

Significance

(i) The proposed Literacy Now Project will build local capacity through an expanded partnership between Kansas City Missouri School District (KCMSD) and the Kansas City Public Library System (KCPL) to improve access to literacy building resources. Specifically, the project will prepare District learning platforms for Google Fiber technology, engage parents of young children in early literacy activities, and prepare teachers to manage learning deficits at the K-2 level. Through well designed and managed activities, the project unites current initiatives to expand services and will provide new services to address unmet critical needs for KCMSD students and families.

KCMSD was organized in 1867; today, the District educates 15,826 children and employs more than 2,300 teachers and administrators. KCMSD serves a rich multi-ethnic, multi-cultural mix of students in 29 schools throughout Kansas City. More than half of these schools are located in neighborhoods with high incidence of poverty, crime and violence, and unemployment. Over 84% of students qualify for the free and reduced lunch plan¹. The District consistently battles a drop out rate of 16.6% – nearly twice the statewide average, an 89% attendance rate, and low test scores with adequate yearly progress unmet in all core areas².

Unmet needs have contributed to the District's low literacy levels and consistent underachievement in communication arts. Challenges include:

Gaps in Early Childhood Literacy: Research conducted by Literacy Kansas City indicates that 225,000 adults in the Greater Kansas City region are functionally illiterate (defined as 6th grade reading level or below)³. Children of parents with low literacy face a high risk of growing up illiterate; the inability to read and comprehend makes it hard for a person to care for a family member and prepare them to become contributing members of society. Literacy education begins

at early childhood with parents talking to and reading to their children. Early learning must begin in the home; yet most children in KCMSD schools come from families living in poverty where challenges to promoting early childhood literacy are at their highest.

The debilitating impact of poverty is seen at the earliest ages in child development; most children across the District enter Kindergarten with 1-2 year deficits in language development and school readiness. According to the 2011 Missouri Assessment Program, only 19.1% of third graders in KCMSD are considered proficient (or above) in communication arts.⁴ This data does not forecast academic success for students; the American Educational Research Association indicates that a student who can't read on grade level by third grade is four times less likely to graduate high school by age 19 than a child at third grade proficiency.⁵

In addition to the academic challenges faced by under prepared students, formal pedagogy and teacher training have not prepared District K-2 teachers with the skills or tools to make up years of lost time in literacy and language learning. Further, many district classrooms are filled with young or first-time teachers from programs such as Teach for America. Last year 32% of K-2 teachers and classroom aids had 5 years of teaching experience or less. In the past, curricular supplements were not streamlined throughout the District; teachers were not evaluated to confirm appropriate implementation of available reading materials or literacy resources.

In partnership with KCPL through the Literacy Now Project, KCMSD will improve early childhood literacy outcomes through expanded parent-child literacy activities and professional development opportunities for elementary school staff.

Access to Technology: With low literacy levels district wide across all grades, KCMSD has planned interventions to meet state performance expectations within the next two years. In previous years, teachers could individually select supplemental classroom materials at their

discretion. The District is now implementing efforts to add streamlined curricular supplements, requiring all teachers to use the computer-based Pearson Product line including Reading Street, My Sidewalks, and Plato coupled with Pearson's e-textbooks and e-workbooks to help improve literacy across all grade levels. Students with the largest academic deficiencies will benefit from extended use of the Pearson programs and other literacy building tools. Similar strategies will be implemented afterschool. Afterschool access to the Pearson Products is a necessity to meet the District's ambitious goals.

According to a recent survey of Kansas City area households released by Google Inc., nearly 25% did not have access to broadband internet⁶. Those without home access must rely on connectivity at work or through public locations such as internet cafes or the public library. KCPL reports that its 800 computer terminal seats at its nine branches are rarely vacant. The library estimates that on any given day roughly 40% of computer station users don't have access to broadband at home, either because they don't have a computer or they can't afford monthly internet bills.

Despite current limited access to internet outside of school hours, Kansas City is home to the promising new Google Fiber technology which will revolutionize the way our citizens utilize the internet. Google Fiber is an experimental high speed broadband internet network using fiber-optic communication; Google selected Kansas City as the location for the unveiling of the new technology. Google Fiber will offer several pricing options, one of which provides up to 7 years of free internet access after a \$300 initial construction fee – available with monthly \$25 payments – to increase access for a wider range of Kansas Citizens. With consideration to all residents and their ability to obtain service, Connecting for Good Inc. – a non-profit organization dedicated to closing the digital divide in Kansas City - is currently in negotiations with Google

for a sliding construction fee or a fundraising plan for poor Kansas City communities. The first homes are expected to be connected in September of 2012 and progress city wide.

