include the Saint Louis Public Library and the St. Louis Public Schools Foundation.

Meeting the Absolute Priority: The "We Love Reading!!" Book Club proposes an innovative approach to literacy that includes <u>book distribution</u> (more than 2,500 electronic and hardcopy books will be purchased for each of 16 low-performing schools); activities that will <u>increase access for K-2 students to high quality learning resources in their classrooms and library media centers</u> (libraries at all 16 participating schools will be upgraded to Exemplary as defined by state library standards); and activities that focus on the <u>improvement of early reading skills</u> (teachers, library media specialists, and parents will receive professional development to increase their skills as K-2 literacy teachers and coaches). The proposed work is strongly supported by research including: Larson, Lotta C. "Digital Readers: The Next Chapter in E-Book Reading and Response," *The Reading Teacher,* 64(1), p. 15, 2010; Maynard, S. "Can Electronic Textbooks Help Children to Learn?" *The Electronic Library*, 23(1), p. 103, 2005; and others.

Meeting Competitive Priority #1, Turning Around Persistently Lowest-achieving Schools: The project will be implemented in 16 of the district's lowest performing schools

including all 13 of the district's Tier 1 elementary schools as well as three additional schools with significantly low communication arts performance. These schools are: Sigel, Columbia, Hamilton, Mann, Jefferson, Walbridge, Ashland, Dunbar, Meramec, Oak Hill, Lyon@Blow, Washington Montessori, Nance, Hodgen, Laclede, and Woodward.

Meeting Competitive Priority #2, Technology: Participating K-2 students will be introduced to electronic book readers (e-readers) and electronic books (e-books) to build strong literacy skills. (At least 1,536 e-readers and 23,040 e-books will be purchased. Participating teachers and elementary library media specialists, will receive professional development in how to use digital learning technologies to support the literacy curriculum as well as to teach literacy across subject areas).

Meeting Competitive Priority #3, Early Learning Outcomes: The "We Love Reading!!" Book Club will be implemented with high-need K-2 children in 16 of the district's lowest performing schools. The project will focus on building strong early literacy skills and fostering a love for reading.

(a) Significance

(i) Building Local Capacity

Poverty is the underlying cause of many social ills, and St. Louis is one of the poorest cities in the nation. In the district as a whole, 86 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. A high parent unemployment rate also affects the health and well-being of the city's children, and over a recent three-year period, the number of parents unemployed for long periods of time (six months or longer) more than tripled.[1] Many financially challenged

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[1] *Children of Metropolitan St. Louis,* Vision for Children at Risk, 2009-2010, p. 42.

parents have lower literacy levels, and many are either unable or unmotivated to serve as positive role models for high levels of learning and academic achievement.

Low-income children carry the heavy burdens of poverty with them into their schools and classrooms where they are at a high risk for educational failure. Many enter kindergarten without the early language and literacy skills they need to succeed in school and as a consequence, have great difficulty meeting the demands of the learning environment, falling further and further behind as they move through the grades. At 3rd grade, where district students first encounter the mandated MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) tests, they are already significantly behind other 3rd graders across Missouri, and they tend to fall further behind at each grade level. In 2011, district 3rd graders scored more than 17 percentage points behind Missouri 3rd graders in communication arts.[2] District 8th graders scored 26 percentage points behind.[3]

In response to this pressing need, the district has put into place a comprehensive literacy improvement plan that focuses on literacy infusion across content areas. The plan provides a robust approach to literacy development, including the use of academic language across disciplines, project-based learning, and an emphasis on non-fiction texts. Students will read challenging texts, reflect with peers on their meaning, and engage in high-level reading, writing, and thinking in all content areas. The literacy model is built on a solid theoretical framework to support teachers with practical applications of literacy instruction designed to enhance students' skills in reading, writing, speaking, and analytical thinking/reasoning.

The "We Love Reading!!" Book Club, featuring 15 Book Club reading periods and 15 award-winning book titles, will build on and support the district's comprehensive approach to

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[2] Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School Statistics, *dese.mo.gov*.

[3] Ibid.

literacy development. Furthermore, the project will build local capacity to maintain high levels of literacy among all of its young students in the following ways:

> **(1) The "We Love Reading!!" Book Club will enable K-2 classroom teachers and elementary library media specialists to integrate digital learning technologies into their instructional programs**.

