Abstract

Project objectives and activities: In a state with one of the highest child poverty rates, Louisiana's students are among the most disadvantaged in the nation. *Literacy Is For Everyone (LIFE) Promise* represents Louisiana's plan to effectively ensure these children receive effective literacy instruction.

Built upon research-based best practices and modeled after the state's highly successful K-12 Pilot, *LIFE Promise* will meet the following objectives: 1) Improve school readiness and success through grade 12 in the area of language and literacy development for disadvantaged students, 2) Enable data-based decision-making to improve instructional practices, policies, and outcomes for all students, ensuring disadvantaged students receive maximum benefits, and 3) use technology to address student learning challenges, to increase student engagement and achievement, and to increase teacher effectiveness, ensuring the needs of disadvantaged populations are particularly addressed.

LIFE Promise will advance and implement the Louisiana Comprehensive Literacy Plan (LACLiP). LACLiP is a framework for comprehensive and cohesive literacy instruction beginning at birth and ensuring the best literacy outcomes for Louisiana's students through 12th grade. The plan outlines clear, measurable steps for building effective literacy instruction from birth and is supported by high-quality professional development. Data-driven decision-making is integral to every component of the plan, and technologies to support student engagement and teacher effectiveness are clearly outlined in every phase of the plan serving every age level from birth to 12th grade.

The State will fund subgrantees who propose implementation of LACLiP in a feeder system, identifying a cluster of ECEPs and schools that are likely to serve the same children as they progress through their education. The goal is to create a replicable model providing a continuum of literacy instruction with a commitment to shared responsibility for ensuring literacy development for each child from birth through 12th grade. Successful subgrantees will demonstrate inclusion of the greatest number

of disadvantaged students, incorporation of families into literacy activities, and active partnerships with community-based resources to support children and families.

Applicable priorities:

Priority 1: Improving Learning Outcomes – *LIFE Promise* is built on Louisiana's evidence-based comprehensive literacy plan to improve literacy outcomes from birth to 12th grade.

Priority 2: Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making – Data-based decision-making is central to *LIFE Promise*. Proposed activities include the integration of outcomes and assessment methods to support this, as well as training and professional development to ensure its appropriate use.

Competitive Preference Priority: Effective Use of Technology – Technology is woven into every component of *LIFE Promise* to enhance student engagement and improve teacher effectiveness as a way to improve learning outcomes and to support data-based decision-making.

Proposed project outcomes:

1: *LIFE Promise* will enhance children's literacy outcomes and demonstrate best practices for program implementation, teacher characteristics, classroom quality, and student characteristics.

2: *LIFE Promise* will provide high quality professional development leading to high quality educational services.

3: *LIFE Promise* will enhance the use of data driven decision-making by teachers and program staff.

Number of participants to be served: The project will serve an estimated 40,000 children during the first full year and at least 60,000 in the second, with increases of 5,000 children in subsequent years.

Number and location of proposed sites: LDOE will serve 26-31 LEA-led cluster groups which will be determined specifically through the subgrant application process. Through *LIFE Promise*, one-third to one-half of the State's LEAs, including charters, will successfully implement a cohesive and coherent evidence-based literacy plan serving children from birth to 12th grade.

A. Quality of State-level activities

i. Required State-level activities and alignment with the State literacy plan

a. Comprehensive State literacy plan

In the fall of 2006, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) developed a statewide literacy

plan and used it to advance a kindergarten through 12th grade pilot of the *Louisiana Literacy Plan:*

Ensuring Literacy for All. This small five-year pilot program was successfully funded through a

competitive grant using state funds. In recent years, LDOE leveraged education trust funds and Federal

funds, such as IDEA, to continue the program for its intended five-year duration. Each LEA in the

program had a complete feeder system spanning kindergarten through 12th grade. Five LEAs were

selected the first year; the program expanded to three more LEAs the following year. As a result, 8 LEAs

with 24 schools participated in the pilot, which is ending this year.

The pilot, which informed the design for this proposal, produced exceptional results. Students in the

pilot program showed greater gains than those in non-pilot schools. The specific improvement in scores is

detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: LEAP and *i*LEAP ELA percent gains in students scoring Basic or above from 2007 to 2010 in K-12 Pilot Schools and non-pilot schools

ELA	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade	6th Grade	9th Grade
K-12 Literacy Pilot Gain 2007-10	**11%**	**9%**	**14%**	**12%**	**13%**
Statewide Gain 2007-10	3%	0%	9%	9%	7%

Louisiana has incorporated lessons learned to revise the literacy plan with stronger emphasis on

adolescent literacy. Revisions and modifications have progressively been made to improve the plan,

which now includes a strong framework for literacy beginning at birth. The result is Louisiana's

Comprehensive Literacy Plan (LACLiP), available on LDOE's website and in print. LACLiP is

grounded in research that supports literacy as an absolute essential set of skills for success in life.[1-6] The

plan serves as a framework to align policies, resources, and practices for effective literacy instruction. It advances the state's instructional goal of ensuring all students are college- and career-ready, despite any disadvantage. LACLiP strengthens the Louisiana Education Reform Plan, as literacy is a key component in every reform strategy from teacher effectiveness and support to data-driven decision making that informs policy and continuous improvement.

LACLiP recognizes that literacy is a continuous developmental progression from birth through high school. It is comprised of three levels: Emergent, Elementary, and Adolescent. The plan addresses different emphases at each level, while underscoring the importance of transitions for students at critical times (i.e., transition to kindergarten and self-contained classroom instruction and from self-contained classrooms to content area classes with different teachers for each class).

LACLiP is composed of five interconnected core components important to improving literacy:

- Leadership and Sustainability: Creating shared leadership and plans for organizing, implementing, and sustaining an effective approach to literacy;

- Standards-Based Curriculum: Examining Louisiana's Standards and Comprehensive Curriculum through the lens of literacy;

- Assessment System: Identifying and using valid and reliable measures to assess literacy progress, and enabling data-driven decision making;

- Instruction and Intervention (RTI): Implementing research-based strategies, promoting active engagement, and establishing systems of support; and

- Professional Learning and Resources: Developing learning opportunities, resources, and coordinated support services that enhance literacy learning for children and educators.

The five core components are reflected and outlined in clear, identifiable actions. Emergent literacy describes the development of literacy from birth when communication and language develop within

social interactions. Building on emergent literacy, elementary literacy refers to the development of literacy from kindergarten to 3rd grade, when formal literacy instruction begins. Adolescent literacy continues the development from 4th grade through high school when students face increasingly challenging or advanced text in different disciplines. It is important that school-based implementation of any level considers the other levels.

Technology is a critical tool in all components of the plan. In a high-quality assessment system, technology is used to collect, analyze, and disseminate timely information, as appropriate, to teachers, principals, families, and other key stakeholders to make decisions that improve teaching and learning in all settings. In professional development, cutting-edge technology increases teacher effectiveness through professional networking, e-mentoring, and self-directed online learning. Instructionally, technology allows access to a myriad of resources to support diverse learning, such as Universal Design for Learning techniques and LDOE's nationally recognized web-based Access Guide.

LACLiP provides schools and early childhood education providers (ECEPs) with a comprehensive, evidence-based guide to implement effective strategies for advancing literacy. It addresses clear roles for principals and superintendents to support and advance literacy. It includes a Literacy Capacity Survey at each level. The survey serves as a starting point for taking stock of current practices and resources, and identifying strengths and challenges. Site-based leadership teams use the results of the literacy survey, as well as other sources of data, including student achievement results, to prioritize decisions and actions for implementing a Literacy Improvement Plan.

Building on the success of the K-12 pilot and a plan firmly rooted in research, Louisiana proposes expansion of the cohesive and effective feeder model to include providers who serve young children. LDOE is applying for SRCL funding to launch this program in October 2011. The program will be called *Literacy Is For Everyone (LIFE) Promise.*

Funds will be awarded to subgrantees who successfully demonstrate plans to implement LACLiP in a cluster (feeder system) that is likely to serve the same children as they progress through their education. High-needs schools serving each age level (Birth-PreK, K-5, and middle and high schools) must be included. The cluster must include nonprofit or school-based PreK programs such as Head Start Centers, community-based organizations, libraries, health care providers, or LA4 classrooms, Louisiana's highly successful pre-kindergarten program. Each LEA subgrant applicant must provide evidence for why those providers are the best choice for inclusion in the cluster. All LEAs, including those that participated in the K-12 pilot, are eligible to apply.

Subgrant applicants are required to select feeder systems that serve the most disadvantaged children, including children who are living in poverty, are homeless or in foster care; are limited-English proficient, new immigrants, or migrant; are at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time or have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, are pregnant or parenting teenagers or have been incarcerated; and students with disabilities. Subgrant applicants are required to demonstrate buy-in and support from all levels of the LEA, including the superintendent and principals, with examples of previous and/or ongoing actions.

Subgrant applicants should demonstrate a team-based philosophy for literacy improvement. Successful subgrantees will show that LEAs and ECEPs incorporate the principal, teachers, superintendent, LEA literacy leaders, and parents into the implementation and continuous improvement of *LIFE Promise.* The involvement of all these stakeholders, especially parents, is critical to increasing student achievement. Louisiana embraces parental involvement through programs, such as Families Helping Families, which provide training and support for parents. LACLiP outlines family involvement options based on grade-level and student needs. LEAs are required to illustrate how families are incorporated.

LDOE's needs assessment data demonstrate the critical need to provide aligned literacy instruction and coordinated support for successful transitions from year-to-year. In Louisiana, the feeder model has been shown to be an effective approach to ensure students receive cohesive and coherent literacy instruction and support. The model also develops a shared sense of responsibility among educators for all children birth-12th grade. The requirement that the LEAs select the schools and ECEPs ensures that on-the-ground knowledge of the feeder pattern with the greatest need is prioritized. Louisiana has 71 traditional LEAs and 90 charter schools, many of which are part of a larger charter management organization, and some which stand alone. Intra-LEA clusters ensure ECEPs are easily incorporated, while inter-LEA clusters make certain the state's growing number of charter schools have a place in *LIFE Promise*.