As neighborhoods join the effort, schools will be outfitted with the Google Fiber technology. The District must examine how to utilize this technological revolution to improve learning outcomes for their students, particularly in literacy, while ensuring that all students have access to literacy building resources.

In partnership with KCPL through the Literacy Now Project, KCMSD will expand student access to technology by extending school library hours in four locations across the district and investigate new technology learning platforms to support new Google Fiber connectivity.

(ii) Google Fiber technology is a promising new technological advancement for Kansas City schools and students; no other city is in the midst of this technology growth. Fiber-optic connection will provide internet connection speeds up to 100 times faster than the average broadband. In preparation for the expansion of internet service city wide, KCMSD will pilot the use of Google internet tablets to help develop literacy and expand literacy building resources.

The tablets will be used by students who participate in the Community Literacy Center book clubs. The tablets, loaded with e-books and an application called My Library, will allow students to read loaded e-books at anytime and use My Library as a social media networking application to discuss book club materials. At a time when students are consistently plugged into social media applications such as twitter, facebook and instagram, the Literacy Now Project will utilize the social media wave to entice students to use internet based tools to improve their skills and abilities. By connecting students through a social media literacy platform, the District aims to increase student learning and improve attitudes towards reading.

Tablets will also be loaded with Brainfuse - an internet based platform for one-on-one homework assistance, tutoring, and study tools - and Pearson Products e-textbooks and e-workbooks. Book club facilitators and CLC Directors will work with teachers and coach students on optimal usage inside and outside of the classroom. Survey feedback will guide technology development District wide.

KCMSD anticipates that the use of these tablets will help students connect with learning resources and school activities. As education models evolve, the tablet can adapt academic activities in a way that continuously connects old and new – linking students to learning through activities they enjoy. The Literacy Now Project will test the use of tablets to troubleshoot issues and challenges, and create a plan for dissemination District wide – a promising new strategy for literacy development at KCMSD.

Quality of the project design

(i) KCMSD based the goals, objectives, and outcomes for the Literacy Now Project on local need data and evidence based research. Community and District assessments have documented the need for improvements in early childhood literacy and technology and literacy development. Based on these assessments, the District has adopted of the following **goals** for the Literacy Now Project: 1. Utilize existing partners and new technology to assist with combating literacy deficiencies in the student population; and 2. improve early childhood literacy levels.

With these goals in mind, the District assembled a task force of teachers, staff, and administrators to assess current school resources and identify research-based programs or materials that would help fill critical gaps and meet project goals. The task force determined that goals can be met through the implementation of three focused activities throughout the grant period. First, KCMSD will create four Community Literacy Centers (CLCs) at current school

libraries, open to parents and supervised students through extended afterschool library hours. The Centers will provide internet-based solutions for literacy development, academic achievement, job readiness and life skills during out of school hours. Additionally, the CLCs will be the site of new technology-based student interventions. Second, KCMSD will provide Professional Development opportunities for K-2 teachers and reading specialists through Pearson Product training, educational coaches and reading strategies classes. Finally, KCPL will provide parent education through the Building a Community of Readers Program (BCR) offering story-time and incentivized book distribution. Through these activities the following **objectives** emerged:

1. *Engage students in technology-based learning platforms that will motivate them to improve literacy (Goals 1 & 2).* KCMSD will create CLCs at four schools across the District. Each CLC will provide services to 100 elementary school students from 3:30pm to 6:00pm, 3 times a week on regular school days. CLCs will provide elementary school students with access to Pearson Products literacy development programs (Reading Street and My Sidewalks) which will further reinforce the lessons newly implemented into classroom curriculum. In research evaluations, early elementary students (K-2) using Pearson's Reading Street Program significantly outperform students using other interventions on the GRADE assessment; 2nd grade students using Reading Street significantly outperformed students using other interventions on the MAT8 Writing assessment. Additionally, 1st grade and 5th grade students using the program have shown significantly more positive attitudes about reading on the Reading Academic Attitude Survey when compared to students using other interventions⁷ (See Appendix A).

CLCs will also offer the Brainfuse internet technologies in afterschool learning centers to help students with homework, engage them in literacy games and provide study resources.

