

Louisiana Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant Program

(a) State-level Activities

State-level Activities (1)

LOUISIANA BELIEVES

The Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) serve over 710,000 students and 48,400 teachers across 1,300 schools in 169 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) – 70 school districts and 99 charter schools – as well as over 700 publically funded child care centers. Within these institutions, 71% of Louisiana students are classified as economically disadvantaged, a rate 5% higher than the national average, and 12% have disabilities.

Despite its disproportionately large statistically disadvantaged population, BESE and LDOE are committed to ensuring every student is on track to be successful in post-secondary education and the workforce through their comprehensive plan – *Louisiana Believes*. *Louisiana Believes* is built on the premise that Louisiana students are just as capable as any students in America. Louisiana has worked hard to raise expectations for students, and as a result, students are performing at higher levels than ever before. Some highlights include:

- In 2016, 10% more disadvantaged* four-year-olds achieved *significant* pre/post gains in oral language skills on the Test of Early Language Development (TELD) from the previous year.
- Since 2011, students scoring Mastery and above on the state’s ELA tests increased 17%.
- 4th grade students achieved the highest growth of all states on the 2015 NAEP reading test.
- Since 2012, the number of students earning Advanced Placement credit each year grew by more than 3,000, an increase of more than 100%.
- Seniors earning a college-going ACT score (18+) increased by 260% from 2012 to 2016.

* Disadvantaged is defined as children living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities.

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While the state is pleased with its accomplishments, LDOE continues to develop new and innovative programming to ensure each child in Louisiana receives a quality education, no matter race, disability, or creed. Because the state has a disproportionately high percentage of disadvantaged children, compared with most other states, there is still much work to do, and the proposed SRCL project represents an opportunity to address these needs. Nearly half of Louisiana's children entering Kindergarten lack the pre-literacy skills needed to learn how to read. While Louisiana 4th graders have grown more than any other state's on the NAEP reading test, they are still below the national average. The state achievement tests are showing a gap of 23% between economically disadvantaged students and their peers who are not disadvantaged.

Louisiana has undertaken bold new initiatives to create a quality birth-12th continuum of educational excellence. Since 2012, the Louisiana Departments of Education, Children and Family Services, and Health have worked collaboratively to establish an integrated early child care and educational system. This effort unified all publically funded early childhood education programs under the oversight and management of LDOE, ensuring consistent expectations and support for all early childhood educators. In 2016-2017, LDOE completed the first full year leading the state's integrated early childhood education system. Louisiana is the only state in the nation where all publically funded child care, Head Start, and PreK leaders in every community are mandated to implement the same set of high standards for all children, unify enrollment to ease access for all families, and use rigorous mandatory qualifications for all teachers.

At the root of *Louisiana Believes* is the belief that an effective teacher is the most critical component of academic success, and that teachers are most effective when they have access to a **high-quality, Standards-based curriculumⁱ, ongoing professional development** to use that curriculum effectivelyⁱⁱ, and **data from a focused set of Standards-aligned assessmentsⁱⁱⁱ**

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measuring how well students are meeting the outcomes of the high-quality curriculum.

LITERACY AND LOUISIANA BELIEVES

Aligned with *Louisiana Believes*, the State Literacy Team, composed of literacy experts within LDOE and across the state, has revised its Comprehensive Literacy Plan around the components of Standards and Curriculum, Assessment, and Professional Development. This plan is the touchstone for the state's literacy initiatives and will be the central guidance for support and technical assistance to SRCL subgrantees. Each component was developed in response to a statewide needs assessment, which highlighted the gap for economically disadvantaged children, and informed by the state's prior SRCL experience. Recommended interventions and practices are supported by moderate evidence or strong evidence. The plan is updated annually, and these updates are informed by outcomes data collected on an ongoing basis. David Liben, a nationally recognized consultant in reading research and practice, has provided invaluable guidance in all three central components: Standards and Curriculum, Assessment, and Professional Development. He will continue to serve as a literacy consultant for LDOE.

LOUISIANA'S STRIVING READERS COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY EFFORTS

Louisiana was one of six states to win the 2011 SRCL competition. As described above, the state has achieved significant gains in student performance, and the 2011 SRCL grant contributed greatly to these gains. This proposed SRCL project incorporates lessons learned from the prior SRCL project and leverages the activities that were initiated in the original project to more Louisiana students. LDOE will build upon the prior project with new activities and innovations supported by strong or moderate evidence.

The following innovations grew from the 2011 SRCL project and are contributing to the state's Comprehensive Literacy Plan, advanced by this new SRCL design:

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- A Teacher Support Toolbox to help educators set goals, plan, teach, and evaluate results:

The toolbox will be expanded through the proposed SRCL project and currently includes:

