A. Significance

(i) Extent to which the proposed project is likely to build local capacity to provide, improve, or expand services that address the needs of the target population

Athens is located in a sparsely populated rural area of northwest Marathon County about thirty miles from Wausau. The economic base of this area is supported primarily by agricultural and industrial jobs. Many of the residents work in surrounding communities. Athens has a large Amish and Mennonite population, both of which have their own educational systems. The total population of the district is approximately 3,900 residents. Athens school district is home to three public schools: Athens High School, Athens Middle School, and Athens Elementary School, with a total of 506 enrolled students PK-12.

The Athens Innovative Approaches to Literacy, a two-year grant proposal, will positively impact reading and writing achievements of students from early childhood through twelfth grade. All students will be impacted positively, especially struggling students. Additionally, students who are at grade level and above will be provided an opportunity to enhance their skills. Professional development for staff in research-based reading and writing programs, via the Literacy Collaborative program, will impact students in all curricular areas and will reinforce the literacy expectations in all subjects as expressed by the Common Core State Standards.

An excerpt from the 2010 Census Poverty Data by Local Educational Agency provides the qualifying data for Athens school district:

State	LEA	Name of		5 - 17		Total
		Local Educational Agency				
Code	Code	(LEA)	Poverty	Population	Percent	Population
55	5500570	ATHENS	266	892	29.82%	3,931

An analysis of the most recent Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) supports the need of additional programs targeting improvement in literacy. WKCE is customized to measure the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards (WMAS) and is developed and designed by the Department of Public Instruction and Wisconsin educators in conjunction with CTB/McGraw-Hill. This standardized test is composed of items specifically designed for Wisconsin and a few commercially developed questions used in schools across the country. Students in grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 take tests in Reading and Mathematics. Students in grades 4, 8, and 10 take tests in Reading, Mathematics, Science, Language Arts, Writing, and Social Studies. WKCE is administered to all the students enrolled in Wisconsin public schools during the fall of each school year.

Data analyzed from the Wisconsin School District Performance Report retrieved from the Wisconsin Public Instruction website (https://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/sdpr/district-report.action) yield reading scores below state average in grades three, four, and eight. Athens school district grade three WKCE reading results were reported as 61.9% advanced-proficient with students statewide testing at 79.7% advanced-proficient; 17.8% below the statewide results. Of the six total schools within Athens athletic conference, Athens school district produced the second lowest advanced-proficient reading scores at the second grade advanced-proficient reading level. Athens school district grade four reading results were reported as 74.2% advanced-proficient with students statewide testing at 81.5% advanced-proficient; 7.3% below the statewide results. Of the six total schools within the Athens athletic conference, Athens school district produced the second lowest advanced-proficient reading scores at the fourth grade reading level. Athens school district grade eight reading results were reported as 78.1% advanced-proficient with students statewide testing at 83.7% advanced-proficient; 5.6% below statewide results. Of the six total schools within the Athens athletic conference, Athens school district produced the lowest advanced-proficient reading scores at the eighth grade level. Athens school district grade ten reading results were reported as 93.6%

advanced-proficient with students statewide testing at 78.2% advanced-proficient; 15.4% above the statewide results. Of the six total schools within the Athens athletic conference, Athens school district produced the highest advanced-proficient reading scores at the tenth grade level.

Additionally, Athens school district tested below statewide average in grades four and eight language arts advanced-proficient, WKCE results with scores of 67.7% and 40.6% respectively. Statewide advanced-proficient average is 76.8% in grade four and 64.2% in grade eight leaving an achievement gap of 9.1% and 23.6%.

Demonstrated weakness in grades 3, 4, and 8 reading and language arts advanced-proficient levels below statewide average calls for an intervention with the IAL grant. Building upon need demonstrated with WKCE results, there is also a research study conducted by Donald Hernandez, Professor of Sociology at the Hunter College City University of New York with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. This study found evidence to support poverty stricken students with supplemental literacy education. 29.82% of Athens school district students live in poverty. Coupling the poverty statistics with the weakened reading scores brings great need for intervention. Studies demonstrate that children living in poverty are less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to struggle in school. Findings from this study include:

- "About 16% of children who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade do not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers;

- For children who were poor, lived in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and not reading proficiently, the proportion jumped to 35%;

- Overall, 22% of children who lived in poverty do not graduate from high school, compared to 6% of those who have never been poor. The figure rises to 32% for students spending more than half of their childhood in poverty;

- About 31% of poor African-American students and 33% of poor Hispanic students who did not hit the third grade proficiency mark failed to graduate. These rates are greater than those for White students with poor reading skills. But the racial and ethnic graduation gaps disappear when students master reading by the end of third grade and are not living in poverty.[1]"

(ii) Extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that build on, or are alternatives to, existing strategies

Literacy Collaborative, a comprehensive school literacy model will be implemented as the Athens Innovative Approaches to Literacy Program. The Athens school district will collaborate with Literacy Collaborative for an innovative, research-based approach to improving school-wide literacy levels. Literacy Collaborative will provide Athens with the training and services of professional development as well as an instructional model that aligns with the state common core standards while meeting the requirements for response to intervention. Services provided through Literacy Collaborative will build upon existing strategies.