LIFE Promise will be implemented in two cohorts: one comprised of 18-21 LEAs to begin in the first year, and a second cohort of 8-10 LEAs to begin 18 months later. Subgrantees will determine an initial feeder cluster of schools. After the first full year of implementation, they will be expected to include an additional feeder school, or disadvantaged population, to expand the effort and impact more students. No additional SRCL funds will be allocated for this expansion, thereby building the LEA's capacity to leverage available resources and to create a model that can be replicated statewide.

b. Aligned use of Federal and State funds and programs

LDOE is committed to aligning State and Federal funds to support the activities outlined in this proposal. The state Literacy Office is dedicating existing resources to support *LIFE Promise* activities through the use of State and other Federal funds and programs within the SEA. Salaries of 6.75 FTEs, listed in the budget narrative, are offset by State and other Federal funds at 25% in the first and second years, 30% in the third year, 35% in the fourth year, and 40% in the fifth year. This demonstrates LDOE's commitment to the project and its ability to align State and Federal funds to assume greater shares of program costs. In addition, the salaries of 6 FTEs are fully funded with State and other Federal monies.

LDOE is using State funds to provide webinars and regional trainings to support all LEAs' use of the literacy plan. State funds will be used to offer trainings for professional development providers to receive LDOE endorsement to ensure alignment of their services with LACLiP. Subgrantees will only be allowed to use providers who have received this endorsement. LDOE is leveraging IDEA dollars to instruct teachers and administrators in principles of Universal Design for Learning and for enhancements to Louisiana's Access Guide. IDEA funds will support System to Enhance Educational Performance (STEEP) training and materials which will be used in assessment and data management for grades 4-12. The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment and data management for grades K-3 will be funded by SRCL subgrantee allocations and State funds, respectively. The Test of Early Language Development (TELD-3) for three- and four-year olds will be funded by subgrantee allocations.

LDOE is requiring LEA subgrant applicants to demonstrate similar leveraging of resources using State and other Federal funds to support *LIFE Promise*, taking on greater shares of funding responsibility through subsequent years of the grant. Since April 2010, LDOE has provided extensive training for LEAs on the *Tools for Integrating Education Funds Guide,* developed by staff throughout the Department, providing a strong basis for LEAs to successfully implement this requirement.

c. Public availability of the process and the results of the review of subgrant applications

LDOE provides highly transparent details of all application processes on its website. On LDOE's literacy web page, the *LIFE Promise* subgrant application process will detail the application timeline, including training dates and support opportunities. The application, scoring rubric, and support materials will be available on the site.

To inform the public of the application process, LDOE's Public Affairs Office will issue media releases directing the public to the web page. Announcements will appear in local newspapers throughout

the state. LDOE will promote the application process via e-mails, podcasts, brochures, electronic

newsletters, at meetings, and at public events. The competition will be announced and discussed as part of

the State Superintendent's bimonthly conference calls with LEA Superintendents. Finalists will be

announced via media releases.

LDOE's subgrant application process is designed to allow a thorough and increasingly sophisticated

review of LEA proposals. A pre-application phase open to all LEAs will be followed by an invitation-

only full application. The timeline is detailed in Section B. LDOE will release the documents and

materials as outlined below.

Table 2: Public Release Timeline

Activity	Cohort 1 Dates	Cohort 2 Dates
Pre-application and full application public release	Oct 14, 2011	Jan 2, 2013
Webinars, workshops, and trainings will be offered to support subgrant applicants. Dates and information will be posted prior to the workshops, and afterward, materials and information will be available for public viewing.	Oct 17- Nov 16, 2011	Jan 15-Feb 8, 2013
LDOE will begin its reviewer selection process. Criteria for reviewer selection will be made public, but the names of the selected reviewers will not be made available until after the full application process is complete.	Oct 17- Nov 11, 2011	Jan 15-Feb 1, 2013
Finalists to advance to full application phase will be notified directly then made public on December 15, 2011.	Dec 15, 2011	March 8, 2013
Finalist applicants will be invited to an interview to allow reviewers to validate and clarify their evaluations of applications and ensure LEAs have the knowledge and capacity to implement their plans. Information about interviewees will be made public.	February 28- March 2, 2012	May 13-17, 2013
Successful applicants will be notified directly and the news made public. Reviewers' names will be released. Specific dates TBD based on State Board meeting schedule.	April, 2012	June, 2013

Subgrant applicants will describe the curricula and materials they propose to use in *LIFE Promise*. These curricula and materials must align with the Louisiana Comprehensive Curriculum (LCC) and the Standards. Subgrantees must provide strong evidence of the suitability of chosen curricula and materials in meeting the needs of the population they serve. As part of the trainings and workshops preparing LEAs to apply for funding under *LIFE Promise*, LDOE will deliver professional development to ensure curricula and materials LEAs propose are consistent with the LCC and Standards. The trainings will assist LEAs in identifying curricula and materials with the strongest available evidence of alignment with Standards.

d. Implementing a comprehensive and coherent literacy program for birth through grade 12

1. Providing effective professional development in literacy

Shifting the paradigm from reading relegated to blocks of time to focusing on literacy throughout the school day and across school years necessitates changing minds and changing practices. Through *LIFE Promise,* professional development will be provided for all LEA staff who impact literacy, including ELA and content area teachers, principals, specialized instructional support staff, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, speech-language pathologists, and pupil appraisal staff.

With the release of LACLiP in April 2011, literacy staff began providing awareness sessions for LDOE staff department-wide, to ensure all levels of the agency understand the plan, as well as their roles in supporting the plan through their initiatives. These awareness sessions on LACLiP were the first steps in a comprehensive professional development effort that will be undertaken with *LIFE Promise*.

LDOE's state-wide literacy professional development will focus on LACLiP's five essential components important to improving literacy. With the recent adoption of the new Common Core State Standards, teachers need to understand what matters most in the Standards and how to integrate literacy

into all content areas. LDOE Literacy Staff, in collaboration with Curriculum Standards Staff, will provide webinars and regional sessions on the new Standards.

State-level staff, including a K-5 Specialist, a K-8 ELL Specialist, a 6-12 Specialist, and an Early Childhood Specialist, will follow up with LEA feeder clusters to help them translate the Standards into high-quality literacy instruction. Other State Literacy Staff are already strategically placed in Louisiana's 8 education regions throughout the state to provide ongoing and sustained technical assistance and professional development.

LDOE will provide a four-day academy each summer, for each cohort. Over the course of the project, subgrantees will receive extensive professional development that will build their knowledge and skills in the use of evidenced-based practices. Subgrantees will commit to professional development requirements and must ensure that principals are involved in professional development.

To build the capacity of teachers to provide evidence-based literacy instruction within all content areas, LDOE will sponsor LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) professional development. This training will provide a critical foundation upon which additional professional development activities can be built. LETRS provides the deep foundational knowledge necessary to understand how students learn to read, write, and spell – and why some of them struggle. The program offers general professional development, as well as specialized courses for early childhood and for limited-English-proficient students.

A strong assessment system is a core component in improving outcomes for disadvantaged students in *LIFE Promise*. Ensuring students' literacy achievement depends on using frequent measures to gauge progress and adjust instruction and curricula based on the results. Subgrantees will use DIBELS and STEEP to identify students at risk of educational failure, to track data to allow teachers and leaders to assess areas for improvement, and to guide their use of professional development resources. LDOE will

sponsor DIBELS and STEEP training to ensure thorough knowledge of these standard protocol

processes. Data Summits, which will consist of 2-day training sessions with site-level follow-up, will

further support the application of data. Each participating LEA cluster will receive data profile documents

which summarize the most recently available data relative to student outcomes identified in Table 5 in

A(iv) "Evaluating the State's progress in improving achievement in literacy."

LDOE will also contract with consultants to provide professional development in the use of Universal

Design for Learning (UDL), Assistive Technologies, and maximized use of Louisiana's Access Guide,

the web-based companion to the L C Cthat provides resources and tools for educators and families to use

in supporting student access and progress in the general curriculum.

LDOE encourages subgrantees to utilize grant funds for professional development, leveraging their

existing Title II professional development dollars, by contracting with additional professional

development and family literacy providers to support the LEAs implementation of *LIFE Promise*. More

specific trainings (e.g., on core reading and intervention programs), tailored to local needs, will be

provided and funded by LEA *LIFE Promise* allocations. Professional development providers must be

endorsed by LDOE before assisting LEAs. To attain state endorsement, providers are required to attend

trainings and webinars and receive technical assistance on the state's Literacy Plan. Providers are also

required to submit an application describing the alignment of their services with the components of

LACLiP. This state review process will include a review of information about the provider's credentials,

experience, and prior outcomes, and Louisiana will hold professional development providers accountable

for delivering work and results.

LDOE will also require subgrantees to allocate grant funds for site-based Literacy Integration

Specialists. These specialists will work closely with teachers to integrate literacy instruction in all subjects

and throughout the day. Literacy interventionists, who work directly with struggling readers, are required

for each school in the cluster. An LEA literacy leader will oversee the activities of the entire cluster, including the early childhood education providers.

LDOE will extend its proven model of dedicated online community networking sites, which will be used by cluster sites to share data, ensure continuity, develop transition plans, and provide peer support. This platform will allow for e-mentoring, in addition to peer support, providing an effective immediate opportunity for LEA staff to communicate with the cluster-level and state-level specialists.

2. Using curriculum and instructional materials aligned with State standards

Louisiana has adopted the Common Core State Standards ("Standards"), which include expectations for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language applicable to a range of subjects, including, but not limited to, English language arts (ELA) & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects and will serve as the foundation for academic literacy instruction. The Standards provide clear sign posts along the way to the goal of college and career readiness for all students. Louisiana's Comprehensive Curriculum is aligned with these state standards.

Louisiana's early learning guidelines and PreK standards are articulated with the Standards to ensure consistency and continuity with overall literacy goals. Rich curriculum content and teacher and early care provider preparation are essential to ensure guidelines and standards lead to child outcomes.

Standards-Based Curriculum is another of the five interconnected components of LACLiP and is understood as "Examining Louisiana's Standards and Comprehensive Curriculum through the lens of literacy." As with every component of LACLiP, specific action steps are itemized by level – Emerging, Elementary, and Adolescent Literacy.

All levels of LACLiP incorporate specific action steps designed for supporting children and youth in meeting the expectations set forth in the Standards. Further, each element is supported by technologies that assist teachers and school leaders in effectively tailoring curricula to student needs.