- Links to K-12 Guidebooks with classroom-ready reading/English Language Arts (ELA) daily lessons that were co-developed with Louisiana Teacher Leaders^{iv};
- Birth-grade 12 reading/ELA curriculum reviews that have made LEA and early childhood program purchases of high quality materials aligned to the state's Standards easier;
- Resources and guidance for individualized programming for students and young children with disabilities and English Learners incorporated into the Guidebooks.
- A Teacher Leader program: Teacher Leaders are a corps of highly effective teachers, with a track record of improved student outcomes, that provide training and support to peers, model strategies and facilitate grade level meetings on data. Teacher Leaders were involved in the development of the products in the Teacher Support Toolbox and improvements in state's Literacy Plan. Teacher Leaders will continue to be a key resource for SRCL technical assistance.
- Alignment with the Division of Strategic Research and Analysis (SRAA): LDOE's original SRCL plan involved the engagement of a formal external evaluator. Through the process of the project, a new alignment with the state's SRAA provided an opportunity for better, but still impartial, data analysis. The SRAA will be a key partner in the proposed SRCL project.
- Consistent Standards: Concurrent with the last SRCL project, the *Louisiana Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)* and the *Louisiana K-12 ELA Student Standards* have been revised to represent a clear and rigorous progression across the birth to grade 12 continuum to fuel greater achievement. The State's Comprehensive Literacy Plan and the corresponding SRCL plan include a suite of resources designed to help teachers and those that support teachers make key shifts in practice required by the Standards.

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- Curriculum Implementation Scale: One of the major findings articulated by the last SRCL project, and supported by strong evidence^v, was that a well-implemented, high quality curriculum aligned with the state Standards is critical. In response, the state developed the Curriculum Implementation Scale, which describes the characteristics of a successfully implemented, high-quality curriculum supported by strong or moderate evidence. This tool will be further developed and fully implemented with the proposed SRCL project.
- Professional Development Advancements: LDOE created valuable tools for advancing student ELA achievement in the last SRCL project, but it also learned that these tools only work in the hands of trained, effective educators. The proposed SRCL project builds upon the lessons learned in professional development, providing more training for teachers to use the tools.

SRCL 2017: IMPLEMENTING A HIGH-QUALITY COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY INSTRUCTION PROGRAM

The proposed SRCL program responds to needs identified in the state, especially for economically disadvantaged children and early literacy, and meets the Absolute Priority for this competition because evidence is a central component to the program plan. LDOE will conduct a subgrant competition through an independent peer review process that incentivizes LEAs to implement evidence-based practices. Subapplicants will outline their local high-quality literacy plan aligned with the state's Comprehensive Literacy Plan. LDOE will require subapplicants to base their plan on a local needs assessment, demonstrating how the subgrant will allow them to reach a high-need population in a way that could not be done without the SRCL funds.

Louisiana's own needs assessment has indicated that early literacy, the foundation for all literacy skills, is particularly urgent in the state, and this plan includes a strong design to address the birth-5th grade literacy foundation. This, along with a high rate of disadvantaged youth, positions

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LDOE to meet both Competitive Preference Priorities, highlighted throughout this narrative.

This SRCL project will be led by two Co-Directors currently on the LDOE team. Literacy Program Manager and prior SRCL project Director Jill Slack, PhD, will lead the birth to grade 5 age spans, and Academic Content Director Whitney Whealdon will focus on grades 6th-12th. The Co-Directors will work closely together but will bring their individual expertise to the age spans upon which they are concentrated, while implementing a cohesive project design.

The SRCL project will be supported by additional existing district personnel including:

- English Learners Coordinator: Beverly Diaz specializes in the instructional needs of English learners and will engage in this project to support activities and interventions for English learners in the SRCL project.
- Special Education Director: Laurie Carlton has an extensive teaching background with specific experience in curriculum design and education needs for students in special education. She will support SRCL project activities and resources related to special education needs.
- Regional Support Coaches: LDOE has three Regional Support Coaches, each assigned to a different region of the state. These Regional Support Coaches will incorporate SRCL technical assistance and support into their activities with all LEAs in their districts who are awarded SRCL subgrants. The Regional Support Coaches are Jenny Comeaux, Sara Sharp, and Monique Wild.
- LDOE SRCL Advisors: A team of LDOE staff with literacy expertise are assigned to district support with each of the three team members focused on a specific age band—birth to five-years-old, K-5th, and 6th-12th. Ivy Starns is the advisor for the Birth-Five year old age span and brings her experience with the prior SRCL project to assist with the alignment of Birth-5 and K-5th (Competitive Preference Priority 2). Angelle Lailhengue and Sharon Necaise will also serve on this team as advisors for K-5 and grades 6-12, respectively.

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- **Monitoring Staff:** LDOE has three monitoring staff assigned to conduct SRCL monitoring activities. All three have SRCL monitoring experience. Angela Miles will be the SRCL Monitoring Leader. This application will detail the state's approach to monitoring subgrant recipients in Section C.
- **Department of Strategic Research and Analysis (SRAA):** Detailed further in this proposal, SRAA will support assessment and data collection for the proposed project. SRAA will provide regular reporting to the Co-Directors to ensure the project is in line with the proposed goals, including the federally required GPRA measures, and the timelines for achieving those goals. Josh Posey from SRAA will be dedicated specifically to the proposed SRCL project.
- **Finance Department Support:** The Project Co-Directors will work closely with LDOE's finance department to ensure the program remains on budget. While the proposed budget does not allocate any SRCL funds to this department, there is a solid communication system in place between finance and the Co-Directors to maintain fidelity to the proposed budget.

The qualifications of support staff named above are attached to this application. All staffing supporting the SRCL project are existing staff with new responsibilities related to this project. No non-Federal funds have been supplanted within this project plan.

LDOE proposes SRCL innovations that will align with the state's greater picture of education reform and including the three core components: Standards and Curriculum, Professional Development, and Assessment.

LOUISIANA BELIEVES COMPONENT 1: STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM

Objective: Subgrantees use a high-quality, evidence-based curriculum aligned with the state Standards.