The program offers interactive literacy games - including the ability to make hangman games, word finds, flash cards, crossword puzzles and more out of vocabulary lists – and 24-hour one-on-one homework help and tutoring for students in grades K-12. In a recent Colorado Department of Education study (2009), Brainfuse ranked first among all tutoring providers in both math and reading – with a math improvement rate of 30% and a reading improvement rate of 39.3% (See Appendix A). Brainfuse is currently provided to the community through the Public Library system but is highly under-utilized because teachers, students and parents are unaware of its presence or capabilities or are unable to utilize it. Bringing Brainfuse to the CLCs will provide another avenue for student growth and academic achievement.

In addition, a book club program will take place in each literacy center. The book club will act as a pilot program to examine student use of Google tablets. Each CLC will have a book club that can accommodate 60 high school students run by a school District librarian or teacher once a week. Culturally diverse, age and reading level appropriate texts will be selected and provided to students as e-books on Google tablets. Students will be required to respond to questions posted by the book club director as well as other students through an academic social media site called My Library.

2. *Provide resources for parents to prepare young children for school and cultivate literacy at home (Goal 2).* Currently, KCPL offers a program within its nine library branches specifically designed to promote the lifelong love of reading as well as help improve early childhood literacy levels and school readiness. The program, Building a Community of Readers (BCR), provides story-time for children and an incentivized book distribution – for every 20 books a child reads with a partner they earn a book to keep. The library's story-time

3. *Offer learning opportunities for teachers to build skills and tools aimed at improving early childhood literacy (Goal 2).* KCMSD will provide K-2 teachers and school reading specialists with several professional development opportunities. Currently, the District has 5 schools receiving School Improvement Grant funds that will provide comprehensive Pearson Product training and access to educational coaches. Training will be administered by Pearson Products representatives inside the classroom to help teachers implement best practices of the literacy development materials. Educational coaches will circulate through the classrooms, advising teachers and working to develop common language of teaching, advancing focused feedback and practice, and ensuring understanding of foundational teacher-student relationship building and student engagement. The coaches will be trained by Marzano Research Laboratories LLC Consultants, utilizing the theories and methodologies presented in *The Art and Science of Teaching*, a framework created from Dr. Marzano's educational research findings. Content coaching methodology focuses on integrating, practicing and applying flexibility and creativity in teaching practices while attending to student learning, rather than instructional strategies. Funding through the Literacy Now Project will expand this comprehensive training package to five more District elementary schools that currently receive only basic Pearson Product training. Schools will be selected based on the K-2 reading and communication arts state assessment results; schools with the lowest levels of K-2 proficiency will be provided with the comprehensive training package.

Each KCMSD elementary school has a reading specialist who circulates throughout the school to assist teachers and students with literacy building activities inside the classroom. To further support K-2 teachers, 20 reading specialists will be offered a continuing education opportunity through the University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC) Department of Education. KCMSD will provide stipends for an online reading strategies class offered during the summer. The class will reinforce the message that reading specialists need to convey the value of teaching students how to read, write, and comprehend the subject matter to faculty while providing teaching strategies in the content areas. The course will focus on the rationale for building literacy skills and teach several strategies relevant to different content areas. Credits earned through the class will count towards additional certification programs at UMKC if the reading specialists decide to continue seeking professional development on their own.

Anticipated project **outcomes** include:

1. 40% of 3rd grade students will meet or exceed proficiency on the State reading or language arts assessments will increase by the end of the grant cycle
2. 40% of the elementary level students who participate in CLC activities at least 3 times per week will meet or exceed proficiency on the State reading or language arts assessment by the end of the school year.
3. 75% of parents will indicate that they have increased literacy development activities in the home for children ages birth to 3rd grade.
4. 80% of students who participate in CLC activities will report more positive attitudes on the Reading Academic Attitude Survey by the end of the grant cycle.