Through the project, each participating elementary library media center will be equipped with four classroom sets (24 in each set) of electronic book readers (e-readers). Each e-reader will be loaded with a wide-range of fiction and non-fiction electronic books (e-books) for each grade level K-2. One set will be available in the library media center; three classroom sets will be shared among K-2 classrooms. Approximately 1,536 e-books will be purchased for each school. E-readers will be stored in the library media center with the library media specialist responsible for storing and charging the readers each evening. In addition, three classroom sets of hardcopy books for each of 15 Book Club feature selections will be purchased for each school.

The e-readers and electronic learning resources will also be used by classroom teachers and library media specialists to teach or reinforce important pre-reading or reading skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and to reinforce literacy skills across the curriculum. In addition to the fiction and non-fiction books acquired, 100 instructional e-books and applications will be purchased for each school (1,500 instructional e-books and applications across the 16 participating elementary schools). The St. Louis Public Schools Foundation, through community donors, will contribute an additional 50 instructional e-books and applications per school.

Professional development for K-2 teachers and library media specialists on e-reader features and applications will be provided by the e-reader vendor. Training will be held in October, November, and December of 2012. Additional professional development focusing on a wide-range of instructional strategies for using e-readers to teach literacy skills will be provided by the district's communication arts supervisors.

(2) Library collections at each of the 16 participating low-performing schools will be upgraded to Exemplary as defined by state library standards.

The 23,040 e-books and 17,280 hardcopy books purchased through the project will enable the upgrade of library media center collections at each of the 16 library media centers to Exemplary as defined by state library standards. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education currently ranks the district's library media centers in the 8th percentile with regard to the currency and condition of its library collections.[4] Of 38 district elementary library media centers inventoried in 2012, 68 percent had collections rated below the Proficient level.

Strong research findings support the relationship between high quality library media center programs and student learning. A 2003 analysis of Missouri data conducted by Quantitative Resources[5] found that in Missouri "school library services exert a 10.6 percent statistically significant impact on student achievement." A 2005 Illinois study[6] found that: (1) schools with better-staffed libraries have more students who succeed on tests; (2) students that

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[4] Missouri School Improvement Report, 2009.

[5] "How School Library Media Center Services Affect Student Achievement," Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2003.

[6] "Powerful Libraries Make Powerful Learners," Illinois School Library Media Association, 2005.

visit the library more frequently receive improved reading and writing scores; and (3) students

with access to larger, more current book collections achieve higher reading scores.

(3) The "We Love Reading!!" Book Club will greatly strengthen the school-home literacy connection.

"Parents play a critical role in the literacy development of their children. What parents

believe, say, and do does make a difference."[7] Through an innovative parents as "storytellers"

component, 640 parents will be trained to increase their involvement in, and support of, the

literacy learning process. They will gain confidence in their ability to read aloud, learn how to

bring award-winning stories alive for children, and master strategies for reinforcing important

literacy skills. These parents will serve as the first cohort of trained parents who will support the

literacy learning of their own children and others.

The parent training model will be institutionalized by the district through its new Parent

University, housed in the district's Community Education Full Service Schools.

(4) The project will help the district address the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) developed by the International Society for Technology in Education, and the Standards for Technological Literacy developed by the International Technology Education Association.

The National Educational Technology Standards (NETS), developed by the International

Society for Technology and Education, are standards for learning, teaching, and leading in the

digital age and are widely recognized and adopted worldwide. The NETS focuses on:

improving higher-order thinking skills, such as problem solving, critical thinking, and creativity;

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[7] Baker, L. "The Role of Parents in Motivating Struggling Readers," *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 19: 87, 2003.

preparing students for their future in a competitive global job market; designing student-centered, project-based, and online learning environments; guiding systemic change in our schools to create digital places of learning; and inspiring digital age professional models for working, collaborating, and decision making.[8]

The Standards for Technological Literacy, developed by the International Technology Education Association, represent a guide for educating students K-12 to use, manage, assess, and understand technology.[9] For example, the standards suggest that students in K-2 understand the following: (a) The natural world and human-made world are different; and (b) All people use tools and techniques to help them do things.[10]

(ii) Implementing Promising New Strategies

(1) The "We Love Reading!!" Book Club will foster a love of reading and strengthen K-2 literacy skills through the application of digital learning technologies.