The Access Guide, the web-based companion to the LCC, addresses the needs of struggling learners, students who need added rigor, advanced learners, and those with the most significant disabilities. Included at the site are strategies and tools related to differentiated instruction and assessment, use of assistive technology, accessible instructional materials, and Individualized Education Program (IEP) development. The Access Guide serves as a hub of information to support teacher effectiveness and improve student engagement.

The Louisiana Department of Education has been a strong advocate for the use of UDL in schools and ECEPs since 2002 and has partnered with LEAs, the Board of Regents, and state and national consultants (e.g., CAST) in this effort. LDOE has laid the groundwork for an updated Louisiana Plan for UDL and the vision is to ensure that **all** Louisiana curricula adhere to principles of universal design.

LDOE provides web-based resources on UDL and related issues (e.g., assistive technology, accessible instructional materials), and conducts professional development at conferences, workshops, regional assistive technology training, and online courses. LDOE also funds eight Louisiana Assistive Technology Regional Centers which provide professional development and technical assistance to LEAs and families on UDL and related issues.

3. Uses of coherent assessment systems

LDOE will require that *LIFE Promise* subgrantees use a common benchmarking system, DIBELS (K-3) and STEEP (4-12), as technological platforms for tracking assessments, screenings, interventions and progress monitoring for K-12th grade. DIBELS and STEEP allow data management of assessment and achievement data with progress monitoring. STEEP includes components for high-need and low-achieving students, and it identifies both students with lack of skill and/or lack of motivation. TELD-3 will be used as the instrument to assess literacy skills for three- and four-year-olds.

LDOE subgrant funds will provide technology interface equipment like tablet pc technology and other support services for principals and Literacy Integration Specialists to input and use STEEP data and enter direct, single entry data to the evaluator's Extranet to ensure reliable and accurate assessments and timely use of data. STEEP also provides direct, single entry data available for immediate analysis to inform instruction, interventions, and professional development, ensuring continuous program improvement.

4. Interventions to ensure that all children and youth are served appropriately

LDOE believes that increased student learning requires the consistent practice of providing high quality instruction matched to student needs. Response to Intervention (RTI) is a general education framework which requires collaborative efforts from all LEA staff, principals, general educators, special educators, and bilingual/ELL staff to facilitate that process. In a quality educational environment, student academic and behavioral needs must be identified and monitored continuously, using documented student performance data to make instructional decisions, with acknowledged parent involvement. Louisiana uses a three-tiered RTI model that incorporates consistent monitoring and achievement data through coordinating technology to ensure data-based decision making for all children and youth, both those who are below grade-level and those who are ahead of their peers.

Instruction and Intervention on an RTI framework is one of the core interconnected components in LACLiP. Defined as implementing research-based strategies, promoting active engagement, and establishing systems of support, RTI is detailed in usable action steps throughout the levels in the plan.

LDOE employs several tools to encourage and enhance achievement for students who are mastering material ahead of their peers. LDOE has an RTI for gifted students strategy, which follows the same tiered approach as the traditional RTI framework, except the tiers determine the increasing complexity of instruction. Advanced placement courses are offered to secondary students. This coursework not only

provides students with the opportunity to receive credit for college coursework, it also positively impacts

academic achievement as a result of the in-depth research and complexity of each class. Dual enrollment

is also offered, allowing students to earn college credit and participate in advanced classes, while still

enrolled in high school.

5. Language- and text-rich classroom, school, and early learning program environments

Print-rich and text-rich environments are addressed in LACLiP and are necessary to achieve

appropriate classroom, school, and early learning program environments. Printed language in the

classroom is found in many forms – from instructional materials to classroom libraries to posted student

work – and emphasizes that print carries meaning and serves many purposes. However, a print-rich

classroom environment involves more than the obvious display of the written word. It involves the

creation of a literate environment which provides time and opportunity for multiple literacy activities,

which has literacy centers in place and in use with comfortable spaces and materials accessible for

reading and writing, and which engages adults and students in reading together.

6. Continuous improvement by monitoring program implementation and outcomes

LDOE will use the STEEP to monitor implementation and outcomes. The assessment and evaluation

processes are extensive and outlined in detail in the evaluation portion of this application, but the STEEP

technology allows tracking of program implementations and outcomes through summative and formative

data. STEEP can be used in schools for a standard protocol approach:

1. Identify students in need of instructional support – STEEP interfaces with assessment tools aligned
   with LACLiP to identify students not meeting benchmarks or age-appropriate milestones.

2. Verify that support is needed– STEEP can assess data on a student-by-student basis to determine if
   the variance in performance is due to the classroom or teacher, or if it is the product of an identifiable
   student support need, or if the problem is behavioral and not cognitive in nature.

3. Find the instructional reading level– STEEP assesses where the student is currently performing, in alignment with the LACLiP guidelines and the Common Core State Standards and determines the level of materials required for intervention.

4. Select specific intervention– STEEP recommends an intervention strategy based upon the assessment data but also aligned with LACLiP's criteria for Instruction and Intervention.

5. Plan for and start intervention– STEEP maps and tracks the implementation of the intervention, detailing which teachers and specialists worked on the interventions.

6. Progress monitor– STEEP guides educators through goal setting and assessing outcomes. The program also provides adjusted strategies for intervention, based upon outcomes.

At each school, the required literacy interventionist, as well as the LEA literacy leader will work closely, using STEEP's technology, to oversee outcomes and improvement as a result of interventions. STEEP will indicate to these staff what areas are in greatest need of improvement, and the literacy interventionist and the LEA literacy leader will work with the state-level literacy support staff to increase professional development opportunities in those areas.

LACLiP is a malleable and customizable plan that allows LEAs to adjust their action steps based on progress within the plan and their assessment and outcome data. LACLiP supports the transition for LEAs to align with the Common Core State Standards by embedding progress monitoring on the skills all students must master and by making data reporting available to drive continuous improvement. This ongoing monitoring and support must be a collective effort of everyone in the schools and LEAs including the principal, teacher, superintendent, LEA literacy leaders, and parents to support the continuous improvement of *LIFE Promise.*

Just as LDOE will only allow pre-approved professional development providers who must be pre-screened and provide documentation supporting their program alignment with LACLiP, the state literacy

team will also monitor progress compiled and aggregated through STEEP to oversee the effectiveness of these professional development providers. STEEP will allow the identification of weaknesses or underperforming providers, and LDOE will have the opportunity to provide additional training or withdraw a providers' approval. Innovation Configuration, an established method which identifies, describes, and monitors the implementation of major components of new practices, will also support efforts to consistently and continuously improve *LIFE Promise*.

ii. Goals for improving student literacy outcomes throughout the State for all students

The State's goals for improving literacy align with Louisiana's Education Reform Plan and define the path the State is taking to achieve these goals. These goals were adopted by the State Board of Education in April 2010. They are detailed below.

Table 3: Louisiana's Goals for Improving Literacy

State Goal	Current Rate	2014 Target
Students enter kindergarten with the pre-literacy skills ready to learn.	39%	65% of entering kindergartners will perform on benchmark for DIBELS
Students are reading on grade level by 3rd grade.	66%	80% of 3rd graders will perform on or above grade level on *i*LEAP (the state's achievement test)
Students enter 4th grade on time and on grade level in reading and math.	67%	85% of kindergartners will reach the 4th grade on time
Students perform at or above grade level in English language arts by 8th grade	62%	80% of 8th graders will perform on or above grade level on the ELA LEAP (the state's achievement test)
Students graduate on time	67%	85% of students entering high school in 2010 will graduate on time in 2014
Students enroll in post-secondary education or graduate workforce-ready	46%	65% of high school graduates will enroll in postsecondary education
Students successfully complete at least one year of post-secondary education	52%	70% of high school graduates who enroll in postsecondary education will complete at least one year of college successfully
Students achieve all eight goals, regardless of race or class.	**	Achievement gaps by race and class will fall 10% per year for each goal.

(**Achievement gap discussed below)

Louisiana's Education Reform Plan is consistently informed by the state's priorities and successes in meeting the needs of disadvantaged students, including those with disabilities and those with limited-

English proficiency. While English language learners represent a very small portion of the state's

population (1.8% of the total student population), the greater indicator for whether or not the state is

addressing the needs of its highest risk students lies in achievement gap data for both students with

disabilities and students who are disadvantaged due to race or income level.

Louisiana is the only state in which the achievement gap has narrowed significantly in both 4th grade

reading and 8th grade math NAEP tests. [7] For example:

• The gap between African-American and white students in 4th grade reading was **reduced by 15 points**

on the NAEP scale score from 1998 to 2009.

• The gap between African-American and white students in 8th grade math **shrank by 10 points** from

2000 to 2009.

• The gap between students eligible and those not eligible for the National School Lunch

Program in 4th grade reading was **reduced by 11 points** from 1998 to 2009.

• In 4th grade reading, the average scale score for **male students increased by 8 points** from 1998 to

2009, while the average scale score for **female students increased by 7 points** over that same time

period. The gap change was not statistically significant. In NAEP 4th grade math, the average scale scores

for **females and males each increased by 11 points** from 2000 to 2009. There is no significant gender

gap in 4th grade math.

• The average scale score in 4th grade math for **students with disabilities increased from 168 in 1998 to

183 in 2009.**

Achievement gap data informing the specific needs of disadvantaged students and students with

disabilities was a key component in the design of Louisiana's Education Reform Plan and Louisiana's

Comprehensive Literacy Plan. LDOE has created these plans with specific activities to address the issues

related to disadvantaged students, including students living in poverty, are homeless, or in foster care; are

limited-English proficient, new immigrants, or migrant; are at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time or have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma; are pregnant or parenting teenagers or have been incarcerated, and students with disabilities. Louisiana requires LEA alignment with the state-level plans.

iii. Technical assistance and support to SRCL subgrantees

Alignment with LACLiP is the fundamental platform for all technical assistance and support. Subgrant applicants are allowed significant flow-through dollars for professional development, and LDOE will require that all funded LEAs use preapproved professional development providers who have been trained and endorsed by LDOE in the research base and application of LACLiP.