5. KCMSD will develop a plan for district wide use of Google Fiber technology to improve learning outcomes.

(ii) The Literacy Now Project will be coordinated with other community-wide efforts to improve literacy throughout the District and work with other publicly funded programs to achieve project outcomes. These programs include:

School Improvement Grants (SIG) – Grant funds are currently in 8 of the Districts Tier I and Tier II school buildings. Over the next three years SIG's will provide support for in-school literacy programs to incorporate Pearson Development Products including Reading Street, My Sidewalks, and Plato, to generate high levels of student performance in reading, writing and speaking as required by Common Core State Standards (CCSS). From Pre-K to 3rd grade there is a strong focus on the development of oral language as a functional building block for literacy. From 4th grade through high school the programs provide age and level-specific reader and writer workshops with the goal of motivating students to become independent and accomplished readers. SIG funds will also provide two supplemental teachers and an instructional coach for each school. The Literacy Now Project will use Pearson tools in the CLCs currently provided by SIG and other District funding.

1 to 1 Technology Initiative – KCMSD Technology Division is currently involved in a research and planning process to achieve a 1:1 student technology throughout the District. They have already established one domain for the District offering free e-mail, Google Drives (storage), video conferencing, Google for Educators, and Google sites. Additionally, several devices have been evaluated with regard to the ease and challenges of District-wide distribution. This Fall the initiative will complete the following: 1) explore funding sources, 2) generate an action plan, 3) ensure teacher buy-in, 4) establish a professional development plan, 5) develop a communication

plan and program evaluation, and 6) determine sustainability of District wide 1:1 technology. A pilot, through the Literacy Now Project, will use student book clubs to test the viability of these resources for large scale dissemination and provide readiness experiences to staff, parents and students.

Kansas City Public Library (KCPL) – The District has a formal agreement with KCPL, working with the Technology Division, to provide technology support with the proposed outcome of expanding current library catalogue service and developing programs for the use of e-books and e-textbooks. KCPL’s current contract with KCMSD will allow for the Literacy Now Project to provide BrainFuse to CLC school libraries at no charge to the District. The library also has additional programming to help develop literacy that KCMSD will access under this collaboration. The Literacy Now Project will incorporate KCPL best practices for developing early childhood literacy and motivating older students to read.

Parent University - The goal of this program is to enhance parent knowledge and skills by providing educational services that parents can use to prepare their students for successful school transitions, and promote student academic success. KCPL’s BCR programming at CLCs will compliment Parent University strategies by enhancing parent knowledge and skills through early childhood literacy training and materials.

Local Investment Commission (LINC) – LINC provides leadership and influence to engage the Kansas City Community in creating the best service delivery system to support and strengthen children, families and individuals, holding that system accountable, and changing public attitudes towards the system. A KCMSD partner since 1992, services include afterschool and summer education programs. The Literacy Now Project will partner with LINC to assist with community outreach and recruit elementary students for CLC programs.

Partners in Education (PIE) - PIE began in the fall of 2010 and links area businesses, places of worship, community organizations and individuals with volunteer opportunities in schools to provide enriched learning opportunities to students. Through area programs such as YouthFriends, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Awesome Ambitions, Collaborative Response and Lead to Read, the District engaged 2,834 volunteers who provided 24,555 hours of service in 2011.

Turn the Page - KCMSD is collaborating with the Kansas City Missouri Mayor's office on the Turn the Page Literacy initiative. The District will have two VISTA volunteers dedicated to recruiting, training and placing tutors for students in grades K-3 to support the literacy campaign. The Literacy Now Project will offer PIE participants and volunteer tutors increased access to valuable reading tools and additional avenues to serve children in the Kansas City community.

(iii) The Literacy Now Project is well aligned with KCMSD's current and future efforts to improve teaching and learning in support of rigorous academic standards for students. District leadership has worked over the last several months to establish a Re-Accreditation Implementation Plan to be completed by June 2013 as required by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The plan includes goals for student achievement, college and career readiness, classroom management and student behavior, and student attendance and drop out prevention. Specifically, KCMSD aims to meet academic growth requirements in order to qualify for Safe Harbor among 8 of 16 subgroups across Communication Arts and Mathematics on the SY12 Adequate Yearly Progress Report (AYP). This would require a minimum of 1.5-2.0 years of student growth per year, per grade level. By the end of the 2012-13 school year, KCMSD must raise proficiency levels of students to 37% on Communication Arts and 35% on Mathematics year-end state assessments. Additionally, all District students must

demonstrate a minimum of one year of growth across one year of instruction in reading and mathematics as measure by locally administered scaled assessments.

District focus areas, particularly literacy development, include two key activities: 1) instituting unified supplemental learning tools across all District schools that are well aligned with curriculum, and 2) extensive professional development for teachers, including the hiring and training of instructional coaches. The Literacy Now Project will expand access to supplemental learning tools and focus professional development on teachers who have the greatest impact on early childhood learning.