Louisiana's Birth-5 Early Learning and Development Standards and K-12 Student Standards

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Louisiana's Comprehensive Literacy Plan has been revised to include the current *Birth to Five Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)* and *K-12 ELA Student Standards*. These Standards are designed to align, through a progression of approaches appropriate for each age group, across the birth-grade 12 continuum^{vi,vii,viii}. Prior to 2013, Louisiana's expectations for children's learning and development were inconsistent across ages and programs. There were different sets of expectations for infants and toddlers, three-year-olds, and four-year-olds, making it difficult for providers and communities to plan collaboratively, develop comprehensive teacher support systems, and establish seamless transitions for children, whether between early childhood programs or from preschool to kindergarten. To unify expectations for what children should know and be able to do, Louisiana developed comprehensive *ELDS*. All publically funded early childhood providers in Louisiana are now using the *ELDS* under the mandate and guidance of LDOE. The alignment of the *ELDS* with the K-12 Standards across a birth-grade 12 continuum supports Competitive Preference Priority 2 in this SRCL competition.

Louisiana routinely reviews its Standards every seven years to ensure that what is being taught in the classroom will effectively prepare students for college and a career. As part of this process, Louisiana underwent a professional review of the state's ELA standards last year to ensure that they continue to maintain strong expectations for teaching and learning aligned with college and workplace demands. Over 100 Louisiana educators, as well as representatives from Louisiana universities, business and industry, and parent groups, participated in the review and development of new standards for ELA. Included in this process were educators at every level to ensure alignment across the full birth-12 continuum.

Louisiana's Birth-Five Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) and *Louisiana K-12 ELA Student Standards* are (1) research- and evidence-based, (2) aligned with college and

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work expectations, (3) rigorous, and (4) internationally benchmarked. A particular standard was included in the documents only when the best available evidence indicated that its mastery was essential for college and career readiness in a twenty-first-century, globally competitive society^{ix}. The Standards are founded on a progression model which stretches children's mastery of skills and pushes them to reach for accomplishing challenging new tasks. The ELDS and K-12 ELA Standards demonstrate a stairway to proficiency from phonological awareness and phonics to fluency to vocabulary and comprehension.

New for SRCL 2017: To accompany the revised ELDS and K-12 Standards, LDOE will create a Family Guide with resources to help parents understand the Standards and be informed on what the Standards determine that their children should know. The Family Guide will help parents support learning at home toward the milestones and benchmarks set out by the Standards.

ELA Guidebooks

ELA Guidebooks are a vital component of the Louisiana Comprehensive Literacy Plan and were developed as part of the previous SRCL project. LDOE began work in 2013 with Teacher Leaders across the state to develop its ELA Guidebooks and to continue to improve them. The ELA Guidebooks are free curricula that include daily lessons for reading and writing. The ELA Guidebooks are informed by the Louisiana Student Standards and guided by moderate to strong evidence. They are one option for implementing high-quality curriculum, in addition to the Tier 1 commercial curricula described below.

Made for teachers by teachers, the ELA Guidebook units build upon a progression of knowledge to ensure all students can read, understand, and express their understanding of complex grade-level texts. A key tool in the state's Comprehensive Literacy Plan, the ELA Guidebooks units are a coherent set of plans focused on real learning grounded in a collection of

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texts. Each text collection has a shared idea, such as the American Revolution, and contains authentic texts and novels commonly celebrated by teachers and students. Students engage with the texts and ideas repeatedly throughout a unit to build knowledge and tackle big ideas.

Support is central to the design of ELA Guidebooks. Student-friendly slides in the ELA Guidebooks create a consistent structure across all grades and lessons, which help students and teachers stay on track and work toward a series of unit assessments aligned to end-of-year expectations. Student look-fors and example responses set the bar for quality student work. The ELA Guidebooks include clearly delineated support for students with disabilities, English Learners, and other special education considerations. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Assistive Technologies are outlined for use as needed.

New for SRCL 2017: Built into LDOE’s SRCL support plan are contracts with Teacher Leaders who have appropriate expertise to develop guidebooks for Early Childhood and write additional supports for children with disabilities and English learners in all guidebooks. This work will be done outside the school day, allowing the teachers to take on the supplemental contract while maintaining regular duties. LDOE will also contract with vendors, using the state’s procurement rules, to launch a train-the-trainer style initiative to certify educators in SRCL subgrantee LEAs. They will serve as content experts to provide, local support for using the ELA Guidebooks.

Curriculum Implementation Scale

To support the state’s focus on quality evidence-based Standards and Curriculum, LDOE has created a Curriculum Implementation Scale which allows districts to assess the degree to which they are implementing quality, evidence-based curricula and equipping teachers with the tools to effectively use these curricula. The scale is scored from zero to four, with four meaning a high-quality curriculum is in place and teachers take full ownership for using information about

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performance to drive modifications to the curriculum and instruction, and zero meaning a high-quality curriculum has not yet been selected.

To support the Curriculum Implementation Scale, LDOE conducted a full-scale rigorous review of 75 birth-12th commercial curricula that address literacy, ranking them in three tiers:

Tier 1 - Exemplifies Quality: Meets all non-negotiable criteria and all additional indicators of superior quality described below, including alignment with the integration of activities and materials supported by moderate or strong evidence.