Currently the Athens school district uses a variety of different resources to deliver reading and writing education: Daily 5, 6 + plus 1 Traits of Writing, Reading Eggs, Scholastic, and Houghton Mifflin Series. The above resources are adequate but individual staff decides on programming for their classroom. Consistency, sequence, and a scope in a program among the grades are needed. Literacy Collaborative will provide this for Athens school district.

Implementation of the program occurs in two stages, training a literacy coach and developing a leadership team and finally implementing the strategies in the classroom. The first two

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[1] Hernandez, D (2011) Double Jeopardy. *How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation.* New York: Hunter College and City University of New York. Retrieved from the World Wide Web: http://www.gradelevelreading.net/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/DoubleJeopardyReport040511FINAL.pdf Webpage 5.

years are dedicated to forming a leadership team and training staff as literacy coaches. Developing a leadership team involves not just the teaching staff but administrators, parents, and the public. The job of the leadership team is to disperse the program guidelines and goals to the parents, school, and community in a combined effort to explain how and why the program will work for Athens unique situation.

Classroom implementation begins during the second year when the literacy coach begins teaching the required 40-hour professional development course to the first group of teachers in the school. Through regular meetings and assignments, teachers learn about the language and literacy framework, the theories behind it, and how to implement and refine their practices. They also begin to monitor student progress through individual student assessments, data collection, and analysis. The literacy coach provides ongoing coaching for teachers as they learn to implement the framework.

The next two years are dedicated to training additional classroom teachers and implementing the Literacy Collaborative model in every classroom throughout the school. Work continues with the leadership team, district personnel, and parents to support increased learning and to build a vibrant community of enthusiastic readers and writers.

B. Quality of the Project Design

(i) Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

District Goals

Due to the high poverty nature of the Athens School District, there are many in-class challenges that face our teachers that result from disadvantages in a child's home life. The reality is that the district needs more leveled literacy materials so that more meaningful guided reading can take place in the classrooms. This will aid in improving student literacy.

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Athens Innovative Approach to Literacy aims to address district goals. We designed our program around our areas of particular need, especially to establish a strong system of sustainable programming. The following objectives were created to facilitate our vision and provide measurable benchmarks for monitoring progress towards its fulfillment.

Objective 1: 50% of the students will gain higher levels of engagement with reading as the variety of Fountas and Pinnell leveled books become available for use at school and home for guided reading groups as evidenced by parent and student surveys;

Objective 2: 10% of students will improve to grade-level reading and writing performance as indicated by MAPS and local assessments the first year and an additional 10% the second year

Objective 3: Increase 10% of third grade reading and writing performance to grade level as precursor to future academic success;

Objective 4: 50% of low-income families will participate in book giveaway programs to build their home libraries.

Outcomes:

The outcomes of the proposed project are as follows: (1) The percentage of 4-year-old children participating in the project who achieve significant gains in oral language skills will increase 10% in year one and an additional 10% in year two; (2) The percentage of participating 3rd-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading or language arts assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA will increase by 10% in year one and an additional 10% the second; (3) The percentage of participating 8th-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading or language arts assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA will increase 10% in year one and an additional 10% in year two ; (4) The percentage of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading or language arts assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA will increase by 10% in year one and an additional 10% in year two.

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(ii) Extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources.

The IAL grant will add additional literacy expertise through the hiring of a literacy coach to assist in the development of instructional strategies across all curricula, as well as providing direct instruction to students. The district will also have the school library open all summer to retain reading writing skill gains during the regular school year.

In addition to professional development provided through Literacy Collaborative, additional elements of the grant dealing with professional development will be coordinated with the districts Danielson Framework for instruction exploration, which will be Title IIa and locally funded. Federal, state, and local RTI efforts will complement the efforts of the grant.

Charlotte Danielson's Framework for teaching, Teachscape, is a research-validated instrument used to evaluate, observe, and develop the skills of educators. Teachscape and the evaluation criteria are formulated from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Measures of Effective Teaching research project that evaluated over 20,000 classroom lessons[2].