Through The "We Love Reading!!" Book Club, young readers will be introduced to digital learning technologies for reinforcing and learning new reading skills as well as for fostering a love for reading. K-2 students in each of 16 of the district's low-performing elementary schools will have access to four classroom sets of electronic readers (e-readers) loaded with hundreds of electronic books (e-books). Across the 16 participating schools, 96 classroom sets, or 1,536 e-readers, will be purchased. A careful study of the features and costs of various e-readers was conducted and the district has identified the *NOOK Color* (Barnes &

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[8] NETS Standards, International Society for Technology in Education, http://www.iste.org/standards.aspx.

[9] *Standards for Technological Literacy*, International Technology Education Association, 2007.

[10] Ibid., p. 24.

Noble) as the e-reader with the most promising applications for this project. These features

include the following:

- *NOOK Color* uses the most current digital technology to make reading more enjoyable
  and appealing.

- Students can quickly and easily look up any word with the built-in dictionary.

- Students can create notes, highlight, and bookmark specific passages.

- Students have access to more than 2 million books, newspapers, and interactive
  children's books.

- *NOOK Color* holds 5,000 titles and has an expandable memory up to 32GB.

- Every page read on a *NOOK Color* saves a piece of paper.

- *NOOK Color* is rated the "Best e-ink reader by CNET and "Ideal for Students."

While the large-scale use of e-readers in elementary schools is still relatively new, there

is considerable research supporting their use. According to Lotta Larson, a teacher educator and

researcher from Kansas State University, "e-books have the potential to unveil an array of new

teaching and learning possibilities as traditional and new literacy skills are integrated in

meaningful ways."[11] A study conducted by Larson in a small K-12 school district in the

Midwest suggests that "…using digital reading devices with 2nd grade students promotes new

literacy practices and extends connections between readers and text as engagement with and

manipulating of text is made possible through electronic tools and features."[12] Furthermore,

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[11] Larson, Lotta C. "Digital Readers: The Next Chapter in E-Book Reading and Response," *The Reading Teacher,* 64(1), p. 15, 2010.

[12] Ibid, p. 17.

participating 2nd grade students consistently used their e-readers to adjust font size, access the built-in dictionary, and activate text-to-speech features."[13]

A recent study supported by the U.S. Department of Education looked at the impact on learning of the PBS Kids educational gaming application (app), "Martha Speaks Dog Party." "The study found that after children had used the app every day for two weeks, the vocabulary of Title I children between three and seven years old improved by as much as 31 percent."[14]

Shirley Grimshaw's research indicates that "…rich multimedia features such as audio narration, sound effects, and animations embedded into electronic books can very much help children improve their reading comprehension skill."[15] A study by Maynard comparing the impact of electronic vs. printed text on learning found that "…those who used the electronic textbook did better on the comprehension tests than those who used the printed textbook."[16]

In a study of 3rd graders conducted by Bruce Sowers, students were provided with an e-reader loaded with *Webster's Concise Dictionary*, *Second Edition* and were also provided with a hardcopy version of the same dictionary. Results were recorded for speed and accuracy. While the test results were mixed, one thing was evident—"every student who used the e-book loved it.

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[13] Ibid., p. 19.

[14] Wylie, Jonathan. "Mobile Learning Technologies for 21st Century Classrooms," *Scholastic*, http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3754742.

[15] Grimshaw, S. Electronic Books: Children's Reading and Comprehension," *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 38(4), p. 584. Reported in Chau, Michelle. "The Effects of Electronic Books Designed for Children in Education," *Scroll: Essays on the Design of Electronic Text*, University of Toronto, 2008.

[16] Maynard, S. "Can Electronic Textbooks Help Children to Learn?" *The Electronic Library*, 23(1), p. 103, 2005.

It was new, different, and fun,"[17] providing strong support for e-readers as motivational supports for the instructional program.