Tier 2 - Approaching Quality: Meets all non-negotiable criteria and at least one additional indicator of superior quality, including alignment with the integration of activities and materials supported by moderate or strong evidence.

Tier 3 - Not representing Quality: Does not meet non-negotiable criteria.

Scoring criteria vary slightly according to age/grade-level and include the following non-negotiable guidelines: Standards-aligned; appropriateness, organization, and quality of materials; assessment; quality of texts; foundational skills; coherence of tasks; and text-dependent questions. Additional indicators of quality include: supports for parent participation, scaffolding and support for diverse learners, range and volume of texts, and writing.

Teacher Leaders, which will be detailed in the following section, received training and support from LDOE staff to conduct the curriculum reviews. Through this training, not only were the Teacher Leaders able to assist in the development of quality curriculum reviews, but their capacity has been built to identify quality curricula in the future. Both the Curriculum Implementation Scale and curriculum reviews are available for free LDOE's website.

New for SRCL 2017: The prior 2011 SRCL project led the creation of the Curriculum Implementation Scale and the tiered curriculum review process that supports the scale. Now that

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the work has been done to define what implementing a quality curriculum looks like, the 2017 SRCL project will focus on moving subgrantees to higher levels on the scale. This will be done through technical assistance by LDOE to help LEA leadership identify means by which they can move up the scale, and it will be supported by Teacher Leaders within the school who are trained to identify quality curricula and components necessary to implement them well.

The proposed SRCL project includes contracts with Teacher Leaders to review and rate additional curricula. These Teacher Leaders will be different from those working on the guidebooks. As with the ELA Guidebooks, LDOE's SRCL plan includes a train-the-trainer style initiative to certify content experts to provide local, in-person support for using the selected curricula, utilizing the Curriculum Implementation Scale, and implementing Tier 1 curricula.

Interventions for Struggling Students

LDOE's Comprehensive Literacy Plan outlines guidelines for interventions as part of the Standards and Curriculum component. LDOE believes that increased student learning requires the consistent practice of providing high quality instruction matched to student needs. In Louisiana, districts use a Response-to-Intervention approach. This approach, requires collaborative efforts from LEA staff, school leaders, general educators, special educators, and bilingual/ELL staff to monitor achievement data through coordinating technology to make instructional decisions toward continuous improvement, including appropriate accommodations for disadvantaged students, with acknowledged parent involvement.

New for SRCL 2017: Embedded in this SRCL project design, LDOE has included plans to contract with literacy specialists, which may include some Teacher Leaders, to review intervention programs and develop and delivery training on intervention materials that are supported by moderate or strong evidence. These literacy specialists will be highly experienced

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in the characteristics of effective interventions. The literacy specialists will develop a recommended portfolio of intervention options and will train subgrantees on the use of these interventions, aligned with the state’s literacy plan, the state Standards, and the chosen curriculum for those subgrantees. Interventions outlined in the program will include accommodations for disadvantaged children, including English learners and children with disabilities. Assistive technologies and UDL will be integrated into plans as appropriate.

LDOE will also provide technical assistance to subgrantees to use a pre-teaching model for struggling readers instead of a remediation approach. Evidence demonstrates that the remedial approach can have multiple issues, with the worst being that students typically fall further behind grade level^x. This directly affects the students’ self-efficacy and motivation. A pre-teaching model for catching struggling readers up was successfully implemented with 112 elementary, middle, and high school students in a SRCL district toward the end of the state’s prior project. The district reported that all children improved their reading performance by at least one grade level in less than a semester.

In the pre-teaching model, the intervention teacher works with the classroom teacher to identify skills students will receive the following week during regular classroom reading instruction. The intervention teacher pre-teaches the skills the other students have not had yet. Students get a “preview” of the lesson before any of the other students see it. The model accelerates learning rather than remediating.

LOUISIANA BELIEVES COMPONENT 2: ASSESSMENT

Objective: Subgrantees use approved tools to conduct assessments that are aligned with the state Standards and use real-time data for decision-making and adjustments to practices.

A strong assessment approach is the second component of the *Louisiana Believes* theory of

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educational excellence and a fundamental component of the state's Comprehensive Literacy Plan. LDOE will require accurate diagnoses of student skills, measured against ambitious benchmarks. Results will inform a constant cycle of data-driven learning for students and teachers and influence continuous program improvement.

LDOE believes that to have the most impact on student learning assessments should be:

- **Meaningful:** Fully aligned to the Standards and state summative assessments
- **Minimal:** Take as little time as possible from learning
- **Connected:** Easily connect to curriculum and day-to-day learning
- **Transparent:** Teachers have a shared depth of understanding about the purpose and design

New for SRCL 2017: LDOE will launch its new SRCL project with the Division of Strategic Research and Analysis (SRAA) as a fully-invested partner in the project. SRAA brings an internal partner's depth of knowledge while also serving as an objective, impartial data evaluation partner. SRAA is already fully informed of the scope of the project, as well as the education reform philosophy and evidence-based literacy expertise that are informing the direction of this project. With this unique partnership, the project Co-Directors have an evaluator who has the ability to process and assess outcomes data, they also have a strategic partner who can knowledgeably ensure that the outcomes data impacts program improvement in a high-quality way. SRAA will be key to ensuring the project remains on track to reach its goals and will be a strong asset in the state's participation in the national evaluation.