Teachers, principals, specialized instructional support staff, paraprofessionals, early childhood educators, speech-language pathologists, and pupil appraisal staff will receive training, coaching, and facilitation directly from LDOE to advance their skills. Direct technical assistance and coaching support via face-to-face and online tools or telephone with LDOE program specialists will be provided to all LEAs. Monthly webinars and a dedicated online community networking site for all subgrantees will be a critical component to offering not only training, but also networking and support.

The State Literacy Office offers toolkits with protocols, tools, and resources (e.g., online intervention clearinghouse, Comprehensive Learning Supports System, data discussion protocols) for advancing literacy in Louisiana schools and early childhood education providers (ECEPs). To enhance use of technologies, the Louisiana Assistive Technology Initiative has established 8 regional centers to improve outcomes for children and youth with disabilities through the use of assistive technology, to access school programs and curriculum, and to increase the capacity of LEAs to provide assistive technology services by making training and technical assistance available to teachers, therapists, speech-language pathologists, early childhood educators, administrators, paraprofessionals and parents. Teaching,

Learning, and Technology Centers, also established in the same 8 regions, provide resources and professional development to assist LEAs and schools with purposeful use and integration of instructional technology with State standards.

In its successful K-12 Literacy Pilot, LDOE implemented highly successful Data Summits to support data-based decision making. Through *LIFE Promise*, LDOE will offer an additional series of Data Summits to assist educators in learning and applying an evidence-driven decision making process aligned with LACLiP. This course will include 2-day training sessions annually, as well as follow-up site visits to LEAs and schools within the LEA cluster. All Data Summit trainings and follow-up will speak to and be aligned with the other components of professional development and training being offered through *LIFE Promise*. The Data Summit courses will incorporate data-driven decision making and action research principles; develop sustainable educator learning communities; emphasize the link between teacher effectiveness and student achievement; and document professional development effectiveness. The same effective contractor will be used to conduct these Data Summits.

iv. Evaluating the State's progress in improving achievement in literacy

1. Evaluation conducted by independent evaluator

LDOE has selected the Cecil J. Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning as the external evaluator for *LIFE Promise*. The Picard Center has been the external evaluator of Louisiana statewide literacy program initiatives since 2004, inclusive of Reading First and the K-12 Literacy Pilot, and has vast knowledge and understanding of data sets specific to literacy. The Center's integrated longitudinal data system has unprecedented scale and scope, integrating educational data from early childhood through college, as well as individual data related to the workforce. The evaluation of *LIFE Promise* will provide essential, ongoing formative and summative data that will be used to improve the design and implementation of the project, and to assess the extent to which program goals are met.

2. Evaluation methods that are thorough, feasible, and appropriate

Picard Center's *LIFE Promise* evaluation will center around three key areas: Student outcomes,

professional development, and data-driven decision making. Table 4 presents a detailed description of the

evaluation questions, methods, and data sources designed to assess progress toward project goals.

Table 4: Description of research and evaluation questions, methods, and data sources

Focus Question	Methods	Measure	Benchmark
Research Question 1: Student Outcomes *Does the program enhance children's literacy outcomes? Do the outcomes vary by program implementation, teacher characteristics, classroom quality, and student characteristics?*			
To what extent have participating prekindergarten children's oral language skills at or above the mean increased?	Analysis of oral and receptive language skills as measured by child assessments administered in fall and spring	TELD-3	Gain in the percent of children at or above the mean for the composite score pretest to posttest
To what extent has 3rd grade students' performance at or above basic on the English language arts section of the *i*LEAP statewide assessment increased?	Descriptive statistics HLM will be used to model the growth of 3rd grade students over the 5 year program duration	*i*LEAP	Percent of children meeting or exceeding proficiency as defined by the State's federally approved accountability system as Basic and above on the English language arts statewide assessment
To what extent has 5th grade students' performance at or above basic on the English language arts section of the *i*LEAP statewide assessment increased?	Descriptive statistics HLM will be used to model the growth of 5th grade students over the 5 year program duration	*i*LEAP	Percent of students meeting or exceeding proficiency as stated above
To what extent has 8th grade students' performance at or above basic on the English language arts section of the LEAP statewide assessment increased?	Descriptive statistics HLM will be used to model the growth of 8th grade students over the 5 year program duration	LEAP	Percent of students meeting or exceeding proficiency as stated above
10th grade students' performance on English 2 End-of-Course (EOC) statewide assessment	Descriptive statistics HLM will be used to model the growth of 10th grade students over the 5 year program duration	English II EOC– Currently identified by BESE as Fair, Good and Excellent (subject to change)	Percent of students meeting or exceeding proficiency (as defined by the Board of Elementary and Secondary during May 2011 board meeting)
11th grade students'	Descriptive statistics	English III EOC–	Percent of students

performance on English 3 End-of-Course (EOC) statewide assessment	HLM will be used to model the growth of 11th grade students over the 5 year program duration	Currently identified by BESE as Fair, Good and Excellent (subject to change)	meeting or exceeding proficiency as stated above
Research Question 2: Professional Development *Does the program provide high-quality professional development leading to high-quality educational services?*			
Focused Question	**Methods**	**Data Source**	**Benchmark**
To what extent has high-quality professional development been provided and to what level has the adult learning become embedded in classroom literacy instruction?	Qualitative Analysis Descriptive statistics Univariate analyses	Participant evaluations Instructional Visit Checklist	Increase in positive feedback from evaluations Increase in the number of indicators observed within each instructional setting
Research Question 3: Coordination, Collaboration, and Use of Data *Does the program enhance the use of data driven decision-making by teachers and program staff?*			
Focused Question	**Methods**	**Data Source**	**Benchmark**
To what extent have LEA leaders, school leaders, and classroom teachers effectively used data to identify children at risk for language and literacy failure and to inform instructional practice?	Qualitative Analysis Descriptive statistics Univariate analyses	Progress Monitoring from DIBELS and STEEP Innovation Configuration composed of five core components of LACLiP (fall, winter and spring)	Increase in the level of implementation within each participating LEA Decrease the number of students at risk for achieving on time and on grade level literacy and language development

To evaluate the program's impact on student literacy outcomes, assessment results of participating 4-year-old children during their prekindergarten experience, 3rd, 5th, 8th, 10th and 11th grade students' ELA performance scores in state assessment will be analyzed. Four-year-old children will be assessed in development of oral language (both receptive and expressive) using the Test of Early Language Development, Third Edition (TELD-3). TELD-3 is an early language test which measures receptive, expressive, and overall spoken language in children between the ages of 2 and 7. TELD-3 scales have demonstrated strong psychometric properties. Hresko, et al. (1999) reported the alpha reliability for TELD-3 is over .90. The criterion prediction validity was established by correlating TELD-3 with other

language measures, and the correlations reported in the examiner's manual range from .40 to .84.[8] An

assessment team, comprised of three members in each LEA, will administer TELD-3 to PreK children in

the program three times per year (fall, winter and spring). The Picard Center evaluation team will train

assessment teams, analyze the data, and provide results to schools. 3rd grade students, 5th grade students',

8th grade students', 10th grade students', and 11th grade students' progress will be monitored using student

performance data on assessments, specifically TELD-3, *i*LEAP, LEAP, and English II and III End-of-

Course assessments, respectively. Table 5 summarizes the measure, data source, and frequency for each

grade.

Table 5: Literacy Assessment Measures

Grade	Measure	Data source/Frequency
4-year-olds	TELD-3	3 times per year – fall, winter, spring
3rd grade	*i*LEAP	State Assessment System/Annually
5th grade	*i*LEAP	State Assessment System/Annually
8th grade	LEAP	State Assessment System/Annually
10th grade	English 2 End-of-Course	State Assessment System/Annually
11th grade	English 3 End-of-Course	State Assessment System/Annually

This component of the evaluation intends to determine (a) how students grow over the five-year

duration of the study, and (b) the extent to which the growth are attributable to relevant individual, school,

and program factors. A three-level Hierarchical Linear Model (HLM)[9] will be used, permitting

researchers to analyze growth of students who are nested within schools, within LEA clusters. Once the

individual growth trajectories of each student are found, Picard Center evaluation team will analyze the

growth pattern of English language arts by ethnicity, free/reduced meals students, special education

students, and limited-English-proficient students, and compare those students' profiles with those of their

peers to examine the impact of *LIFE Promise* on at-risk populations.

Picard Center evaluation team will collect qualitative information to further inform the quantitative

findings of students' performance. Up to twelve schools will be selected for a case study. The

methodology for selection of schools for this study will be discussed with LDOE program staff prior to

implementation. The qualitative methods used to conduct these case studies may include faculty focus groups, principal interviews, or classroom observations. Qualitative data collection will help determine best practices and lessons learned by grantees in implementation of *LIFE Promise*.

The GPRA measures outlined in the SRCL announcement have consistently informed the development of this evaluation plan. As an additional measure, the evaluation team will evaluate the effectiveness of *LIFE Promise* based on the cost per child participating in the program who achieves significant gains. This data will allow measurement not only of the effectiveness of LDOE's plan in impacting the GPRA measures, but also the efficiency of the model for future replication. LDOE will consistently track and analyze evaluation data to assess the state-level efforts and delineate trends in subgrant results. Maintaining a constant vision of program outcomes will allow LDOE to drive continuous improvement based on direct, single entry data where results of the program's implementation are immediately available for analysis.

A study will be conducted by Picard Center evaluation team to determine the quality and impact of professional development provided to educators participating in *LIFE Promise*. Picard Center evaluation team will use data obtained from training observations and evaluations, classroom observations conducted by LDOE program staff, LEA leaders, principals, and Literacy Integration Specialists, as well as the results of the Innovation Configuration (IC), developed in collaboration with LDOE.

Picard Center evaluators will observe state-sponsored professional development, using a semi-structured observation protocol. At the end of each professional development (PD) opportunity, participants will be asked to complete a survey reflecting the *usefulness*, *clarity*, and *quality* of the information presented. Following the PD delivery, the Picard Center evaluation team will assess impact of PD, using the data obtained from the Instructional Visit Checklists (Checklists) and the IC. Both instruments will be beta tested prior to collecting baseline information. The Checklist results, conducted

by those listed in the above paragraph will be submitted to the Picard Center through a direct, single entry

process via tablet pc technology and the Extranet. Baseline and annual data collection from the LDOE's

Instructional Visit Checklists, the IC, and an educator survey will be used to gather information about the

impact of PD and educators' implementation of *LIFE Promise*.