Danielson's Framework for teacher's evaluation process is divided into four main categories: Planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. Within the four main components for evaluation are specific skills and tasks that the framework values as desired qualities and/or capabilities for educators. The biggest goal of Danielson's framework is to set a benchmark for educators to strive to and be aware of areas that need improvement as well as areas that may lay dormant.

Implementing Literacy Collaborative with our current efforts as well as state and federal resource efforts will allow Athens school district the ability to bring students of every level the

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[2] (Framework for Teaching Proficiency Test Instrument, page 2; Appendix A; New York State Department of Education; *usny.nysed.gov/rttt/teachers-leaders/*).

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supplemental resources and education to assist in production of a well-educated and prepared person.

The district's Title I Reading program will be extended and complemented through the application of the grant programs. Early childhood screening procedures will be extended by the reading readiness efforts. Title I services the neediest students identified in grades PK-5 through assessments, parental and teacher referrals. Title I Reading provides small group intensive instruction based on individual student needs in the areas of comprehension, decoding and fluency, to name a few.

(iii) Extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students

Prior to applying for this grant, the School District of Athens was implementing efforts to improve staff instructional effectiveness. This would be reflected in the increase in student achievement on state and local assessments, including MAP improvements. The district has a defined professional development program to increase skills in expressing curricular scope and sequence, including early mapping to CCSS. Professional learning center modeling has been introduced and will be expanded. The district has prepared for deeper use of Professional Learning Centers (PLC) to increase staff focus on student achievement. The Dufour model is the basis of the initial program. Definitive times for PLC teams to meet has been carved out of the schedule to assure integration into the school culture. This will be an excellent vehicle to enhance professional conversation about the AIAL grant research-based implementation.

"Literacy Collaborative is a comprehensive model designed to provide a school-wide approach for improving the reading and writing achievement of children. Literacy Collaborative includes 10 essential design elements:

1. A school leadership team;

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2. A school-based literacy coordinator;

3. Initial and ongoing professional development for teachers and literacy coordinators;

4. In-classroom coaching for classroom teachers;

5. Research-based classroom instructional practices;

6. Classroom assessment that informs instruction;

7. Materials to support the implementation;

8. Reading Recovery as a safety net;

9. A home/school partnership program; and,

10. Research on results in terms of student achievement."[3]

Implementation of Literacy Collaborative will assist Athens school district with a comprehensive program improving teaching and learning. Literacy Collaborative asks for a school district to commit five years to the program. The first year is spent training a teacher as a literacy educator via rigorous evidence based system. Upon implementation of the program into the classroom in year two, the newly trained literacy educator will have the knowledge and "know-how" to train future teachers in the program; ultimately continuing high academic standards. This program is comprehensive because not only are teachers being trained but administrators and parents are directly involved with the program.

Finally, a school-wide book distribution program will be implemented through Fountas and Pinnell's literacy intervention program. Fountas and Pinnell are the creators of a literacy intervention program, the Continuum of Literacy Learning. Fountas and Pinnell literacy intervention program is weaved into the Literacy Collaborative program. This program assists the

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[3] Literacy Collaborative. Literacy Collaborative Trademark Committee. July 29, 2012, www.literacycollaborative.org.

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educator is assessing, teaching, intervening, and monitoring a student's reading level. The program offers supplemental books specific to reading levels of struggling students.

Athens is looking to provide Fountas and Pinnell leveled literacy books to staff and students in all the classrooms so the school can fill the reading gaps for additional materials for guided reading groups, giving students differentiated instruction with books at their own individual level. Guided reading follows the common core standards where students need to read books at their levels and within grade level complexity bands. By expanding the leveled reading library, and by having additional books for high poverty students to have in their homes, students will have a choice in what they are reading, plus, the more books available, the more books available to read.

(iv) Extent to which performance feedback and continuous improvement are integral to the design of the proposed project.

By involving a large spectrum of each community, we will generate diverse feedback which will be used to make necessary adjustments throughout the 2-year program. Assessments of these activities from participants and staff will be shared with the advisory board at monthly meetings. Board members will be charged with analyzing the effectiveness of each program. Ultimately, all project outcomes will be aggregated by the project director and shared quarterly with the contracted evaluator.