The District Assessment Guide

LDOE has created a District Assessment Guide to support the development of a comprehensive system of assessments within each school system, and it has also created an Assessment Guide for Early Childhood Education Providers. The guides are designed to help

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districts and Early Childhood Education Providers understand the role of different assessments and ensure that those assessments contribute to continuous program improvement and increased student learning. The assessment guides provide audit tools that guide reflection on the current assessments being given and aids in identifying areas for improvement.

New for SRCL 2017: As part of the Teacher Leader Collaborative meetings, LDOE will build upon its ELA assessment guides by providing SRCL subgrant recipients with technical assistance and support to use the tools.

The State's Assessment Tools

LDOE is building a streamlined comprehensive assessment system through the development of high-quality summative and non-summative assessments that are aligned to Louisiana's Student Standards to provide districts and schools access to one delivery system for all summative and non-summative assessments. The central tool for kindergarten through twelfth grade, which will support the SRCL project, is LEAP 360:

LEAP 360

LEAP 360 is designed to help:

- ***teachers*** understand a more complete picture of student performance at the beginning, throughout, and end of the year. This understanding will help teachers adjust their instruction to help students achieve, including students with unique needs, and accomplish continuous improvement. If used well, these tools will help teachers set a meaningful, ambitious goal for student learning and monitor learning towards that goal.
- ***principals*** identify throughout the system where additional support is needed (e.g. teachers, grade levels, students). In addition, these tools will provide school leaders the information they need to focus educators on the learning that matters most for students.

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- *LEA leaders* monitor progress towards goals and create a strong system that reduces the amount of testing and focuses time on learning.

There are three components to LEAP 360:

1. Diagnostic assessments: at the beginning of the school year, teachers conduct an initial screening to determine student readiness against the grade level expectations of the prior year, defined by the state Standards, to progress to the current year.
2. Formative assessments: throughout the school year, teachers conduct formative assessments to collect real-time data on how students are progressing. These assessments complement curriculum, interventions, and evidence-based practices and allow teachers to make adjustments and refine practices based on the data produced by the formative assessments. LEAs are allowed to use a variety formative assessments, which are grade-level appropriate and supported by moderate or strong evidence. The state's preferred high-quality assessment for K-12 is the EAGLE 2.0 tool, which will be further described in the following section.
3. Summative assessments: The LEAP 360 cycle concludes with year-end summative assessments, which include the LEAP state achievement test. These tests measure student mastery of grade-level standards. They also help to provide context for the diagnostic testing that will begin the LEAP 360 cycle in the following school year.

EAGLE 2.0

EAGLE 2.0 is the state's gold standard for formative assessments, or the second phase of the LEAP 360 cycle. It is an online assessment tool, developed in alignment with moderate to strong evidence, that supports formative assessment in the classroom and can be used to aid and enhance student learning throughout the year. The system provides Louisiana teachers the ability to build online tests, assign them to students, and receive student and class performance reports

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on items aligned to state Standards. EAGLE 2.0 aligns with the ELA Guidebooks and supports teachers in using the Guidebooks to improve student achievement.

TS GOLD

LDOE requires Early Childhood Education providers to use the *Teaching Strategies GOLD*[®] (GOLD) assessment tool for birth through kindergarten. GOLD measures the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are most predictive of school success. For the purposes of the SRCL project, the GOLD measures in the Language and Literacy Development category will be tracked. GOLD includes specific strategies for students with disabilities and English learners.

New for SRCL 2017: LDOE will utilize its current Assessment tools to support the new SRCL project, but it will secure contracts with literacy specialists to create new items for LEAP 360. These new LEAP 360 items will include PreK-grade 2 formative tasks related to common social studies and science topics, as well as securing rights to high-quality, authentic texts.

LOUISIANA BELIEVES COMPONENT 3: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective: SRCL LEAs, teachers, and staff receive professional development to support their execution of the Standards and Curriculum and the Assessment Components of their SRCL plan.

As outlined in this proposal, LDOE has generated significant resources around selecting a high-quality curriculum. This SRCL project will impact the continued growth of high-quality ELA curricula throughout the state. However, the state's needs assessment has demonstrated that many teachers feel that they need additional professional development that focuses on helping them navigate and use their curriculum effectively. Within Professional Development is the technical assistance to ensure that the interventions and practices included in the other core areas—Standards and Curriculum and Assessment—are implemented with fidelity.

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School System Professional Development Planning Guide

LDOE has created a School System Professional Development (PD) Planning Guide to help LEAs create a strong PD plan. An Early Childhood Education PD Planning Guide is also available. Included in the state's Comprehensive Literacy Plan, the PD Planning Guides define a strong PD plan as meeting three criteria:

- Focuses on what matters most: helping teachers use high-quality curriculum effectively
- Provides coherent, cohesive, ongoing professional development
- Leverages existing structures, local educators, and vendors with track records of success.

The guide leads LEAs through a seven-step process to develop and evaluate their plans.

Resources include:

- A PD Planning Template, which helps the district define their vision of success.
- A PD Calendar Template with a monthly planning grid, which includes activities for: District PD, School PD, Follow Up Classroom Support, and Professional Learning Communities.
- A PD Plan Checklist, a self-assessment based on the three criteria for a strong PD Plan.
- Specific support resources for children with disabilities and English Learners.

New for SRCL 2017: LDOE will provide technical assistance to SRCL subgrantees to use the PD guide and will make refinements to the guide based on experience supporting subgrantees.