(iv) Ongoing performance feedback and continuous improvements are key elements to the success of the Literacy Now Project. The Project Director will coordinate efforts with the Data Collection Specialist to distribute and collect Mid-semester and End-semester Parent, Teacher and Student survey's about CLC activities. Feedback from these surveys along with CLC attendance data and student acuity scores will be used to help evaluate the project each semester. Evaluations will be compiled into a semester review, summarizing the intended outcomes, successes, and challenges of the project. The reviews will outline improvements to be made for the following semester, and will be provided to the District Superintendant and subsequently to the community through the KCMSD website. These reports will provide a platform for continuous improvement while helping students, parents and staff realize student progress.

Quality of the project services

(i) Research documents substantial differences in the reading and writing ability of children as a function of their socio-economic level. Among U.S. Black and Hispanic students (two groups who experience disproportionate rates of poverty) the percentages of Grade 4 students reading below the basic level are 64% and 60%, respectively⁸. Unfortunately, Kansas City has

historically been a racially and socio-economically divided town, specifically with regard to the isolation, lack of opportunity, and exclusion of the city's Black population. Most Blacks remain highly concentrated in the urban core, held there by poverty, limited public transit and lack of employment opportunities. The poverty rate of Blacks in Kansas City is 22.5% and centralized, while the White poverty rate is 5.8% and spread geographically throughout the city.

The effects of the Kansas City's racial division stretch beyond the demographics of a particular neighborhood. As a District that has struggled to meet state accreditation standards and AYP scores, KCMSD has become part of that divide. Population data from 2010 show that 29,555 children between the ages 5-17 live within KCMSD lines⁹, yet the District only serves 15,826 students. Families with resources have moved their children to charter schools and private schools, or have relocated out of the city to neighborhoods with higher performing school districts; those without the means, remain in the KCMSD system. A glance at District student demographics provides further evidence of the great divide; the District overwhelmingly serves students in the clutches of poverty – over 84% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch – and minority students – 3.0% Asian, 62.6% Black, 25.3% Hispanic, 0.2% Indian, and 8.9% White. Based on national data and learning trends, it is no surprise that KCMSD student literacy levels are low. A District-wide intervention will attack disparities suffered by underrepresented members of our community.

Through the Literacy Now Project. CLCs will be placed in four different locations across the district. One CLC will be placed in each of the District's four zones ensuring easy access for all students. All students will be welcomed and encouraged to participate in the CLC. Each CLC will be able to serve 100 students, three times per week, consistently over the semester. KCMSD will partner with LINC to ensure consistent student attendance, becoming a regular part of the

after-school program. Additionally, the Outreach Specialist will present bi-lingual information and materials; translators will be utilized for home visits or community presentations. Further the District will provide English Language Learning instructors at CLCs to assist students and parents with navigating literacy building activities based on the assessed need.

CLCs will provide access to technology that is currently limited or unobtainable for underrepresented students in the community. During afterschool and after-work hours, public libraries are at capacity, resulting in long waiting periods for students. CLCs will be a resource for students to access computers for literacy learning activities, homework assistance and tutoring. While not all District schools are receiving Tier I and Tier II money, all will have the Pearson Product line in the classrooms within next year. The CLC will provide access for all District students to literacy tools offered in the classroom. Further, introduction of the Google tablet into the book club activities will expose students to advanced technology. The District anticipates a high demand for program participation and will collect applications from students with a required letter of recommendation from a school librarian or teacher. Students who complete the application process will be placed into the book club on a first-come, first-serve basis.

(ii) Several Pearson Products and Brainfuse studies have shown marked improvements in literacy scores and motivation to read for K-12 students. The programs have additionally been evaluated by the District's task force and align well with both curriculum and elements of the state testing requirements. With current academic standings, students must show marked increases in learning and language development by at least 1-2 years of growth in each grade level, for each school year if the District is to meet their goals for accreditation. Curriculum is not enough to fill the gaps, and in-school access to Pearson Products may not provide enough

time to fully supplement the suggested 1.5 hours per day for maximum results. Providing access to these proven tools outside of school helps fill critical gaps.

Further, professional development activities will supplement the use of technology resources available to teachers in the classroom. Activities will take place in the classroom and facilitate the improved use of literacy building tools. With many District teachers having little experience with the Pearson Product line, this professional development service is necessary to help teachers utilize the programs properly and effectively.