> **(2) The project will greatly strengthen the home-school connection through an innovative parents as "storytellers" component.**

The project will implement a promising strategy for engaging parents in the learning process and helping them become literacy role models for their children. Six-hundred-forty parents, 40 from each of 16 participating schools, will be trained as "storytellers" who can read aloud to children with confidence and bring award-winning stories alive for them. The project model was successfully pilot tested in the district through a small grant from the Barbara Bush Foundation. Using parents as "storytellers" proved to be an innovative and exciting way to get parents engaged in reading to their own children and to others in the schools and community.

Researchers and practitioners across the board agree that parent and family involvement can make a difference in a child's education, and the research base on family involvement consistently reports high correlations between parent involvement and student achievement.[18] All too often, however, "educators tend to treat parents and families as bystanders rather than as partners, and often overlook their strengths and their capacity to transform public education."[19] According to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, one of five essential supports for school improvement is strong parent-community-school ties. "The quality of these ties links directly to students' motivation and school participation and can provide a critical

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[17] Sowers, Bruce. "E-book in the Classroom – Pass or Fail?" In *E-ink*, 2008.

[18] "Beyond Random Acts: Family, School, and Community Engagement as an Integral Part of Education Reform," The National Policy Forum for Family, School, and Community Engagement.

[19] Ibid, p. 2.

resource for classrooms."[20] Researchers at the Southwest Education Development Laboratory report the following benefits of effective family engagement: higher grades and test scores; more classes passed; better attendance; better social skills and improved behavior at home and at school; easier adaptation to school; and increased likelihood of high school graduation and attendance at postsecondary education.[21]

In a review of research on parental roles in supporting literacy achievement, Professor Linda Baker of the University of Maryland concluded the following: "Children whose early encounters with literacy are enjoyable are more likely to develop a predisposition to read frequently and broadly in subsequent years. This in turn improves their reading achievement."[22] Furthermore, according to Baker, "The beliefs held by children's parents about the purposes of reading and how children learn to read relate to children's motivations for reading. Parents who believe that reading is a source of entertainment have children with more positive views about reading than parents who emphasize the skills aspect of learning to read."

In addition to "storytelling," parent training will focus on how parents can reinforce important reading skills. Training materials will include the *Shining Stars* booklets for parents developed by the National Institute for Literacy. These booklets provide checklists for parents of toddlers through 3rd graders of the literacy skills their children should be mastering at each level and hints for how to help them succeed.

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[20] Bryk, Anthony S. "Organizing Schools for Improvement," *Kappan*, Volume 91, Number 7, April 2010.

[21] Henderson, A.L., and Mapp, K.T. "A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement," Southwest Education Development Laboratory, Austin, TX, 2002.

[22] Baker, p. 101.

(b) Quality of Project Design

(i) Project Goals, Objectives, Activities, and Outcomes

The project's overarching goal is to increase literacy skills for K-2 children attending 16 of the district's lowest performing schools. More specifically the project will:

1. Integrate digital learning technologies into the literacy curriculum.

2. Upgrade library media center collections in the district's 16 lowest performing schools to Exemplary as defined by state library standards.

3. Increase the extent to which parents are actively involved in the literacy learning process and model a love for reading for their own children and others.

4. Build a strong collaborative relationship with the Saint Louis Public Library in order to reinforce and extend school-based literacy activities.

5. Develop a K-2 model that can be adopted or adapted by others.

Project activities will include the following:

The "We Love Reading!!" Book Club

The "We Love Reading!!" Book Club will serve as the organizing centerpiece for the project. The Book Club will be implemented in the district's 16 lowest performing elementary schools, including all 13 of the district's Tier 1 elementary schools as well as three additional schools will significantly low communication arts scores last year. These schools serve children with the lowest levels of literacy achievement in the district. The "We Love Reading!!" Book Club will meet four times each month—twice in the school library media center, under the direction of the library media specialist, and twice in the classroom, under the direction of the classroom teacher and with assistance from trained parent volunteers. Each K-2 classroom will have its own Book

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Club meetings, with common monthly book club titles for each grade level across participating

schools. Feature titles will be selected by an eight-member committee made up of K-2 library

media specialists, K-2 classroom teachers, and children's librarians from the Saint Louis Public

Library. Each monthly selection will be introduced by the library media specialist in the library

media center. The second Book Club meeting each month will occur in the classroom, with the

teacher providing a structured pre-reading or reading activity using the monthly selection for

content. A third session will involve trained parent storytellers re-reading the monthly selection

to children in the library media center, highlighting and reinforcing specific reading skills such

as phonemic awareness, comprehension, or listening skills. The last monthly session will occur

in the classroom and will involve children in writing or illustrating brief book reports.