IC is an established method which identifies, describes, and evaluates the implementation of major

components of new practices,[10] in this case LACLiP, i.e., in-class coaching/mentoring, teacher

collaboration, meetings for discussing student data and classroom practice. When the IC process is used,

evidence for the targeted components is collected establishing the level of implementation ranging from

little to ideal. LDOE program staff and LEA-level staff will use the IC during site visits, reporting results

in a direct, single entry process using tablet pc technology. Not less than three times a year, the principals

and Literacy Integration Specialists together will self-report IC ratings in a direct, single entry process

using tablet pc technology, attaching the documentation to validate their ratings making the data

immediately available for analysis. Table 6 outlines the methods and measures used to evaluate the

quality and impact of *LIFE Promise*'s professional development.

Table 6: Analytic methods and measures used to evaluate the quality and impact of *LIFE Promise* professional development activity

Domain	Analytic method	Measures/Frequency
Quality	Descriptive statistics and Univariate analyses	End-of-session survey – as scheduled Session observation – as scheduled
Impact	Descriptive statistics and Univariate analyses	LDOE's Instructional Visit Checklist – daily Teacher survey – annually Innovation Configuration – 3 X annually Student Progress Monitoring assessments – 3 X annually

3. Use of evidence to inform and continuously improve design and implementation

The evaluation of *LIFE Promise* is designed to combine qualitative and quantitative methods, which

allow for triangulating data and testing validity and objectivity of evaluation findings. Through the

Center's integrated longitudinal data system, the evaluators will establish individual baseline literacy data

from PreK through 11th grade, and then follow each cohort at the individual level over the next five years from early childhood through post-secondary, as well as into the workforce.

As part of the Extranet on the Picard Center website, an online data collection system will be created to collect direct, single entry data inclusive of the student performance assessments, LDOE's Instructional Visit Checklists (e.g., Primary, Adolescent, and Intervention) and the IC. To capture the direct, single entry data, LDOE program staff, LEA staff, principals, and Literacy Integration Specialists will use tablet pc technology to enter data during on-site visits. This secure system will allow state program staff, LEA- and school-level administration to login and generate direct, single entry information on the impact of PD on classroom instruction and student outcomes. This process will enhance the ability to conduct immediate analysis, making informed, data-driven decisions. To inform and promote program improvements over time, the Picard Center evaluation team will work in close collaboration with stakeholders at all levels and report formative evaluation findings to LDOE program staff not less than three times (fall, winter, and spring) annually. The Picard Center evaluation team will generate cluster-level profile documents which present data down to the school and subgroup level. These profiles can be used to help inform decisions. The evaluation team will meet with the LDOE program team quarterly to provide and discuss evaluation findings/progress. Monthly progress reports will be provided by the evaluator to the LDOE team.

v. Dissemination of information on project outcomes

LDOE will require reporting on student outcome data and program achievements to ensure that this data is made available to parents, students, the community, and other stakeholders. Through the implementation of data management systems, and with the support of LDOE's Data Specialist, LEAs will be provided resources to organize and prepare data for internal evaluation purposes, as well as to ensure consistent and meaningful reporting to LDOE and to the public.

LDOE will maintain a *LIFE Promise* platform on its website. This platform, which will be a public forum for transparency of the subapplication process, the curriculum, and alignment priorities, will also be the source for public information on program outcomes. LDOE will present all data points listed in the previous evaluation section, including collective assessment results of participating 4-year old children during their prekindergarten experience, as well as when entering kindergarten, and 3rd, 5th, 8th, 10th, and 11th grade students' English language arts performance scores on assessments (following FERPA guidelines).

Technical reports and memoranda to inform stakeholders of the project progress will be released several times each year throughout the project. LDOE will also produce publications to inform the research community; policy briefs to inform policy makers and practitioners; and research summaries about the findings and implications for the educational community, including higher education, and the community at large. Findings will be presented at conferences and through webinars, and press releases will be issued when major findings from the program are available.

Mid-year and annual full-evaluation reports examining key research questions will be produced. The Picard Center for Child Development and Lifelong Learning, the project's evaluator, will submit this report for review by State staff and then to a peer-reviewed journal as a way of disseminating the work to the broader research community. The study team will also submit mid-year and annual performance reports summarizing project progress and GPRA indicators, with the final performance report at the end of the project. The full evaluation report, which will be publicly accessible online, will also be presented to the Board of State Education; BrightStart, the State's early childhood advisory council; the State Literacy Team; and all other relevant stakeholders.

LDOE will produce simplified charts showing achievement levels throughout the years of the program. Separate charts will be provided showing average achievement scores beginning in 2010 and

each year of program implementation, and a separate chart will be created and published for 4-year-olds,

3rd grade, 5th grade, 8th grade, 10th grade and 11th grade students.

B. Quality of the State subgrant competition

i. The extent to which the SEA will run a rigorous, high-quality competition for subgrants

   To improve literacy outcomes for Louisiana's children, Literacy Is For Everyone (*LIFE*) *Promise*,

Louisiana's proposed SRCL initiative, will support LEAs and schools to infuse literacy instruction into

the core academic programming across all disciplines. LEAs successful in the subgrant competition will

form seamless birth-12 education clusters that include at least one "high needs" school for each age

group. Clusters can be strictly within the LEA, and can also be comprised of different school models as in

the case of charters and other non-traditional LEAs. Clusters must also include non-profit early childhood

education providers. A key feature of such clusters is that the majority of students attending each school

within the cluster will likely feed into a subsequent school within the same cluster. The lead applicant for

each subapplication must be an LEA. LEAs must demonstrate the strength and credibility of the early

childhood education provider by outlining all accreditations and affiliations of the provider. LEAs must

demonstrate the involvement of the principal, teacher, superintendent, LEA literacy leaders, and parents

into the implementation and continuous improvement of *LIFE Promise.* Finally and critically, LEAs must

align their literacy program with the Louisiana Comprehensive Literacy Plan (LACLiP) and provide

thorough documentation of the alignment. All LEAs, including those that participated in the K-12 pilot,

are eligible to apply.

   The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) will implement *LIFE Promise* in two cohorts,

allowing the state to manageably provide intensive one-on-one start-up support to each cohort. The first

will begin at six months into the first year, and a second will begin 18 months into the project. LDOE will

apply evaluation data from the first cohort to improve the process for the second cohort.

a. LEAs and early childhood education providers' capacity

LDOE will provide extensive support to LEAs throughout the entire application process. LDOE's insistence in requiring tight adherence to LACLiP and to the feeder model not only fulfills LDOE's priorities for SRCL funding, but also directs LEAs toward prioritizing this evidence-based and proven system for advancing literacy. LDOE is determined to help LEAs design successful programs to advance *LIFE Promise.* A collateral benefit of participating in the subgrant application process will be opening a dialog and providing a platform to educate all LEAs on this proven model. Louisiana's subgrant application also requires applicants to assure the conditions for school- and cluster-wide reform are in place. These include capacity to implement rigorous and meaningful interim assessments and student-based data systems, to maximize dollars for instruction by leveraging SRCL funds with other State and Federal funding streams, and to ensure the most successful educators serve the students most in need. Trainings will also include how to identify evidence-based strategies and recognize a quality research validation for the strategy. Through this approach, LDOE aims to create a culture of understanding what evidence-based truly is – that rather than selecting a strategy and trying to find research to support it, research should guide the selection of the strategy.

A two-part application process is designed to assess each applicant cluster's suitability and capacity to successfully implement its proposal. The two-phased process offers the opportunity to screen applicants twice on several dimensions of capacity and allows the elimination of weak proposals early on, making the review process as efficient as possible. The application process serves as a guide for LEA clusters who are poised to successfully implement their proposals by leading them through a planning process that will help them address the necessary components of the program while becoming more familiar and aligned with LACLiP.

LDOE will release both the pre-application and full application along with scoring criteria, timelines, and logistics in October 2011. The LEA will be required to <u>apply as a unified birth to grade 12 education cluster that includes a feeder system, comprised of an early childhood education provider, and elementary, middle, and high schools</u> within a geographic district or area (in the case of charters). The pre-application, which will be a brief 8-10 page overview of LEA need and plan alignment with LACLiP, will be due on November 30, 2011. Reviewers will apply a rubric for scoring the pre-application based on:

- Careful consideration of schools and providers for inclusion in the cluster based on at-risk factors, which demonstrate the highest population of disadvantaged children to be served;

- The extent to which the proposed project will provide services for and address the needs of disadvantaged children and students at risk of educational failure;

- Clear alignment of the LEA's literacy improvement plan with LACLiP; and

- An overview of partnerships to be included in the plan, which may include institutions of higher education, health care providers, libraries, and other community-based organizations.

During the pre-application phase, reviewers will be selected and trained. The selection criteria for reviewers will include: level of familiarity with LACLiP; prior experience and relevant knowledge of literacy programs; and absence of conflict of interest or connection to any curriculum or literacy-related product. Reviewers will be trained by state senior literacy staff on the finer points of LACLiP and the criteria that will be used to judge the quality of the applications. Training will include inter-rater reliability exercises. Reviewers will be grouped into panels of three with each member chosen to bring a diverse perspective. The panels will be matched with a moderator from the State Literacy Office. The names of the reviewers will not be released until after the full application process is complete to prevent lobbying or the creation of conflicts of interest.

Reviews of pre-applications will occur the first two weeks in December. Each LEA that submitted pre-applications will be notified directly of their application status, and the list of finalists eligible to apply for the full application will be made public on LDOE's website on December 15, 2011. The full application, which will be a 30-page thorough description of the LEA's comprehensive literacy program, will be due on February 1, 2012. Reviewers will apply a scoring rubric based on:

- Itemized roles of partners and early childhood education providers, including memoranda of understanding and letters of support;

- Detailed budget projections showing alignment with LACLiP; integration of SRCL funds with other local, State, and Federal funds; and adherence to funding distributions (sample LEA budget attached);

- Description of how the project aligns with other state and LEA-level reforms;

- A plan in which the LEA assumes greater responsibility for securing funds to sustain the program each year with fewer SRCL funds;

- The LEA's goals for improving student literacy outcomes based on alignment with LACLiP as part of its literacy improvement plan, and clearly articulated steps for reaching those goals;

- A specific plan to meet the needs of English language learners that is aligned with LACLiP;

- Detailed transition plans to demonstrate how the cluster partners will support one another, showing explicit consideration of the supports students will receive as they progress through the cluster;

- Identification of curricula and materials aligned with LACLiP and State standards to be used at each level;

- An outline defining the use of a coherent assessment and data management system to guide instructional decisions;

- A description of the professional development plan, including the rationale and timelines;

- Leadership and staff's credentials, experience, training, and skills indicating the cluster's capacity to implement its plan for effective literacy instruction;

- A plan to attract and retain effective teachers and leaders;

- A demonstrated commitment to advancing literacy for all students and to providing a continuum of literacy instruction from birth-12th grade, especially for the most disadvantaged students; and

- Alignment of the proposed project with existing priorities.