(iii) KCMSD considered the time commitment and requirements of teachers when selecting professional development services for K-2 teachers. During the school year teachers have limited time and energy to allocate towards improving their teaching ability, presenting challenges to professional development. The three strategies selected – Pearson Product training, Marzano instructional coaching, and UMKC reading strategies classes – would take place either during the normal school day or in the summer months when teachers are not actively teaching. The three-tiered professional development strategy also offers diversified learning environments that assist in developing a strong skills set. Both Pearson Product training and Marzano instructional coaching are based on research findings and best practices with relation to the quality, intensity and duration of the training exercises. Further, the instructional coaches offer consistent evaluations of teacher performance that will help track subsequent improvements in teaching practice as a result of the District’s K-2 professional development activities.

Adequacy of resources

(i) The Literacy Now Project aligns best practices across several key initiatives within KCMSD. Identified objectives and project activities span teachers, parents and students – across all grade levels - maximizing the reach of the project while contributing to minimized expenses.

Costs are shared among several District departments and multiple funding streams. The Project Director is well connected to other District initiatives and has incorporated cost saving activities into the project design when possible without sacrificing the scope of project reach. Continued efforts will be made to promote cost saving initiatives as project design is continuously examined and revised throughout the duration of the grant period.

(ii) The District aims to serve 640 students per year through the CLCs, including 240 students through the technology rich book club activities; 100 parent-child pairs per year through BCR; 5 elementary schools (KCMSD averages 14.5 teachers per elementary school); and 10 reading specialists per year through professional development activities. Overall, the project is designed to serve at least 1,866 participants over 24 months with an average cost of [REDACTED] in IAL funding per participant. The Literacy Now Project is a comprehensive and well-planned collaborative effort among the District and community partners to improve youth literacy levels throughout Kansas City. The project will help the District combat low student achievement and bring together existing efforts to eliminate low literacy levels among students. The Literacy Now Project unifies students, parents and teachers in a way that provides diversified strategies for literacy development. Students will be provided supplemental learning platforms that encourage reading and improve attitudes about reading; parents of young children will be provided education and activities proven to raise literacy levels prior to entrance into school; and teachers will have access to improved resources and strategies for developing early childhood literacy within the classroom.

Quality of the management plan

(i) The management plan below outlines organized and collaborative efforts for meeting project goals and objectives. Roles are clearly defined with all communication and fiscal

responsibilities running through the Project Director. The project will begin in October of 2012 and run through September of 2014. The management plan is as follows:

Responsibilities	Personnel	Timeline	Milestones
Assemble CLC Directors and Book Club Facilitators	Project Director	Oct 2012	4 CLC Directors, 4 Book Club Facilitators
Identify additional schools to receive professional development	Project Director	Oct 2012	5 schools selected and scheduled
Assess school library, purchase needed equipment and materials	Project Director, CLC Directors, Technology Director	Nov 2012	All Equipment purchased
Align CLC Staff and Volunteers	CLC Directors	Nov 2012	2 Staff and 10 volunteers each
Schedule KCPL activities, coordinate with KCPL Staff	CLC Directors, Literacy Coordinator	Nov 2012	1 Staff for BCR activities each
Promote CLC, Student/Parent/Teacher Recruitment and Retention	Outreach Specialist, Literacy Coordinator	Nov 2012 to Sept 2014	Obtain and retain 1866 participants
Install/launch new technology; continued support throughout project	Technology Director	Dec 2012 to Sept 2014	All Equipment installed and up to date
Begin CLC Activities	CLC Directors, Book Club Facilitators;	Jan 2013 to	640 students served

Responsibilities	Personnel	Timeline	Milestones
	KCPL Staff	June 2013	
Identify Reading Specialists for UMKC Professional Development	Project Director, Outreach Specialist	Mar 2013	10 Reading Specialists enrolled for summer class
Mid-Semester Feedback Survey	Data Collection Specialist	Mar 2013	50% response rate
End of Semester Feedback Survey	Data Collection Specialist	May 2013	50% response rate
Feedback review, plan for next semester, make necessary adjustments to activities, personnel and resources, write assessments	Project Director, CLC Directors, Technology Director, Data Collection Specialist, Outreach Specialist, Literacy Coordinator	June 2013 to July 2013	Literacy Now Semester I Review provided to community and Superintendent
Identify additional schools to receive professional development	Project Director	Aug 2013	5 schools selected and scheduled
Begin CLC Activities	CLC Directors, Book Club Facilitators, KCPL Staff	Aug 2013 to Dec 2013	640 students served

Additional CLC and Professional Development activities are ongoing throughout the duration of the funding period. The project will complete 3 consecutive semesters of CLC and Professional Development activities with the timeline, evaluation and reporting consistent throughout.