Expanding and Upgrading School Library Book Collections

In order to upgrade collections in each library media center, and in support of Book Club

activities, each participating elementary library media center will be equipped with four

classroom sets of e-readers (24 readers each), and each reader will be loaded with the feature

Book Club selections as well as a wide-range of other e-books for each grade level. One

classroom set will be used in the library media center. Three classroom sets will be shared

among K-2 classroom teachers. Approximately 1,536 e-books will be purchased for each

school. Because each e-book can be loaded on to five e-readers, this yields 7,680 e-books per

school. In addition, three classroom sets of hardcopy books for each Book Club selection will be

purchased for each school. While students won't be able to take the e-readers home, the

hardcopy books will be available for children to check out from their classrooms or library

media centers. Therefore, a total of 8,280 new fiction and non-fiction e-books and traditional

books per school will be acquired. These resources will enable participating library media

centers to upgrade their library collections to Exemplary as defined by state library standards. E-readers will be stored in the library media center with the library media specialist responsible for storing and charging the readers each evening.

Integrating Digital Technologies Into the Literacy Curriculum

In addition to supporting Book Club activities, the e-readers and electronic learning resources will be used by classroom teachers and library media specialists to teach or reinforce important pre-reading or reading skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and to teach literacy across subject areas. Fifty instructional e-books and applications will be purchased for each school (800 instructional e-books across the 16 participating elementary schools). The St. Louis Public Schools Foundation, through community donors, will contribute an additional 50 instructional e-books and applications per school.

Professional Development for Teachers and Librarians

Professional development for K-2 teachers and library media specialists on e-reader features and applications will be provided at no cost to the project by the e-reader vendor. Professional development sessions will be held in October, November, and December of 2012. Additional professional development focusing on a wide-range of instructional strategies and materials for using e-readers to teach literacy skills across the curriculum will be provided by the district's communication arts supervisors. Four sessions per school will be held over the two-year project period.

Parents as Trained "Storytellers"

K-2 parents will serve as trained "storytellers" within their families, in the classroom, and in school and community libraries. They will gain confidence in their ability to read aloud, learn how to bring award-winning stories alive for children, and master strategies for reinforcing important literacy skills. Forty K-2 parents from each participating elementary school will be trained through the district's new Parent University, housed in each of the district's Community Education Full Service Schools. Parents will attend three, two-hour training sessions and complete a brief practicum supervised by library media specialists. Experienced literacy specialists will provide the training. One session will feature a local storyteller demonstrating how reading can be enhanced with gestures, facial expressions, and intonation. The district will support refreshments for each parent training session.

Family Literacy Circles at the Saint Louis Public Library

Quarterly "We Love Reading!!" family literacy circles featuring one or more Book Club selections will be held evenings at each of the 13 branches of the Saint Louis Public Library. Each literacy circle will feature trained parent "storytellers" and a family-centered literacy activity provided by a Saint Louis Public Library children's librarian. One session each year at each branch library will feature a professional storyteller.

Model Development and Dissemination

The project will be carefully evaluated to identify its strengths and weaknesses. The model will be refined, and a brief project implementation guide will be developed to assist others interested in adopting or adapting the project model.

(ii) Coordination With Related Efforts and Resources

(1) The "We Love Reading!!" Book Club will reinforce and dovetail with the district's literacy improvement plan by focusing on the reinforcement of pre-reading and reading skills, featuring non-fiction as well as fiction books, and providing teachers with strategies for teaching literacy across the curriculum.

(2) The project will serve as an introduction to digital learning technologies for many K-2 students and will be an advance organizer for 3rd grade, where all students will be introduced to and have access to an *iPad* to support their learning.

(3) Project training for parents will reinforce a district-wide initiative to educate all parents about the Common Core Standards for language arts and mathematics.

(4) The parent training component will be coordinated through the district's Title I family specialist program, providing a staff person in each school for whom strengthening the home-school connection is his or her first priority.