To ensure a high-quality program with significant, long-term impact for our students the contracted evaluator will use a Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UF-E) framework. The Utilization-Focused Evaluation will include formative and summative evaluation of program impact using a mixed method approaches (qualitative and quantitative). This design actively involves users (District Staff, the Consortium's Advisory Council) in interpreting findings and generating recommendations, allowing users to examine the findings and interpret implications from various perspectives with a focus on the primary intended uses by the primary intended users. Through this

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process the users, with assistance from the independent evaluator, will identify measurement tools most suited for measuring the impact of the program activities within the context of our community and the student populations (and will include the mandatory GPRA performance measures as discussed above). The evaluator will work with district staff and the Advisory Council to ensure the tools, data collection, and collection methods are scientifically sound. The UF-E allows users to be actively involved in the evaluation process, choosing tools and assisting with data collection, thereby facilitating the users' sense of ownership of the findings and their commitment to act on those findings, thus promoting sustainability. (Please see the attached diagram of the UF-E framework attached.) Feedback and recommendations from the quarterly meetings and/or review with the evaluator will ensure we continue to adjust our program as needed.

C. Quality of the project services

(i) The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

Athens school district has a policy and abides by the law in that it does not discriminate against students regardless of gender, race, color, national origin, age, or disability.

As a check and balance, counselors, teachers and administrators will review the experiences of students in the underrepresented areas to assure equal access on a monthly basis. Employees who are assigned this oversight responsibility will provide written statements of ensured accessibility to the superintendent on a monthly basis. Athens special education needs are addressed by a plan for all families to not only have access but to receive a personal invitation to family activities and events. Over 60 students receiving special education services are in the district. Including families of these students in the broader life of the school district will increase the sense of community and support.

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The use of mobile tablet technology to provide students additional reading materials and writing programs to assist in alleviating impediments suffered in existing service models.

For a comprehensive listing of the Athens school district policies please refer to the GEPA document attached to this application.

(ii) Extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services.

The *Literacy Collaborative* instructional framework is designed for classroom instruction (Tier 1), and *Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI)* for small groups (K-3) and *Reading Recovery* for individual first graders are designed to serve as interventions for struggling readers and writers (Tier 2 or Tier 3). Together, Literacy Collaborative and these two interventions comprise a full RTI plan for grades K-3. For grades 3-8, Literacy Collaborative for classroom instruction and individual or small group guided reading and writing groups for struggling readers comprise a full RTI plan. LC and these interventions are evidence-based.

The Literacy Collaborative school improvement initiative is research-based in three ways:

1. The instructional framework for the students, the professional development and coaching program for teachers, and the comprehensive school improvement components of the LC model are based on research on language and literacy development, effective teaching, and best practices in professional development, school leadership, and comprehensive school improvement. The program developers at The Ohio State University and Lesley University continuously modify and improve the LC model in response to new research. In a 2006 review of 17 elementary school reform programs, conducted by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center (CSRQ) in Washington, D.C., rated LC's "Evidence of the Link between Research and the Model's Design" as "Very strong."

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2.   Research and evaluation studies of the Literacy Collaborative have found positive effects of LC on: a) the quality of classroom teaching, b) student achievement and growth in literacy, and c) teachers' professional communication. The CSRQ review found that eight LC research studies met their standards for "rigor of research design". They rated LC's "Evidence of Positive Overall Effects on Student Achievement" as "Moderate." Several additional studies showing positive effects of LC have been conducted since the CSRQ review. LC studies include external evaluations conducted by third-party evaluators, collaborative studies conducted by university researchers and LC's research and development team, and internal studies conducted by LC researchers. Studies have also been conducted evaluating LLI (Leveled Literacy Intervention) and Reading Recovery.

3.   Every year, LC schools collect and analyze data on student growth and achievement in order to evaluate the effectiveness of LC in their own school and to inform decisions about students and their LC implementation.

An evidence based research study titled, *Assessing the value-added effects of Literacy Collaborative professional development on student learning*, published in the Elementary School Journal in 2010 demonstrates the significance of the Athens school district's implementation of Literacy Collaborative.

The U.S. Department of Education funded a four-year "value-added" study of the effects of the LC program on student achievement and teacher quality, which was conducted by the president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in collaboration with researchers at the University of Chicago and Stanford University. The studied measured the literacy skills of 8,500 students in grades K-2 in 17 Literacy Collaborative Schools over four years (2004-2008) with the DIBELS and Terra Nova assessments. Forty percent of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch. The average rate of student literacy growth increased by 16% in Year 1, 28% in

Year 2, and 32% in Year 3, which is equivalent to effect sizes of 0.22, 0.37, and 0.43.[4] Effect sizes of 0.4 to 0.8 are considered to be of "moderate" size in educational research. The quality of classroom instruction ("teacher quality") was also measured three times per year for the 259 teachers in the study and found to increase over three years.[5] The amount that individual teachers improved was correlated with the amount of professional development and individual coaching they received from their literacy coordinator (r=.33, Biancarosa et al, 2010). In addition, teacher survey responses at the beginning and end of the study showed that professional communication networks within the schools grew denser over three years, with more cross-grade communication, more reciprocal communication, and more communication between the literacy coach and teachers.[6]

The proposed project and research, points to positive effects on student achievement, teacher quality, and professional communication. We intend to utilize funding from the IAL grant to better balance faculty, teacher quality, student achievement, and professional communication. Our expectation with the Literacy Collaborative program is for a focused district-wide effort on implementing activities for reading and writing enhancement as well as focusing the strengthening of literacy services.