After each reviewer has read and scored their applications independently, panel discussions will be held to discuss scores. Interviews with selected applicants will be conducted during the final review process. Superintendents, principals and relevant staff from the subgrant applicant cluster will attend. Final selections will be made in March 2012, and all applicants will be notified directly of their application status in April. A list of grantees will be made public on LDOE's website. At this time, the names of the reviewers will also be released. A similar process will be followed for Cohort 2.

Table 6: Subgrant Application Timeline

Activity	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Party responsible
Pre-application and full application release	Oct 2011	Jan 2013	LDOE Literacy Staff
TA sessions and grant writing workshops for pre-application	Oct 17- Nov 16	Jan 15-Feb 8	LDOE Literacy Staff
Reviewer selection process	Oct 17- Nov 11	Jan 15-Feb 1	LDOE Literacy Staff
Reviewer training	Nov 14- 30	Feb 4-20	LDOE Literacy Staff
Pre-application due	Nov 30	Feb 20	Applicant LEAs
Screening, copying, and review of panel assignments	Dec 1-2	Feb 21-22	LDOE Literacy Staff
Applications mailed to reviewers	Dec 2	Feb 22	LDOE Literacy Staff
Off-site review of pre-applications	Dec 5-9	Feb 25-Mar 1	Review panels
Scores due with comments from reviewers	Dec 9	Mar 1	Review panels
Comments/scores reviewed by senior literacy staff and decision made on applicants for full application	Dec 12-15	Mar 4-8	LDOE Literacy Staff
Announcement of finalists	Dec 15	Mar 8	LDOE Literacy Staff
TA sessions and grant writing workshops for full application	Jan 2-20, 2012	Mar 18-Apr 12	LDOE Literacy Staff
Application due	Feb 1	Apr 24	Applicant LEAs
Screening, copying, and review panel assignments	Feb 2-3	Apr 25-26	LDOE Literacy Staff

Activity	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Party responsible
Applications mailed to reviewers	Feb 3	Apr 26	LDOE Literacy Staff
Independent off-site review	Feb 6-10	Apr 29-May 3	Review panels
Scores due with comments from reviewers	Feb 10	May 3	Review panels
Panel discussions	Feb 14-17	May 6-10	Review panels
Interviews	Feb 28-Mar 2	May 13-17	LDOE Literacy Staff
Final review and decisions	Mar 5-9	May 20-24	Review Panels and LDOE Literacy Staff
Final selections recommended to the State Board of Education	Mar 12	May 27	Review panels and LDOE Literacy Staff
Board approval and announcement of subgrantees	Apr Mtg	June Mtg	BESE

b. A comprehensive high-quality literacy program

1. Disadvantaged students, highest levels of need and capacity for improvement

The pre-application must show that schools/providers chosen for inclusion in the cluster are those with the greatest need. Using the definition for disadvantaged populations outlined in the federal application – including indicators like low student achievement, underserved populations such as teenage mothers or previously incarcerated youth – only LEA-led cluster applications that initially propose to address the highest needs and show the greatest capacity for improvement will be allowed to move forward in the process.

2. Needs assessment, support for effective teaching, and improving student achievement

A comprehensive needs assessment was the centerpiece of Louisiana's planning process in designing LACLiP and this proposal. LDOE examined student achievement data, including transition data from one school level to the next; family and community involvement factors; and the adequacy and effectiveness of state and local professional development activities to identify strengths and weaknesses. This information was used to create a plan and a model for improving literacy achievement and meeting challenging academic standards. Throughout the implementation of *LIFE Promise*, Louisiana will continue to apply evaluation data to assess strengths and weaknesses in the ongoing implementation of its literacy programming.

To align with LACLiP, subgrant applicants will be guided through the same needs assessment process. Staff will complete a self-survey of their literacy capacity aligned with the plan's five interconnected core components: Leadership and Sustainability, Standards-Based Curriculum, Assessment System, Instruction and Intervention (RTI), and Professional Learning and Resources. This self-assessment tool is a confidential online survey on LDOE's web platform and addresses all age spans served within the cluster. The plan also includes a professional growth plan template, which guides educators to align their own needs and goals for improvement with the needs and goals of the school and the cluster. It further offers achievable actions for designing both individual and collective improvement plans to impact outcomes and to create a seamless evidence-based literacy program.

During the application process, LEAs will be required to submit comparative student achievement and subgroup data as reported on state-level tests and other valid assessments for all schools in the LEA (or all schools in charter partnerships) to verify that highest-needs schools are being served by the subgrant. To demonstrate capacity and commitment, applicants must demonstrate success of literacy efforts with disadvantaged students using state ELA assessment results from the past three years. Applicants will also be required to demonstrate how data is used to make modifications for continued improvement.

Retention of effective teachers and leaders is a state priority in regard to capacity for improvement. Retaining effective teachers and leaders is a product of quality school programs which produce good results, yet creating quality school programs is difficult when lack of retention and high turnover rates of effective teachers are factors. In addressing the needs of disadvantaged students, subgrant applicants will be required to articulate their differentiated retention plan, based on evidence of educators' effectiveness, to increase retention rates for the most effective teachers and leaders in all schools in the cluster. While

retention strategies will not necessarily impact grant scores, the subgrant applicant's plan to retain

educators who have demonstrated effectiveness will be assessed.

3. Involves other agencies, organizations, and families

Collaborative partnerships are a critical element in LACLiP and, therefore, in *LIFE Promise*. LDOE

has learned through its literacy initiatives that partnerships give schools and LEAs opportunities and

resources they would not otherwise have. Just as LDOE has done and will continue to do, each subgrant

applicant will involve partners in the design of its proposal and continue to engage partners in the

implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students. Subgrant applicants will be

encouraged to partner with service providers of family literacy activities who demonstrate a track record

of success. LDOE will give priority to applicants who show a sophisticated and well-designed partnership

strategy with community groups, organizations, and institutions of higher education that can support the

literacy needs of students and families, particularly those who are disadvantaged.

c. Alignment with other Federal funds, State and local funds.

In April and May 2010, LDOE conducted a series of trainings for all LEAs on integrating educational

funds for sustaining efforts to improve student outcomes. This training was accompanied by a

comprehensive set of manuals, *Tools for Integrating Education Funds*. This training included activities

that demonstrate alignment of State and Federal funding streams. Comprehensive charts outline how

initiatives – from Afterschool Interventions, to Louisiana Virtual School, to RTI – can be aligned with

each of the major education funding streams: Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV, Title VI, Title X, the Carl

D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, and IDEA.

These comprehensive training resources include cost categories, such as salaries, benefits, and

supplies and demonstrate the variety of funding options that can support them. Subgrant applicants will

use the Integration of Funds Guide to help prepare their *LIFE Promise* application, which requires that

they demonstrate leveraging of SRCL funds with other Federal and State funds to ensure all activities align with LACLiP and are sufficiently funded to improve literacy instruction. Specifically, they must outline which budget items will be offset with other Federal and State dollars. Also, subgrant applicants will be required to demonstrate greater responsibility for securing funds to sustain the program each year with fewer SRCL funds.

ii. Priority to high-poverty schools or a high-poverty population

The child poverty rate in Louisiana is 40% higher than the national average and 66% of students participate in free and reduced lunch programming. As part of the feeder system approach requiring LEAs to submit a cluster of providers to participate in the program, LDOE will require subgrant applicants to select schools and early childhood education providers serving high-poverty populations. They will be required to provide comparative free and reduced lunch percentages for all schools in the LEA to verify that schools with the highest poverty rate are being served. As part of the subapplication scoring criteria, weight will be given according to the poverty rate served.

iii. LEAs and providers of early childhood education supported by the strongest available evidence

Literacy is for Everyone (*LIFE*) *Promise* is based on LACLiP, requiring applicant LEAs to submit proposals which clearly define a continuum of quality literacy education from birth-12th grade. LDOE will only accept applications that outline quality programming to all children from birth-12th grade. Applicant LEAs will be scored for funding consideration based upon how their "cluster" design brings together educators and community partners across the full spectrum from birth to graduation and how each level is aligned with LACLiP. Only applicants who show strong alignment with LACLiP across the full spectrum will be considered for funding.

Being evidence-based and comprehensive, LACLiP advances the most effective techniques for instilling literacy in young children, as well as students in the elementary and secondary levels. Subgrant

LEA clusters will include a cohesive and coherent system that incorporates all age ranges. Through this application process, they will have demonstrated solid integration and alignment with LACLiP, which in itself is evidence-based and comprehensive. LEAs will be required to submit the scientific research that supports their selection of specific strategies and materials they are proposing and must demonstrate that they are appropriate for the population being served. The state will support this process with trainings that provide the protocols for recognizing and using high-quality research.

iv. Evidence base and alignment with State standards for the curricula and materials

Louisiana has a formal curricula and materials adoption process. The process ensures alignment through a comparative analysis of curricula with State standards. A publisher who is interested in having its curricula considered for inclusion on the State's approved list must provide materials and correlation documents supporting alignment. A committee of content specialists for each subject area verifies the correlations.

Louisiana has adopted the Common Core State Standards ("Standards"). These new Standards represent a shift in instructional emphasis to include a balance between literature and informational texts, from ELA taught in isolation to ELA taught in collaboration, and from emphasis on literary skills to cross-content literacy integration. The review process will be updated to reflect this shift.

LACLiP represents a concrete and comprehensive plan of action to ensure Louisiana's students meet the literacy expectations set forth in the Standards that will prepare them to enter college and the workforce ready to succeed. Louisiana's Comprehensive Curriculum (LCC) is organized into timebound units with sample activities that guide teaching and learning of the Standards. All LEAs are expected to implement the LCC, which is being retooled to reflect the rigor of the new Standards.