(ii) KCMSD has carefully selected the appropriate staff to coordinate and facilitate all project activities and provided them with support to allow them to commit adequate time to the project.

The following represent key personnel in the Literacy Now Project:

Project Director – Mr. Lewis Gowin (0.2 FTE)

Mr. Gowin currently serves as KCMSD’s Director MSIP Accountability Plan, Implementation Plan, and Director of Professional Development. His current responsibilities align with the intent and objectives of the Literacy Now Project, focusing on securing needed professional development and implementation of the MSIP Accountability Plan. He will serve as the Project Director and is charged with oversight of all project activities and fiscal management.

CLC Directors – TBA (7.5 hours per week for 35 weeks)

The Project Director will hire 4 CLC Directors from the staff of District school librarians. Each CLC Director will report directly to the Project Director and be charged with daily program administration, aligning of appropriate staff and volunteers, planning and scheduling of CLC activities, and tracking of student attendance. Hours dedicated to this project will be outside of daily in-school hours and will not conflict with current job responsibilities.

Book Club Facilitators – TBA (1 hour per week for 35 weeks)

The CLC Directors and Project Director will recruit additional teachers or school librarians to facilitate student book club activities at each of the CLCs. These individuals will be trained on the new Google tablet technology and lead students through discussions and activities using the

e-reader and My Library social networking application. Their time commitment to the project will occur after school hours.

Technology Director – Mr. Craig Nulan (0.1 FTE)

Mr. Nulan currently serves as the IT Operations Manager for KCMSD managing the data center, all production services, network and telecommunications systems in addition to network security and technical support. He will serve as the Literacy Now Project Technology Director ensuring that all technology products are appropriately installed for student use and have appropriate security protections. Additionally, he will lead the team responsible for compiling a plan for 1:1 technology District-wide based on results from the book club Google tablet pilot study.

Literacy Coordinator – Ms. Crystal Faris – KCPL Director of Teen Services

Ms. Faris will serve as the coordinator of library services for the Literacy Now Project. Ms. Faris will schedule and staff BCR activities at each of the four literacy centers. She will be the critical link aligning KCMSD activities with initiatives and resources at the Public Library.

Data Collection Specialist – Mr. Michael Reynolds (0.1 FTE)

Mr. Reynolds currently serves as the Data Analyst/Project Manager with nine years of experience working with KCMSD. Within the Literacy Now Project he will provide services such as survey creation, distribution, and collection, retrieval of CLC attendance and student acuity data, and compilation of data for semester feedback reviews.

Outreach Specialist – TBA (8 hours per week for 40 weeks)

The Project Director will select a current District staff member to act as the Outreach Specialist. This position will be charged with promoting Literacy Now Project activities via emails, promotional materials, presentations at community events, outreach to community partners etc.

The position will also provide assistance with recruitment and retention of all students, parents, teachers and volunteers.

(iii) The Literacy Now Project combines many of the current KCMSD initiatives working simultaneously to improve academic performance and technology District-wide. The task force charged with developing the District's re-accreditation plan has spent months evaluating and analyzing what products and implementations would best meet District goals. Gowin, the Literacy Now Project Director, was at the forefront of this taskforce and played an integral part in selecting the Pearson Product line Marzano Laboratories LLC; both were selected based on clear, evidence-based studies that showed improvements in youth literacy levels.

Similarly, KCMSD's Technology Division has spent months investigating opportunities for implementation of a 1:1 student-technology ratio with the fast approaching Google Fiber technology. Evaluations of technology resources have aided in the selection of the Google tablet to best fit student need, project requirements, and district budget. Testing the tablets through the book club activities will further ensure the appropriate use of high-quality technology products to promote student learning.

KCPL, the Literacy Now Project's link to services for parents and young children, has been providing services through BCR since 2011. Well-trained staff provide activities based on the Every Child Ready to Read at Your Library (ECRR) model. ECRR is a research-based early literacy initiative of the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Services to Children, providing skills and strategies that parents and caregivers can use to help children get ready to read. Based on the following practices: talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing, BCR has been continuously embraced by members of the community, often exceeding capacity.