Examples of activities that are expected to have a direct impact on student's reading scores include incorporation of electronic reading devices and the use of applications with the electronic reading devices to meet and challenge reading and writing levels; Training and hiring of a full-time dedicated literacy teacher knowledgeable with Literacy Collaborative instructional model

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[4] Biancarosa, G., Bryk A.B, & Dexter, E. (2010).   Assessing the value-added effects of Literacy Collaborative professional development on student learning. *Elementary School Journal, 111,* 7-34.

[5] Hough, H. & Bryk, A.B., Pinnell, G.S., Kerbow, D., Fountas, I., & Scharer, P. (Measuring change in the practice of teachers engaged in Literacy Collaborative professional development: Preliminary results from a four-year study. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY.

[6] Atteberry, A., & Bryk, A. (2009). The role of schools' social networks in intervention diffusion. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

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information and capable of applying this in the classroom and through professional communication; Identification of struggling students and guiding these students to books and resources provided through Fountas and Pinnell programming; By expanding the leveled reading library, and by having additional books for high poverty students to have in their homes, students will have a choice in what they are reading, plus, the more books available, the more books available to read; Leveled reading books in Spanish also will be purchased.

Literacy skills in reading and writing are essential for college and career readiness. Literacy capabilities impact the academic success of students in public schools. Through the review of individual student performance on state and local assessments, MAP date, Dibels, Best, Pals and other instruments, as well as assessments made through Literacy Collaborative, the appropriate degree of grant resource application can be determined to make sure all students benefit from the resources of the grant, while assuring those who are greatest need are appropriately serviced.

(iii) Extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

Professional development services are to be provided by Literacy Collaborative and will be intense the first two years of implementation as the first year is dedicated to training a literacy instructor and employing the programming. Working with Literacy Collaborative is a five year commitment with professional development being stacked in the first two years. This will be beneficial to the Athens school district in that after the funding from the IAL grant is complete, we will have the knowledge and training from Literacy Collaborative to train other staff in-house. The remaining three years of the commitment to fully implement the Literacy Collaborative program is dedicated to assessment and evaluation of the literacy instructor and curriculum.

D. Adequacy of Resources

(i) Extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project

By building this program, we will be able to make improvements impacting our 506 students. The project will be overseen by a .1 FTE project coordinator employed at the Athens District. 1FTE Literacy Coach to serve early childhood through grade five and 1FTE Literacy Coach to serve grades 6-12. These positions will allow for and provide support, professional development, and significant improvements in our reading performance. The best professional development opportunities are those that are held in the district by qualified staff, this allows for integration into the classroom and for follow up with the trainer since they are training is in district. This grant will allow us to integrate new approaches to improve literacy in our communities. Following the expiration of the grant funding, we anticipate reorganizing staff positions and reallocating local funds to continue to support the initiatives that have the most impact. Our Schoolwide Title status could also help us sustain the new programming as well as the community support we will develop and continue to foster throughout the grant cycle.

(ii) Extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits

506 students are to be served with the IAL grant money. An average of ▮▮▮ per student is allocated for the IAL grant project in total. An average of ▮▮▮ per student is allocated for the IAL grant project per year for the two year grant program. One third of these children are from low-income disadvantaged communities and need the economic assistance to prepare and enable their success. The Athens school district believes that by obtaining these funds will improve the reading ability of our children in our communities.

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These economic struggles led to overall low school performance. Additional literacy programming will give these students an advantage and translate to higher performance. These rural areas are in a high poverty area. At times both parents work two jobs to survive. Parents are more and more counting on county, local, and school district services to help feed, educate, and open up opportunities for their children. The Athens school district has a long history of providing a quality education to the students served, but are stretched too thin to adequately provide all the services our students need.