(iii) Comprehensive Effort to Improve Teaching and Learning

Under the leadership of a new Academic Officer, Dr. Nicole Williams, the district has refined its "theory of action for improvement," key areas of focus, and key levers for improvement. The theory holds that if the district: aligns resources (human and fiscal) strategically to develop and support effective, high-quality school leaders and teaching staff; provides targeted support to schools and implements clear standards and data-driven processes for accountability; implements high-quality, robust professional development linked to improving student learning; designs and delivers a uniform, rigorous district-wide core curriculum preK-12; and aligns systemic processes and targeted support for continuous school improvement; then it will realize statistically significant improvements in student achievement.

(iv) Performance Feedback and Continuous Improvement

The project will use evaluation data to make periodic refinements in project strategy and ensure the project is meeting its goals and objectives. The project's external evaluator, in collaboration with district evaluation staff, will summarize evaluation data on a quarterly basis for review by the project leadership team.

(c) Quality of Project Services

(i) Ensuring Equal Access

Project services will be available and accessible to all K-2 students in participating schools including students with special needs. A focused effort will be made to address the needs of students from immigrant families with limited English proficiency. Several of the project schools serve large numbers of refugees and other immigrants representing 50 countries and 58 different languages. These students and their families will be integrated into project activities, in consultation with the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Program.

(ii) Meeting the Needs of Project Students

Project strategies are designed to meet the needs of participating students.

(1) Low-income students are less likely to have access to digital technologies at home. The project will serve as a good foundation for more intense technology-based learning that starts in 3rd grade, when all students have access to an *iPad* to support their learning.

(2) The project's main focus is to help ensure that children enter the 3rd grade with strong reading skills. In 2011, district 3rd graders scored more than 17 percentage points behind Missouri 3rd graders in communication arts. Extensive reading experiences using e-readers and e-books, and skill reinforcement by classroom teachers, library media specialists, and parents, are expected to have a significant impact on their reading scores.

(3) The project also focuses on strengthening the home-school connection. Many low-income parents, including those from participating schools, lack the knowledge, skills, and for some, the motivation, to serve as positive role models for academic achievement. Research has shown that parental involvement and support are highly correlated with student success. The project will implement a parent training component designed to address this critical connection.

(iii) Providing High-quality and Intensive Professional Development

The project will provide professional development for classroom teachers, library media specialists, and parents. Classroom teachers and library media specialists will receive indepth training on the *NOOK Color* and its features and applications. This training will be provided at no cost to the project by the vendor. Training will occur in the first three months of the project. Teachers and library media specialists will also receive eight hours of training provided by district communication arts supervisors focusing on the use of the *NOOK Color* and related electronic teaching resources to teach literacy across the curriculum. Sessions will be provided at each school site, with lesson modeling provided by the communication arts supervisors.

Parents will also be trained, in three two-hour sessions, as "storytellers" and literacy coaches. The training will be conducted by literacy specialists and will encompass storytelling and literacy coaching skills. Over the two-year project period, 640 parents will be trained.

(d) Adequacy of Resources

(i) Costs are Reasonable in Relation to Project Design and Significance

Eighty-three (83) percent of the project budget is devoted to the acquisition of high-quality fiction and non-fiction electronic and hardcopy books designed to bring participating elementary library media centers up to the Exemplary standard. The remaining 26 percent of the budget will support the costs of project coordination, professional development, parent training,

and project evaluation. The project is expected to be self-sustaining after the initial two-year

development period.

(ii) Costs Are Reasonable in Relation to Number Served and Anticipated Outcomes

Project costs are quite reasonable. Approximately 2,800 K-2 students will be impacted

during the two-year project period at ███ per student, with no further costs for implementation

required in Year 3 and beyond. E-readers and books with be in place, teachers and library media

specialists will be trained, and parent training will be incorporated into training programs offered

through the Parent University. The Saint Louis Public Library will continue to support family

literacy circles.