Subgrant applicants will describe the curricula and materials they propose to use in *LIFE Promise*. These curricula and materials must align with the LCC and the Standards. As part of the trainings and

workshops preparing LEAs to apply for funding under *LIFE Promise*, LDOE will deliver professional

development to ensure curricula and materials LEAs propose are consistent with the LCC and Standards.

Subgrant applicants must provide strong evidence of the suitability of chosen curricula and materials in

meeting the needs of the population they serve. The trainings will assist LEAs in identifying curricula and

materials with the strongest available evidence of alignment with Standards.

C. Project management

i. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project

To improve literacy outcomes for all children, management of *LIFE Promise* will be coordinated by

the LDOE Literacy Director, with support from the LDOE Literacy Chief and program staff. The director

will review monthly financial reports to ensure all activities take place within budget and that the total

amount of grant funds is allocated according to the statutorily mandated distribution. The Literacy

Director will ensure that all activities take place within the established timeline (Table 7), coordinate all

professional development, ensure that subgrant recipients have appropriate and adequate personnel

including literacy integration and data specialists, literacy interventionists and district literacy leaders to

support students, and work with the external program evaluators.

To help achieve program objectives, LDOE will use award funds to hire a state-level Data Specialist

with thorough knowledge of data management and experience in utilizing databases. The Data Specialist,

working with the Literacy Director, will ensure timely reporting and dissemination of relevant results to

key stakeholders to inform policy, continuous improvement, and decision-making. The Data Specialist

will ensure systems are in place at LDOE and LEAs to collect data; train and support all LDOE program

staff in use of state and local data systems; and prepare accurate, timely, and relevant reports to assist

LDOE and LEAs. To improve learner outcomes, the Data Specialist will work closely with the Literacy

Director and LDOE program staff to ensure project alignment and facilitate the coordination and use of

Table 7: Objectives and Activities, Responsibilities, Timeline, Milestones

Objectives and Activities	Responsible Party	Timeline	Milestones
Objective 1: Improve school readiness and success through grade 12 in the area of language and literacy development for disadvantaged students			**Evaluation measure 1:** The program enhances children's literacy outcomes and demonstrates best practices for program implementation, teacher characteristics, classroom quality, and student characteristics
Develop and continuously improve a comprehensive State literacy plan to address the pre-literacy and literacy needs of children from birth through grade 12 that aligns policies, resources, and practice; contains clear instructional goals' and sets high expectations for all students and student subgroups	LDOE Literacy Staff; Emergent, Elementary, and Adolescent Taskforces; State Literacy Team	Jan-July 2006 June 2009-April 2011 2012-ongoing	Louisiana's first literacy plan, Literacy for All (K-12), created Louisiana's new Comprehensive (Birth-Grade 12) Literacy Plan developed and disseminated Literacy plan improved based on SRCL implementation
Align the use of Federal and State funds and programs within the SEA and in LEAs to support a coherent approach to funding and implementing literacy instruction and practices for disadvantaged students	LDOE Literacy and Federal Program Staff; LEA subgrantees	**LDOE:** April 2010-May 2011: **Cohort 1:** April 2012-Sept 2016 **Cohort 2:** June 2013-Sept 2016	Budget plan completed and implemented with secured funding allocated to compliment SRCL funds and designed to accommodate reducing levels of SRCL fund reliance
Fund 26-31 LEAs to implement high-quality, evidence-based literacy plans aligned with LACLiP through a rigorous, high-quality competition that creates sustainable birth to grade 12 clusters that include feeder schools with the greatest number of disadvantaged children, highest levels of needs, and capacity for improvement to serve as models for LEAs	LDOE Literacy and Finance Staff; State Board of Education; LEA subgrantees	**Cohort 1:** April 2012-Sept 2016 **Cohort 2:** June 2013-Sept 2016	Fair and thorough application and selection process conducted that prioritizes applicants serving high numbers of disadvantaged children and demonstrated capacity for program implementation

Implement an evidenced-based literacy program aligned with LACLiP	LDOE Literacy Staff; LEA subgrantees; Evaluators (in the case of IC)	**Cohort 1:** April 2012-Sept-2016 **Cohort 2**: June 2013-Sept 2016	
		Within first 3 months	LEA- and school-based literacy staff hired
		Within first 6 months	Materials/curricula selected and purchased, based on alignment with LACLiP and State standards
		Within first 6 months	Assessment systems purchased
		Monthly, beginning immediately after receiving funds	Professional development and technical assistance sessions provided to ensure comprehensive knowledge of evidenced-based practices aligned with LACLiP
		Three times a year	Innovation Configuration used to ensure implementation fidelity of key program components aligned with LACLIP
Objective 2: Enable data-based decision-making to improve instructional practices, policies, and outcomes for all students, ensuring disadvantaged students receive maximum benefits			**Evaluation Measure 2:** The program provides high quality professional development leading to high quality educational services **Evaluation Measure 3:** The program enhances the use of data driven decision-making by teachers and program staff

Ensure data are used to implement a comprehensive and coherent literacy program that serves students in the birth through grade 12 continuum	LDOE Literacy Staff; LEA subgrantees; Picard professional development team	**Summits:** Annually **Follow up:** Quarterly	Data Summits and follow up provided for LEAs in analyzing and using data gathered in needs assessment
		Annual kick-off PD in summer, and follow up at least quarterly	Professional development and follow up provided for LEAs on the use of DIBELS, STEEP, LETRS and data systems to evaluate student outcomes and inform decisions to adjust practices
		Ongoing	Data collected and compiled from LEA subgrantees and used to inform professional development and improve teaching and learning
		Quarterly, and as requested	Timely, specialized reports for LEAs and key stakeholders prepared and disseminated
		At least quarterly	Assessment and outcome data used to improve program activities, ensuring successful implementation of LACLiP
		As needed	Policy developed to ensure continuation of strong literacy practices
Make program results publicly available	LDOE Literacy Staff and LDOE Public Affairs Office, including Information Technology Staff	As available	Reports published using a variety of media types to support research and policy, and to keep key stakeholders abreast of program progress

Objective 3:			**Evaluation Measures 1, 2 &3:**
Use technology to address student learning challenges, to increase student engagement and achievement, and to increase teacher effectiveness, ensuring needs of disadvantaged populations are particularly addressed			Technology will support the outcomes assessed for all evaluation measures
Ensure the implementation of Universal Design for Learning(UDL) principles to address student learning challenges	LDOE Literacy Staff , including special education program consultants; regional technology centers; LEA subgrantees	Awareness sessions beginning Year 1, followed by in-depth training in subsequent years At least annually	UDL professional development and follow up provided for LEAs Regional training provided for families on UDL
Implement technologies that support the curriculum and standards outlined in LACLiP targeted toward increasing student engagement and increasing teacher effectiveness	LDOE Literacy and Information Technology Staff; LEA subgrantees	Ongoing, and as requested	Training and technical support provided to LEAs on implementing cutting-edge technology tools Professional development provided via Web-based learning and online community networking sites, e-mentoring, and quarterly webinars

data among teachers, interventionists, school-based Literacy Integration Specialists, principals, LEA

coordinators, and external partners. The majority of state level program staff is currently employed at

LDOE. Each has at least 15 years of classroom teaching and literacy leadership experience. All have

completed extensive trainings and have in-depth knowledge and expertise in instructional coaching, data-

based decision making, RTI, differentiated instruction, and evidenced-based literacy instruction. Program

specialists have already begun assisting LEAs in aligning local literacy efforts with LACLiP, using

current data from the online Literacy Capacity Survey. This will ensure a smooth transition from receipt

of the award to initial implementation.

To ensure implementation quality and data-based decision-making, LDOE Program Specialists will

serve as "data coaches" for subgrant recipients. They will work with district literacy leaders and school-

based Literacy Integration Specialists to ensure that the use of data guides effective literacy instruction in

all classrooms. This collaborative effort will also ensure that the use of cutting-edge technology practices

and strategies described earlier in this proposal are effectively implemented and lead to increased student

engagement, learner outcomes, and teacher effectiveness.

Integration Specialists, teachers, and interventionists will participate in state-sponsored and locally led

professional development on research-based practices aligned with those described in LACLiP (see

Budget Narrative). Integration Specialists will provide extensive, ongoing support for teachers by

modeling and coaching the use of literacy strategies in all subject areas, facilitating data-based discussions

in grade-level, vertical, and/or departmental teams, and providing professional development on effective

literacy practices. Principals and district literacy leaders will actively participate in all state-sponsored and

locally led professional development to acquire sufficient expertise in the implementation of effective

literacy practices in order to support the Integration Specialists, teachers, and interventionists. They will

conduct classroom observations with Literacy Integration Specialists using LDOE's Instructional Visit

Checklists (See Evaluation Section) to monitor, improve, and sustain practices. District literacy leaders

will oversee all activities and ensure that all staff are working closely to provide a cohesive system of

support throughout the cluster.

ii. The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key personnel

Curriculum Vitaes for all key personnel are included in the Appendices.

Dr. Jill Slack, Director of the Literacy Office at LDOE, will be responsible for the overall

management of *LIFE Promise*. This includes planning and implementation, program delivery, and

management of state staff. As LDOE Literacy Director, Dr. Slack plays a lead role in the day-to-day

administration and implementation of the state's literacy efforts, birth through grade 12. She manages the

activities of the State Literacy Team, which is charged with assisting in the development and continuous

improvement, dissemination, and implementation of LACLiP. Dr. Slack has vast experience managing

literacy programs at the state and local level. Prior to joining the Department in 2008, Dr. Slack designed

and provided training and ongoing support to state and local agencies in reading, writing, and school

improvement strategies. Dr. Slack has also served as reading specialist, administrator, classroom teacher,

ESL instructor, research associate/site trainer and program evaluator for a national reform program, and

assistant professor in higher education.

Dr. Kerry Laster, Chief of the Literacy Office at LDOE, will provide leadership and guidance in all

aspects of *LIFE Promise*. She will serve as official advocate for the program by networking with local

and state agencies, as well as policymakers, for future program development. Dr. Laster ensures

integration of resources with the various offices of LDOE to meet the literacy needs of all students in

Louisiana. Dr. Laster has served as teacher, reading specialist, principal, curriculum coordinator, and

district superintendent.