E. Quality of Management Plan

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks

"Athens Innovative Approaches to Literacy" Management Timeline and Milestones		
Date	**Project Activity**	**Milestone**
10/12	• Review Grant Guidelines and Letter of Award	Meeting minutes
	• Key informants review grant proposal – Independent evaluation	Contracts signed
	• Advisory Board notified of monthly meeting (repeat '13, '14). To repeat for life of grant.	Meeting notice
	• Job postings for project director and literacy coach positions developed—hiring notices placed per district policy	Job postings
	• Financial system established—Letter of Award distributed	System confirmed
	• Identify and hire project director and literacy coach—orient to project	Personnel records
	• Contract with External Evaluator	Meeting minutes

Date	**Project Activity**	**Milestone**
	• Develop program management plan	Plan finalized
	• Schedule and initiate training with Literacy Collaborative • Assemble subcommittee to develop leadership team	Contracts signed
	• Initiate training to staff.	Events scheduled
11/12	• Purchase classroom and family take-home books, purchase electron	Use in classroom distribution to families
12/12	• Hold early childhood activities where books are given out (ongoing during grant)	Attendance logs
1/13	• Conduct quarterly evaluation meeting	Evaluation reports
2/13	• Advisory Board, *Leadership Teams meet* (repeat annually)	Drafts completed
	• Conduct formal mid-year project evaluation; based on results, modify activities as needed. (Repeat '14)	Attendance logs Student services report, minutes
4/13	• Quarterly/year-end evaluation meeting	Evaluation report
	• All project teams & committees continue to develop their respective elements;	Meeting minutes
	• Conduct year-end parent/student satisfaction survey. Write first year report; submit to stakeholders and USDOE.	Meeting minutes, Survey results
6/13	• Initiate sustainability plan (ongoing).	Meeting minutes, Schedule posting

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"Athens Innovative Approaches to Literacy" Management Timeline and Milestones

"Athens Innovative Approaches to Literacy" Management Timeline and Milestones		
Date	**Project Activity**	**Milestone**
7/13	• Quarterly evaluation	Evaluation reports
9/13	• Submit Year Two annual report to USDOE.	Annual report (2)
	• Full implementation of IAL, sustainability plan in place	Evaluation
10/13	• Meet with Advisory Board to reassess objectives and make adjustments where needed.	Trainings scheduled, held; Adv. Bd. report
6/14	• Conclude project evaluation; develop final evaluation report and distribute to stakeholders and USDOE. End of 24-month Federal grant period. Project full part of Athens infrastructure	District Records, meeting minutes Annual Report (3)

(ii) Extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project

Time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel are described below. Job descriptions of key project personnel are attached.

Superintendent: District Administrator to the School Board of Athens: 5% of contracted time

CIA Director: District Coordinator of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; designer of staff professional development programs: 10% of contracted time

Building Principals: MS/HS principal: 5% of contracted time. Elementary principal is the CIA director.

ITLC Director: MS/HS/Elementary media specialist: 10% of contracted time

CESA 9 library consultant: 5% of contracted time.

Pk-5 Literacy Coach: 100% of contracted time.

6-12 Literacy Coach: 100% of contracted time.

Grant activities will be complementary to the on-going school improvement plan of the district. The project director will be the Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment director of the School District of Athens. The middle and high school principals will also be involved in the same key activities at the building level. The Building principals will be on the management team. The library-based literacy coaches will be responsible to provide direct services to students and instructional staff, but also be involved in the assessment of the program and services provided. Professional development activities will be a complementary part of the overall district instructional and support staff professional development plan under the CIA director and MS/HS principal. The project direction team will report monthly to the superintendent for knowledge base of services offered students and professional development activities and assessment. Technology implementation will be under the aegis of the superintendent/systems administrator. The grant program key benchmark activities will be expressed in a Learning Management System (OpenClass) to assure initial planning rationality and continuing points of assessment and provision benchmarks. Third-party evaluators will also apply valid and reliable instruments to provide formative and summative evaluation of the grant program.

(iii) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project

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Both internal and external evaluation will collect a variety of formative and summative data. **Formative (process) evaluation** will focus on the extent to which daily project activities were implemented in a cost-effective and efficient manner to support. **Summative (outcome) evaluation** will focus on the extent to which the project has impacted the two Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measures required of all grantees.

To ensure a high-quality program with significant, long-term impact for our students the contracted evaluator will use a Utilization-Focused Evaluation (UF-E) framework. The Utilization-Focused Evaluation will include formative and summative evaluation of program impact using a mixed method approaches (qualitative and quantitative). This design actively involves users (District Staff, the Advisory Council) in interpreting findings and generating recommendations, allowing users to examine the findings and interpret implications from various perspectives with a focus on the primary intended uses by the primary intended users. Through this process the users, with assistance from the independent evaluator, will identify measurement tools most suited for measuring the impact of the program activities within the context of our community and the student populations (and will include the mandatory GPRA performance measures as discussed above). The evaluator will work with district staff and the Advisory Council to ensure the tools, data collection, and collection methods are scientifically sound. The UF-E allows users to be actively involved in the evaluation process, choosing tools and assisting with data collection, thereby facilitating the users' sense of ownership of the findings and their commitment to act on those findings, thus promoting sustainability. (Please see the attached diagram of the UF-E framework attached.) Feedback and recommendations from the quarterly meetings and/or review with the evaluator will ensure we continue to adjust our program as needed.