Professional Development Vendor Catalog

LDOE created this tool to make it easier for schools and school systems to identify vendors who provide professional development packages that meet all of the following criteria: help teachers use high-quality curricula; build teachers' content knowledge in reading; and provide teachers with the opportunity to practice skills and receive feedback.

The tool was updated in 2017 to provide a shortlist of preferred vendors in reading/ELA and

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Early Childhood Education that meet all key criteria, and this list is included as part of the state's Comprehensive Literacy Plan. The vendor guide includes descriptions and scopes of the vendor services, and it also includes at-a-glance cost estimates. Vendors include Achievement Network, American Reading Company, LearnZillion, Teaching Strategies, and Writing Revolution.

New for SRCL 2017: SRCL subgrantees will be expected to use preferred vendors listed in the guide when purchasing professional development using SRCL funds.

Louisiana Teacher Leaders

As part of its prior SRCL project, LDOE launched the Teacher Leader initiative. The Louisiana Teacher Leaders make up a group of over 2,000 highly effective literacy educators from around the state who are focused on high expectations for students. Teacher Leaders include classroom teachers and site-based literacy coaches that encompass all levels of education from birth to grade 12. This group was born out of the core beliefs that evolved under the prior SRCL project: 1) that those closest to students are best positioned to make instructional decisions, and 2) Teacher Leaders are a powerful voice in training fellow teachers.

LDOE provides Teacher Leaders a robust blend of high-quality tools and resources along with in-person and virtual trainings to help them achieve ambitious results with their students, as well as to share that learning with other teachers in their schools. Teacher Leaders are leaders in critical transition points between Early Childhood, elementary, middle, and high school.

These Teacher Leaders are positioned to support LDOE's priorities and to provide technical assistance to ensure that LDOE's programs are implemented with fidelity. Teacher Leaders participate in LDOE's instructional materials review process, including curriculum evaluation and contributing to the ELA Guidebooks. Teacher Leaders currently support updates of the state's Comprehensive Literacy Plan and help create materials for the Teacher Support Toolbox.

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Teacher Leaders also develop and lead job-embedded professional development for peers, modeling evidenced-based strategies and facilitating grade level meetings focused on data. Each Teacher Leader supports between three to eight ELA teachers, with an average of five to six.

New for SRCL 2017: LDOE’s proposed SRCL plan not only leverages the value and expertise of Teacher Leaders, especially in technical assistance, but Teacher Leaders will also be charged with leading their schools’ implementation of their local literacy plans. By making a Teacher Leader the project liaison for each school, LDOE can ensure a strong communication loop between the department and the individual schools involved in the SRCL program. LDOE leverages its professional development and technical assistance training for its Teacher Leaders by giving them the authority and the ownership of the SRCL project within their own schools.

Teacher Leader, Principal, and LEA Supervisor Collaborations

Teacher Leaders, principals, and LEA supervisors participate in role-like Collaboration Meetings four times per year in regional settings across the state, as well as a Statewide Summer Summit. These meetings are designed to build the capacity of these educators to implement sound practices supported by moderate or strong evidence and examine the impact of local interventions and activities on teacher practice and student learning. The meetings include reviews of real-time data on teacher performance and student achievement and encourage collaboration on shared best practices and activities.

New for SRCL 2017: To ensure maximized support for Teacher Leaders, collaboration among SRCL subgrant recipients, and effective communication from the department to all involved in the SRCL project, LDOE will conduct special SRCL “break-out” meetings as part of the Collaboration Meeting and Summer Summit formats. These forums will also provide the opportunity for LDOE to leverage the experience of Teacher Leaders and other school personnel

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from the prior SRCL program in the implementation of the new SRCL project.

Teacher Preparation Programs

Guided by a commitment to build a pipeline of highly effective new teachers, LDOE has launched the program Believe and Prepare: Louisiana's Next Generation Educators. Believe and Prepare forges partnerships between LEAs and teacher preparation programs not only to provide undergraduate education for new teachers, but also to provide an alternative certification track for professionals with degrees in other disciplines to receive a teaching certificate. This alternative certification opportunity is serving to boost the state's literacy efforts because it allows for candidates with education and expertise in English and language to become Louisiana teachers and potentially earn other certifications, such as reading specialist. By partnering with teacher preparation programs, the state has the opportunity to influence teacher competencies to embrace LDOE's priorities and implement the central *Louisiana Believes* components: Standards and Curriculum, Assessment, and Professional Development.

Preparation for Early Childhood Educators is also undergoing innovation with the addition of the state's Ancillary Certificate program. The program requires training from an authorized provider, including Institutions of Higher Education, and certification will be required of any teacher working in a publically funded child care center within two years. By raising child care teacher expectations and increasing access to high-quality preparation, Louisiana will develop a prepared, professional child care workforce that supports all children to enter kindergarten ready. ***New for SRCL 2017:*** For the proposed SRCL project, LEAs will be encouraged to maximize their relationships with teacher preparation programs and invite teacher preparation candidates to participate in SRCL-related professional development opportunities. Some LEAs will already have student teachers in their classrooms participating in SRCL-related PD, and applicants who

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take the initiative a step farther and develop PD partnerships with teacher preparation programs will receive additional points in their subgrant applications.