(e) Quality of the Management Plan

(i) Achieving the Objectives of the Project On Time and Within Budget

The project will be administered by the district's division of Curriculum and Instruction,

with Executive Director Sheila Smith-Anderson serving as project director. (Smith-Anderson's

time will be contributed by the district.) Communication Arts Supervisor, Cathy Cassy, will

serve as project coordinator, with responsibility for day-to-day project coordination. (Cassy's

time will also be contributed by the district.) A team of three elementary library media

specialists and three K-2 teachers will serve as a coordination support team and the project's

direct link to elementary classrooms and library media centers. An eight-member book selection

committee made up of the coordination support team and two children's librarians from the Saint

Louis Public Library will select feature titles for the Book Club. The point person in each

participating school will be the library media specialist. Ms. Patricia Carleton, Director of Youth

Services for the Saint Louis Public Library, will serve as project liaison to public library

services. In this role, she will coordinate activities implemented across the Saint Louis Public

Library's 13 locations. A project leadership team will include the project director, project

coordinator, and the coordination support team. Resumes for the project director, project

coordinator, and project liaison for public library services are attached.

Project monitoring and time management strategies for ensuring the project objectives

are met on time and within budget will include the following:

- Bi-weekly meetings of the project leadership team;

- Weekly meetings of the coordination support team;

- Monthly meetings of library media specialists and K-2 classroom teachers at each
  school; and

- Quarterly meetings of the project leadership team and project evaluators to review
  summaries of project evaluation data and identify needed strategy refinements.

(ii) Ensuring Time Commitments of Key Personnel are Appropriate and Adequate

Time commitments of key project personnel are appropriate and adequate. For the most

part, project assignments reflect existing district responsibilities. The project director, Ms.

Smith-Anderson, will devote five percent of her time to the project. The project coordinator will

devote 20 percent of her time to the project during the first six months and 10 percent thereafter.

The coordination support team will devote five hours each month to the project, working closely

with the project director and project coordinator to ensure that project activities at each school

site are implemented as planned.

A project schedule and timeline follows.

Project Implementation Schedule

Project Tasks and Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Year 1	Year 2
Project Coordination & Evaluation			
Announce project award.	Project Director	10/12	
Refine project evaluation plan.	External Evaluator	10/12	8/13
Hold project leadership team meetings.	Project Director	Bi-monthly	Bi-monthly
Hold coordination support team meetings.	Project Coordinator	Weekly	Weekly
Hold meetings of teachers and librarians.	Project Coordinator	Monthly	Monthly
Monitor project activities.	Project Coordinator	Ongoing	Ongoing
Conduct project evaluation.	External Evaluator	Ongoing	Ongoing
Report project outcomes.	Project Director	9/13	9/14
Upgrading Book Collections			
Order e-readers.	Project Coordinator	10/12	
Select book titles.	Selection Committee	10/12	
Order e-books and hardcopy books.	Project Coordinator	10/12	
Order storage and charging carts.	Project Coordinator	10/12	
Equip library media centers.	Librarians	12/12	
"We Love Reading!!" Book Club			
Schedule Book Club meetings.	Project Coordinator	11/12	8/13
Hold Book Club meetings.	Librarians, Teachers	1/13-5/13	9/13-5/14
Monitor Book Club activities.	Project Coordinator	Ongoing	Ongoing
Refine Book Club strategies as needed.	Leadership Team	Quarterly	Quarterly

Project Tasks and Activities	Person(s) Responsible	Year 1	Year 2
PD for Teachers and Librarians			
Refine professional development plan.	Project Director	10/12	7/13
Train teachers and librarians.	Literacy Specialists	Ongoing	Ongoing
Monitor professional development.	Project Coordinator	Ongoing	Ongoing
Refine PD strategies as needed.	Leadership Team	Quarterly	Quarterly
Parents As "Storytellers"			
Select parents.	Family Specialists	10/12	8/13
Train parents.	Literacy Specialists	Ongoing	Ongoing
Assign parents to storytelling events.	Project Coordinator	Ongoing	Ongoing
Monitor storytelling activities.	Project Coordinator	Ongoing	Ongoing
Refine storytelling activities as needed.	Leadership Team	Quarterly	Quarterly
Family Literacy Circles			
Schedule literacy circles.	Project Coordinator	11/12	8/13
Assign parents and other storytellers.	Project Coordinator	11/12	8/13
Hold literacy circles.	Public librarians	Quarterly	Quarterly
Monitor literacy circles.	Project Coordinator	Ongoing	Ongoing
Refine literacy circle activities as needed.	Leadership Team	Quarterly	Quarterly
Model Development and Dissemination			
Refine project model.	Leadership Team	Ongoing	Ongoing
Develop project implementation guide.	Project Director		7/14
Disseminate implementation guide.	Project Director		8/14

(iii) Ensuring High-quality Products and Services

The project will ensure high-quality products and services through regular feedback and data-based continuous improvements. The project leadership team will meet quarterly to review project outcomes to date, identify strengths and weaknesses, and refine strategies as needed.