F. Quality of Project Evaluation

(i) Extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.

Project outcome objectives are again listed below, with corresponding qualitative and quantitative performance measures are italicized.

Objective 1: 50% of the students will gain higher levels of engagement with reading as the variety of Fountas and Pinnell leveled books become available for use at school and home for guided reading groups as evidenced by parent and student surveys, *as measured by behavioral student and parent surveys to access behavioral and attitudinal changes.*

Objective 2: 10% of students will improve to grade-level reading and writing performance as indicated by MAPS and local assessments the first year and an additional 10% the second year, as measured by WKCE outcomes.

Objective 3: Increase 10% of third grade reading and writing performance to grade level as precursor to future academic success, as measured by WKCE outcomes.

Objective 4: 50% of low-income families will participate in book giveaway programs to build their home libraries, as measured by attendance logs.

(ii) Extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes

As previously discussed, ongoing, formative evaluation of our implementation process will play a critical role in ensuring the project is continually responsive to participants' needs. The Project Advisory Board, which will meet quarterly during the life of the grant projects, with help from the external evaluation consultant, will examine data from periodic progress assessments to recommend timely changes to the day-to-day logistics of project implementation. Based on data and information shared at Board meetings, members will be able to use a consultant-developed
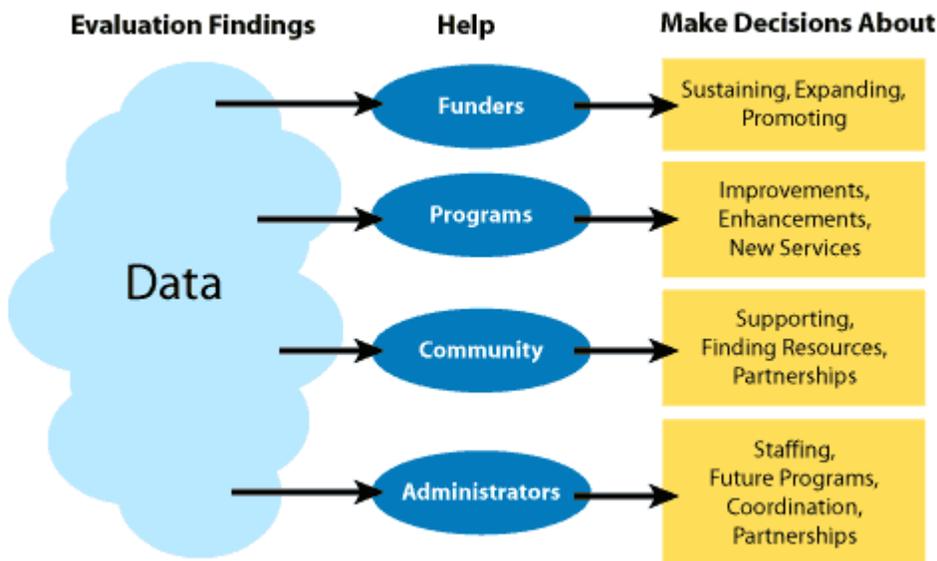
The Athens School District – Wisconsin   *24*

process including an action item form and "talking point" questions to help assess <u>program quality</u>, <u>implementation timeliness</u>, <u>cost-efficiency</u>, <u>participation</u>, and <u>overall impact</u>. These assessments will pinpoint challenges (such as low parent turnout at a particular event, or staff resistance to change in a specific building) that will in turn spark development of solutions as well as itemization of the resources needed to implement those solutions.

The Project Director will hold the ultimate responsibility for combining formative project data and summative student and parent outcome data gathered by local staff and advisory personnel with the objective measurements taken by our external evaluator to provide the most complete picture of project progress. The external evaluator will gather this data into a comprehensive annual report for the U.S. Department of Education. The project director will use this to form an annual report to be distributed to staff at each district, the School Boards, community stakeholders and project partners, and the U.S. Department of Education. Information will also be summarized with key accomplishments and outcomes in a condensed version that can be used to communicate to the communities via district newsletters, web sites, press releases and other outlets.

Utilization-Focused Evaluation

The framework of Utilization-Focused Evaluation works to get all stakeholders involved in the evaluation process. It helps make sure that evaluation is not only useful to funders by measuring successes, but also:

• Helps staff make real improvements in the program
• Helps administrators make decisions about future programs
• Helps the community make decisions about resources.