Mona Erickson, **Michelle Handy**, and **Dr. Cindy Treme** are LDOE Literacy Program Consultants. They will serve as program specialists of *LIFE Promise*, providing intensive support to LEAs and schools to ensure quality of program implementation and outcomes. They each have broad knowledge and experience in assessment practices, implementation of literacy intervention, data analysis, research-based literacy instruction, technology, and in providing training, technical assistance, and support to LEAs and schools on Louisiana's Comprehensive Literacy Plan. Dr. Treme adds extensive experience working with special education and English language learners.

Dr. Mary Louise Jones, Director of Early Childhood Programs at LDOE, will provide training and support in literacy and language development of children in early childhood settings. She will facilitate collaboration between LEAs and Family Support Services to ensure consistent and quality services for students and their families. Dr. Jones guides efforts to increase the outcomes of at-risk preschool children, with particular emphasis on language skills, in an effort to ensure they enter kindergarten ready to learn. She has over 25 years of experience in early childhood education.

Nanette Olivier, Education Program Consultant at LDOE, serves as the statewide leader for issues pertaining to curriculum and instruction for students with significant disabilities. Ms. Olivier will provide technical assistance and training to address literacy needs of this population (e.g., assistive technology, instructional accommodations, etc.). Ms. Olivier led the development of Louisiana's Access Guide, a web-based instructional resource that supports educators and families with children who have significant disabilities.

Dr. Gary Asmus, Picard Center's Director of Management Information Systems, holds the Loyd J. Rockhold Professorship in Child Development and is responsible for overseeing and managing all data and analyses at the Center. He has been the principle investigator on the evaluation and research for

Louisiana's literacy initiatives since 2005, inclusive of Reading First and K-12 Literacy Pilot. He will be the lead evaluator of *LIFE Promise*.

iii. Diversity of perspectives in the design and implementation of the proposed project

Louisiana can affirm the diversity of perspectives in the design and implementation of *LIFE Promise* by outlining the process under which LACLiP was developed. LACLiP serves as the literacy framework for the state, and therefore as the design of this proposed project.

Louisiana's State Literacy Team, comprised of multiple stakeholders with expertise in literacy development and education of children from birth through grade 12, offered substantial advice and guided efforts in creating LACLiP. The plan builds upon successful elements that have been tested, and it represents a natural evolution in how the formal education system conceptualizes its role in helping children succeed in literacy, as well as in life.

The design of the plan involved representatives of the educational community and the community at large. Stakeholders included: Southern University, Xavier University, and Southeastern Louisiana University education professors; superintendents; charter school managers; principals; teachers and early childhood educators; policymakers and advisors from the Board of Regents and the State Board of Education; and LDOE specialists from other departments. Also included were government agencies such as BrightStart, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Governor's Office of Community Programs, and nonprofit groups such as Families Helping Families and the Early Childhood and Family Learning Foundation. Overall, the plan was vetted and revised multiple times through input from over 100 stakeholders. These and many other stakeholders have expressed their support of LACLiP and this project (see Appendices), and their perspectives will continue to play an important role during its implementation. LDOE will disseminate information on project outcomes, including overall and subgroup student performance, to the stakeholders who helped design LACLiP, as well as to the general

public. Like the SEA, LEAs will engage a broad base of stakeholders as active partners, linking school resources with those in homes and communities to ensure effective implementation of *LIFE Promise*.

D. Adequacy of resources

i. Costs described in the SEA's budget are reasonable

LIFE Promise will directly support 18-21 LEA clusters in Cohort 1 and an additional 8-10 LEAs in Cohort 2. The project will serve an estimated 40,000 children and youth during the first full year of implementation and at least 60,000 in the second, with increases of 5,000 children each subsequent year. Through *LIFE Promise*, one-third to one-half of the LEAs, including charters, will successfully implement a cohesive and coherent evidence-based literacy plan serving children from birth to 12th grade. The total cost per child served will be approximately $498.98 per child per year.

Louisiana's experience with the K-12 Literacy pilot schools has shown that start-up costs for such an extensive project require a substantial front-end investment to jump-start changes in practice. Providing educational services for disadvantaged students requires an equitable, rather than equal, distribution of funds. The disadvantaged require additional resources to "catch up" with their peers. *LIFE Promise* requires that each child at every level is served, and the budget allows for a baseline investment of $1 million for an LEA to launch, along with a per pupil allocation to ensure fair distribution of funds and adequacy of resources. All LEAs are eligible to apply, including those that participated in the K-12 pilot. Following the implementation of this program, which represents a reach 70% greater than the K-12 pilot and will further grow the best practices from the K-12 pilot, LDOE will have the full evidence-base and best practices to drive the implementation of *LIFE Promise* statewide. All LEAs are eligible to apply, including those that participated in the K-12 pilot.

This program design ensures that LEAs are leveraging funds, from the onset of the project, to share in and increasingly offset ongoing project costs. The budget has been carefully planned to cover all costs to

ensure the ambitious goals of *LIFE Promise* are met, including extensive, high-quality professional

development for educators, and use of research-based literacy instructional materials to provide rich

literacy instruction for students who need it the most. Project activities and extensive professional

development will impact classroom teachers, interventionists, paraprofessionals, special educators,

administrators, instructional leaders, and families, in addition to the impact on children and youth.

Staffing is designed to be thorough and comprehensive, ensuring that throughout the cluster there is an

integration of efforts, feedback and support.

Funding for this project will result in: 1) improving school readiness and success through grade 12 in

the area of language and literacy development for disadvantaged students; 2) enabling data-based

decision-making to improve instructional practices, policies, and outcomes for all students, ensuring

disadvantaged students receive maximum benefits; and 3) using technology to address student learning

challenges, to increase student engagement and achievement, and to increase teacher effectiveness,

ensuring needs of disadvantaged populations are particularly addressed.

ii. SRCL subgrants are allocated according to statutorily mandated funding distribution

LIFE Promise has been carefully planned to ensure that at least 15 percent of subgranted funds are

used to serve children birth through age 5, and at least 40 percent of the funds are used to serve students in

middle and high schools, including equitable distribution between middle and high schools. LDOE is

requiring that all subgrant applicants submit fully itemized budgets showing where funds will be spent

across the cluster of feeder schools. As part of the comprehensive training and technical assistance given

to subgrant applicants, LDOE will provide extensive support and assistance in budget development. The

Project Director and program staff will work with subgrantee applicants to answer questions, maintain a

list of FAQs available to all subgrant recipients in both cohorts, and ensure their budgets support the

mandated funding distribution. Recipient LEAs will be provided a list of allowable expenses and must

provide assurances that they follow the funding distribution and allowable expense guidelines. The

Project Director will meet with LEA finance staff to ensure they understand and can allocate costs with

fidelity. The Project Director will conduct biannual meetings to address questions and provide

clarifications, as well as be available via telephone. Finally, the Project Director will review funding

allocations prior to LEA draw downs to ensure funds are being appropriately spent and allocated.

A sample LEA budget that demonstrates the appropriate distribution of all costs is attached, including

administrative costs, across the three levels of the program. It will serve as a guide for appropriate use of

funds to ensure that LDOE's total program activities meet the SRCL guidelines for funding distribution.

The state will monitor each subgrantee for adherence to the approved budget. Budget revisions will only

be considered if they maintain the appropriate distribution of funds across the age ranges as prescribed

and technical assistance will be provided if LEAs submit revisions that are not allowable.

LDOE has allocated 4.5% of the proposed SRCL funds for state-level training and management costs.

The remaining 95.5% will flow through to subgrant recipient LEA clusters. The subgrant applicants will

be required to show that 16% will be dedicated to birth-5 activities, 42% to K-5th, and 42% to middle and

high school. By providing this stringent budgeting guideline, the state has ensured that the distribution of

funds for the full awarded amount will break down as follows:

- 4.5% for state-level staff specialists, professional development, supplies, assessment materials,

  evaluation, and endorsed consultants for professional development to support the subgrant application

  process and, in turn, the subgrant recipients;

- 15.3% of the total funds will be expended on birth-5 activities;

- 40.1% of the total funds will be expended on K-5th activities; and

- 40.1% of the total funds will be expended on middle and high school activities.

iii. Leveraging other State and Federal funds in order to maximize the impact of the grant

LDOE has documented throughout this proposal its plans to leverage State and Federal funds throughout the duration of the SRCL grant to support *LIFE Promise*. As demonstrated in the budget narrative, virtually every line item demonstrates a share allocated to funds outside of the SRCL award. The budget submission details plans to gradually reduce LEAs' reliance on SRCL funds while increasing student reach. Similarly, LDOE's budget reflects increasing percentages of program costs, particularly personnel, covered by other State and Federal funds. This transition to reaching a greater number of students while reducing SRCL fund per school/provider serves not only to ensure sustainability after the grant, but also to demonstrate a model of sustainability.

iv. SRCL subgrants of sufficient size to support projects that improve instruction

Each LEA subgrantee will receive a base allocation of $1 million sufficient to cover the fundamental program costs including salaries, resources, and services necessary to implement the program effectively. LEA allowable expenses include: salaries for Literacy Integration Specialists and interventionists (in each school in the cluster), and a district literacy leader. Grant funds can pay up to 75% of salaries, including benefits, in the first year. LEAs must demonstrate leverage of other State and Federal funds to cover the remaining 25%, and demonstrate an increasing share of leveraged funds in subsequent years. Allowable expenses also include instruction and intervention materials and resources (including technology resources) aligned with LACLiP and the State Standards. Contracts with professional development and family literacy providers, software and hardware to implement STEEP and access real-time data, the TELD-3 language assessment, and travel to attend state-directed professional development are also allowable and encouraged.

The $1 million LEA-base allocation will be supported with a per pupil allocation for each cluster school to ensure equitable and appropriate distribution of funds among all children served by the grant.

Subgrantees receive $300 per pupil, an amount comparable to successful LDOE projects of this scale, to implement the required activities of *LIFE Promise.*

LDOE has extensive experience implementing literacy projects supported by multiple funding streams. *LIFE Promise* is designed to ensure the initial per child investment is leveraged effectively to serve each child for the rest of their high-quality literacy education.