(f) Quality of the Project Evaluation

(i) Use of Objective Performance Measures and Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Evaluation activities will be conducted by Dr. Jeri Levesque, a nationally recognized literacy researcher, in collaboration with the district's Department of Research and Evaluation. Dr. Levesque will devote 80 days to the project.

Evaluation is a learning process which will be used for project improvement, model development, and capability building. Two kinds of evaluation activities will be performed: process evaluation; and outcome evaluation. Process evaluation attempts to determine the quality of an activity and how it can be improved. Qualitative assessments of project activities will be made through a wide variety of surveys and interviews of project participants and other stakeholders designed to assess the quality of specific events, activities, and products including:

- **Quality of project organization and coordination**—as measured by an annual Project Evaluation Questionnaire completed by teachers, library media specialists, and parents.

- **Quality of Book Club selections**—as measured by written and oral feedback from classroom teachers and library media specialists collected annually.

- **Quality of Book Club activities**—as measured by written and oral feedback from classroom teachers and library media specialists collected annually.

- **Quality of professional development for teachers and librarians**—as measured by written and oral feedback from classroom teachers and library media specialists collected after each professional development session.

- **Quality of parent training**—as measured by written and oral feedback from participating parents collected after each training session.

- **Quality of parent storytelling**—as measured by written and oral feedback from classroom teachers and library media specialists collected annually.

- **Quality of public library literacy circles**—as measured by written and oral feedback from parents and public librarians collected after each literacy circle.

A comprehensive outcome evaluation will determine the project's impact on students, elementary library media specialists, teachers, parents, and the district as follows:

(1)   **To what extent did the project increase literacy skills for participating K-2 students?** *As measured by pretest and posttest TerraNova reading scores for 1st and 2nd graders collected each year and compared with a control group. Benchmarks: At the end of both Year 1 and Year 2, project students in each school will have made significantly greater gains than students in the control group.*

(2)   **To what extent were digital learning technologies integrated into the literacy curriculum?** *As measured by a degree of project implementation scale developed by the external evaluator. Benchmarks: At the end of Year 1, teachers and library media specialists will have begun to effectively integrate project technologies into their literacy instruction. At the end of Year 2, teachers and library media specialists will show at least a 90 percent implementation rate.*

(3)   To what extent were the library media center collections in the 16 participating schools expanded to meet the Exemplary standard? *As measured by a annual audit of library collections conducted by Follett Library Services. Benchmarks: At the end of Year 2, participating libraries collections will have reached the Exemplary standard.*

(4)   To what extent did the project increase parent understanding of and engagement in their children's literacy learning process? *As measured by parent and teacher surveys and interviews conducted at the end of each school year. Benchmarks: At the end of Year 1, parent and teacher surveys will indicate perceived improvements of at least 25 percent in parent understanding and engagement. At the end of Year 2, surveys will indicate perceived improvements of at least 50 percent in parent understanding and engagement.*

(5)   To what extent did the project strengthen the ongoing collaborative relationship between St. Louis Public Schools and the Saint Louis Public Library? *As measured by surveys and interviews of district and Saint Louis Public Library staff. Benchmarks: At the end of Year 2, results will indicate a strong relationship between St. Louis Public Schools and the Saint Louis Public Library, with both parties hoping to continue the relationship in the future.*

(6)   To what extent did project activities yield a model that can be used by others interested in adopting or adapting the project? *As measured by a brief project implementation guide for others interested in adopting or adapting the project model. Benchmarks: At the end of Year 2, the Project Implementation Guide will be available.*

(ii) Providing Performance Feedback and Periodic Assessment of Progress

Evaluation data will be summarized quarterly and reviewed by the project leadership team to identify needed refinements in project strategies.