Quality of the project evaluation

(i) The Literacy Now Project evaluation was designed to measure outcomes linked to project goals and objectives, based on needs related to early childhood literacy and technology and literacy development. Intended outcomes of the project will provide qualitative and quantitative data through the following measures:

Early Childhood Literacy: Under KCMSD's Literacy Now Project, early childhood literacy interventions, including CLC activities, BCR programming, and teacher professional development are tracked by the following outcomes: 1) 40% of 3rd grade students will meet or exceed proficiency on the State reading or language arts assessments by the end of the grant cycle; 2) 40% of the elementary level students who participate in CLC activities at least 3 times per week will meet or exceed proficiency on the State reading or language arts assessment by the end of the school year; and 3) 75% of parents will indicate that they have increased literacy development activities in the home for children ages birth to 3rd grade.

State reading and language arts assessments will be the quantitative backbone of determining success and the focus of literacy development by third grade. State reading assessments are completed at the end of each school year and reported to KCMSD by August. Further data will be collected through parent surveys to determine if the BCR has impacted literacy learning at home, including specific activities it has helped develop, and what contributes to parent's increase of literacy activities. Surveys will be collected twice each semester, once at mid-semester and at the end of the semester. Surveys will be created, distributed and collected by the Data Collection Specialist.

Technology and Literacy Development: Technology and Literacy Development activities through the Literacy Now Project include CLC activities and high school student book clubs. Outcomes measuring these interventions include the following: 1) 80% of students who

participate in CLC activities will report more positive attitudes on the Reading Academic Attitude Survey by the end of the grant cycle; and 2) KCMSD will develop a plan for district-wide use of Google Fiber technology to improve learning outcomes.

Great attention will be focused on the use of student book clubs as a pilot to expand Google tablet technology District-wide. Qualitative data will be collected through student, teacher, and parent surveys, regarding the use of the tablets and expansion of e-learning devices. Surveys will be distributed twice a semester – mid-semester and end-semester – by the Data Collection Specialist. Quantitative data collected through the Reading Academic Attitude Survey, tracking student attitudes towards reading, will be used to develop a plan to increase the use of technology throughout KCMSD. This measure will have a pre-test and post-test schedule. This investigation will come at a critical time as Google Fiber technology is introduced to the Kansas City community. Lessons learned and best practices can be easily disseminated to other school districts as Google Fiber extends throughout the nation.

All data will be collected by the Data Collection Specialist and analyzed in semester feedback reports used to guide continuous project evaluation. Reports and raw data will be provided at the end of each project year to the Resource Development Institute (RDI) - Kansas City's Leader for Evaluation, Research and Consultation Services – to conduct the project evaluation. RDI has a 50-year history of providing community research and evaluation and assisting organizations in maximizing the effectiveness of programs. RDI will provide an objective analysis on all project activities and manage all grant reporting requirements with assistance from the Project Director and Data Collection Specialist.

(ii) Continuous feedback is necessary to the success and continued progress of the Literacy Now Project. Several methods of evaluation are in place to provide consistent performance feedback and guide action steps. Data collected includes:

Evaluation Tool	Administered By	Frequency
Student Survey	CLC Directors, Book Club Facilitators	Mid/End Semester
Reading Academic Attitude Survey	CLC Directors, Book Club Facilitators	Pre-test/Post-test Semester
Parent Survey	Literacy Coordinator	Mid/End Semester
Teacher Survey	Data Collection Specialist	Mid/End Semester
Student Acuity Data	Data Collection Specialist	3 X per year
Project Attendance	CLC Directors, Book Club Facilitators, Literacy Coordinator	Daily

The Data Collection Specialist will create a brief overview of project progress based on completed surveys, to be discussed with Key staff and assembled in the semester feedback report. These reports will be provided to Superintendent Green, who is heavily invested in the development of early childhood literacy strategies. He is also actively involved in the Kansas City Mayor's Turn the Page literacy program that will serve children in multiple school districts across the bi-state Kansas City metropolitan area; evidence of success from the Literacy Now Project will be shared with this program. Additionally, the Literacy Now Project will yield a development plan for 1:1 student-technology systems to be used with Google Fiber technology. This plan can easily be disseminated to help other schools and districts prepare for the emerging Google Fiber.