SRCL 2017: OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, AND TIMELINE

Obj. 1: Subgrantees use a high-quality, evidence-based curriculum aligned with state Standards.			
Activities	Responsible Party	Timeline	Milestones
Create Early Childhood Guidebook. Update ELA Guidebooks and upgrade existing lessons. Include additional supports for children with disabilities and English Learners, and provide training for SRCL subgrantee LEAs.	SRCL Co-Directors, contracted Teacher Leaders, District Support Coaches	Jan 2018-May 2020 Mar 2018-May 2020	Early Childhood Guidebook completed, and updates are made to ELA Guidebooks. Trainings are provided for ELA Guidebooks.
Additional Teacher Leaders are trained to recognize high-quality, evidence-based curricula and conduct additional curriculum review. Teacher Leaders have the opportunity to achieve content expertise certification. LEAs move to higher levels on the Curriculum Implementation	SRCL Co-Directors, Teacher Leaders	Jan 2018-Sep 2020 Feb 2018 Aug 2018, 2019	Trainings are provided for Teacher Leaders on quality curricula and the Curriculum Implementation Scale. Optional content certification is also offered. LEAs conduct initial assessment using the scale. LEAs conduct follow-up assessments using the scale.

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Scale.		May 2020	LEAs demonstrate increase of at least two levels (or maximum score) on the scale.
LEAs use intervention programs that are supported by moderate or strong evidence and employ a pre-teaching model for struggling students.	SRCL Co-Directors, Teacher Leaders, District Support Coaches	Jan 2018-Sep 2020 Apr 2018-Sep 2020	Literacy specialists review intervention programs for evidence-base. Literacy specialists provide training on interventions and pre-teaching model to all LEAs.
Obj. 2: Subgrantees use approved tools to conduct assessments that are aligned with the state Standards and use real-time data for decision-making and adjustments to practices.			
Activities	Responsible Party	Timeline	Milestones
LDOE’s SRAA will be engaged from the beginning of the project and provide ongoing data, including those that support the national evaluation.	SRCL Co-Directors, SRAA	Jan 2018 and ongoing	SRAA will provide monthly reports on all GPRA measures and the proposed goals outlined in this application
LEAs will use the Assessment Guide to evaluate their current assessment systems, upgrading to the state’s required platforms where necessary. LEAs will	SRCL Co-Directors	Jan-Mar 2018	All Subgrantee LEAs will be trained and using approved assessment systems. LEAs will receive monthly data reports from SRAA.

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receive training on required platforms.			
Obj. 3: SRCL LEAs, teachers, and staff receive professional development to support their execution of the Standards & Curriculum and the Assessment Components of their SRCL plan.			
Activities	Responsible Party	Timeline	Milestones
LEAs will use the Professional Development Planning guide to develop a plan that supports SRCL activities through the full project period.	SRCL Co-Directors, Teacher Leaders, LEA Leaders	Jan-Mar 2018	LDOE will provide training to SRCL subgrantees on using the PD Planning Guide. LEAs will have a completed three-year PD Plan in place.
LEAs will contract with preferred vendors for PD services as needed.	SRCL Co-Directors, Teacher Leaders, LEA Leaders	Jan 2018-Sep 2020	As part of the PD planning process, LEAs will identify needed PD support and incorporate PD vendors into their PD plans.
LDOE provides ongoing technical assistance to SRCL subgrantees.	LDOE SRCL Support Staff	Jan 2018-Sep 2020	SRCL LEAs receive targeted assistance based on their needs.
LEAs partner with teacher certification programs to share PD resources.	Teacher Leaders, LEA Leaders	Jan 2018-Sep 2020	Teacher preparation candidates have access to SRCL PD resources.
LDOE conducts quarterly collaboration meetings for	SRCL Co-Directors, Teacher Leaders,	Jan 2018-Sep 2020	Teacher Leader and Supervisors/Principals

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SRCL Teacher Leaders, principals, and supervisors.	LEA Leaders	participate in collaborations and Summer Summit.
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State Level Activities (2)

Assessments are one of three central guiding elements for Louisiana’s education reform philosophy. Not only does LDOE require strong assessment protocols for its districts, schools, leaders, and teachers, it exemplifies its own priority in self-assessment and evaluation for continuous improvement. LDOE is driven by this philosophy: the ultimate goal is to increase student achievement, which is accomplished by increasing teacher performance, and teachers become better with a system of support.

In order to achieve the goal of increased student performance, the state must monitor the system of teacher support that impacts teacher performance, assess the application of teacher practice, examine the data for student achievement, and explore how these components influence each other. To do so, this SRCL program will include data collection across three domains to evaluate effectiveness and impact and to inform continuous improvement: Student achievement, Teacher performance, and Alignment of teacher practice with the state’s literacy plan.

Student Achievement

For the proposed SRCL project, LDOE will measure student achievement through a series of standardized tests and prescribed measurement tools:

- Proficiencies for infants, toddlers, and PreK students will be measured by the GOLD formative assessment that collects data on children’s language and literacy development, including their oral language skills.
- Proficiencies for kindergarten through second grade will be measured by screening assessments such as iSTEOP that collect data on children’s foundational skills and formative

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assessments such as EAGLE and K-2 Formative Tasks that measure children’s understanding of complex texts read aloud or read independently.

- Proficiencies for third through high school students will be measured by the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP).

These assessments are informed by strong evidence. LDOE’s Division of Strategic Research and Analysis (SRAA) manages and evaluates the data from all of these assessments. LDOE also employs a value-added model for assessing teacher performance, which includes teacher observations as part of the overall measurement of teacher success. Because some factors that affect student performance are out of the teachers’ control, the value-added model helps provide accurate data for how well the teacher has performed, based on multiple data points, including observation, and with consideration for the individual challenges faced by students.