Evaluation Findings   **Help**   **Make Decisions About**

Data → Funders → Sustaining, Expanding, Promoting

Data → Programs → Improvements, Enhancements, New Services

Data → Community → Supporting, Finding Resources, Partnerships

Data → Administrators → Staffing, Future Programs, Coordination, Partnerships

Michael Patton, in his 1997 book *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, describes the process this way: "Utilization-focused program evaluation (as opposed to program evaluation in general) is evaluation done for and with specific, intended primary users for specific, intended uses."

The evaluation plan UpFront helps you create at the beginning of a project includes specific steps to gather information from program participants. Just as important, it contains a description of how we will gather information from stakeholders and how we will involve them in the process.

> *"Utilization-focused program evaluation (as opposed to program evaluation in general) is evaluation done for and with specific, intended primary users for specific, intended uses."*
> —Michael Patton

PATRICIA McKEOWN

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Grants Specialist/ Lead Evaluator: <u>GROW Grant Resources/ CESA 6, Fall of 2011 - present</u>
♦ Assist school districts, educational service agencies and other nonprofit organizations in development of evaluation plans independent of, or as part of state, federal and/or non-profit grant proposals.
♦ Conduct local, state and federal grant evaluations, including for the state *Enhancing Education through Technology (E2T2) grant, federal Carol M. White Physical Education Program grant, federal Grant for the Integration of Schools and Mental Health Systems, and federal Elementary and Secondary School Counseling grant, among others.*
♦ Develop evaluation timelines, tools and processes for qualitative and quantitative data collection.
♦ Carry out formative (ongoing) and summative (at the end of the project or a set reporting period) data analysis and reporting for grant programs and/or other programs.
♦ Utilize an array of evaluation tools and processes including online or paper surveys, interviews, focus groups, observation, etc. for most robust reporting.
♦ Prepare progress updates, interim reports, annual reports, final reports and other informational materials as may be appropriate for clients, stakeholders, and governmental reporting needs.

Grants Specialist/ Grant Writer: <u>GROW Grant Resources/ CESA 6, 2005 – present</u>
♦ Consult with school districts and agencies for grant proposal development and submission, including extensive planning and coordination with administrative teams, instructional staff, and other clients.
♦ Research clients' grant needs, eligibility, grant availability, and proposal requirements.
♦ Write private, state and federal competitive grants, from needs sections and narratives to management plans, timelines, and evaluation plans.
♦ Advise clients on multi-year grant planning, conducting needs assessments, incorporating data collection and evaluation, and initial implementation activities.
♦ Assist school districts, educational service agencies and other nonprofit organizations in development of evaluation plans independent of, or as part of state, federal and/or non-profit grant proposals.

Educator: <u>Middle school English teacher, Perry Tipler Middle School, Oshkosh, Wisconsin, 2003-2005; student teaching and practicum teaching, Madison, Wisconsin 2002-2003.</u>

♦ Taught reading, writing, literature and communication. Served as advisor to student newspaper at Tipler Middle School. Maintained classroom web page; wrote winning arts grant, allowing literacy students in grades 6-8 to write for an audience and experience a theater troupe performing selected student short stories.

News reporting, magazine writing/editing, public relations, marketing: <u>Career experience interviewing, writing, and leading planning and production efforts in the field of journalism.</u>

♦ Corporate freelance writer in the Madison area for clients such as American Family, Mead & Hunt Consulting Engineers, and the University of Wisconsin-Extension Cooperative Extension, 1993-2000.
♦ Editor at *Wisconsin Trails* magazine from 1989-93. Wrote feature articles, planned issues, made article assignments to staff and contributing writers, handled revisions.

♦ Marketing/public relations coordinator for Mead & Hunt Consulting Engineers, 1987-89. Developed proposals for state and federal engineering projects, as well as employee and client newsletters, brochures and other marketing materials.

EDUCATION

♦ Ongoing high-quality training through the American Evaluation Association (AEA), most recently through the AEA/ Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Summer Institute, June, 2012, a four-day training for evaluation professionals, with 13 sessions led by internationally recognized practitioners in the field. Hosted "K-12 Grant Evaluation" luncheon discussion table during this conference.
♦ Grants Specialist Certification, Research Associates, Columbia, South Carolina, December 2006
♦ Edgewood College, Madison, Wisconsin, English Teacher Certification, Secondary Level, Grades 6-12, 1993
♦ University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, Bachelor's of Science Degree in Journalism with Political Science minor, 1984; English major, 1986

PROFESSIONAL MEMEBERSHIP/DEVELOPMENT
♦ American Evaluation Association