LDOE proposes the following goals, which align with and extend upon the required SRCL GRPA measures. Because the baseline scores are unknown until the cohort of subgrantees are selected, all goals are measured by increase in percentage of:

- Grade 3, 5, 8, and 10 students achieving mastery or above on the LEAP test, and
- PreK children achieving significant gains pre/post in oral language.

Grade Level	Increase in Year 1 from Baseline	Increase in Year 2 from Year 1	Increase in Year 3 from Year 2
PreK GOLD	3%	4%	5%
Grade 3 LEAP ELA	2%	3%	3%
Grade 5 LEAP ELA	2%	3%	3%
Grade 8 LEAP ELA	2%	3%	3%
Grade 10 ELA	2%	3%	3%

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LEAP English II			
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Teacher Performance

Subgrantees will select teacher assessment tools, as age-appropriate, from the following:

- Teacher Advancement Program™ (TAP) - LDOE has a cohort of schools implementing the TAP™ model, through a specially funded initiative. This model includes embedded teacher performance assessment tools for K-12th, which are tied to performance-based compensation.
- Compass – For districts not participating in TAP, the Compass tool supports teachers and principals in defining expectations for student learning in kindergarten-grade 12 and monitoring progress against those goals throughout the year.
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS) – This is an observation instrument that assesses the quality of teacher-child interactions in early childhood settings. This model is LDOE’s standard for measuring effectiveness in infant, toddler, and PreK environments.

LDOE’s Division of Strategic Research and Analysis (SRAA) has conversion tools that allow LDOE to review scores on each of the tools—TAP, Compass, and CLASS—on the same scale. By using this conversion tool, all teacher performance scores will be assessed on the same measurement framework, and LDOE proposes the following goals:

	Increase in Year 1 from Baseline	Increase in Year 2 from Year 1	Increase in Year 3 from Year 2
Teachers rated Effective or Highly Effective	5%	10%	10%

Alignment of Teacher Practice to the State’s Literacy Plan

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The third domain for evaluating effectiveness of the proposed project centers around how state-provided resources (and other resources informed by moderate or strong evidence) are being implemented in the SRCL subgrant projects. LDOE has created an Evidence-Based Practice Matrix that can guide districts and schools in the development of appropriate use of evidence-based practices (e.g., strategies, interventions). It requires that LEAs conduct self-assessments on a tiered scoring rubric for those practices. Higher levels of implementation for practices supported by moderate or strong evidence will be scored higher, and subgrantees will self-assess across many components. Subgrantees will use the assessment to identify needs and then select practices that best serve their needs. LDOE will work with subgrantees to implement selected practices and to monitor the quality of implementation of practices. Each year, subgrantees will be expected to demonstrate increased implementation of these practices.

The Evidence-Based Practice Matrix includes specific practices that are supported by strong or moderate evidence, and each practice is scored on a scale of zero to three. Zero means that there is no implementation, and three meaning there is significant proof of implementation. There are a total of 45 evidence-based practices that are measured on the 0-3 scale. A maximum score would be 135 points for SRCL subgrant recipients serving children up to grade 5, and the maximum score for a subgrant recipient serving only grades 6-8 or 9-12 would be 36. The lowest possible score for all groups would be 0.

LDOE proposes the following score increases on the Evidence-Based Practice Matrix:

	Increase in Year 1 from Baseline (original score)	Increase in Year 2 from Year 1	Increase in Year 3 from Year 2
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Avg. LEA Score on Evidence-Based Practice Matrix (for appropriate age band)	10% (or max. score)	15% (or max. score)	20% (or max. score)
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(b) SEA plan for subgrants

SEA Plan for Subgrants (1)

LDOE will conduct a subgrant competition for Louisiana LEAs, which will include school districts and charter schools/charter management organizations with independent LEA status. Throughout this application, the term LEA refers to both districts and charter schools.

LEAs proposing to serve children in kindergarten through fifth grade will be required to include at least one birth to 5-year-old provider serving high percentages of disadvantaged children as part of their application, whether it is the LEAs own early childhood program or a nonprofit provider of early childhood education, with a demonstrated record of effectiveness . In this way, LDOE’s SRCL project aligns with Competitive Preference Priority 2.

LEAs partnering with early childhood programs must show that the program has a demonstrated record of effectiveness. The standard used to determine this record will be the program’s Performance Profile. All publically funded early childhood sites in Louisiana receive Performance Profiles that include a rating based on classroom observations using the CLASS® system described in Section (a)(2). Performance Profiles also include information on the provider’s use of evidence-based practices that measure important quality inputs, including use of ongoing assessment and a high-quality curriculum, the education and certifications of teachers, and program investment in high levels of individual attention for children.

Subgrant applications will require LEAs to prepare and submit a local literacy plan, aligned with the state’s Comprehensive Literacy Plan, an exercise that will benefit applicants regardless

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of whether their subgrant application is successful. The LEA responses to the application will require thoughtful incorporation of the three major focus areas: Standards and Curriculum, Assessment, and Professional Development. Subgrants will be awarded to LEAs that align with the state's evidence-based platforms, including recommended curricula and intervention models. Subgrant applicants will be required to demonstrate how their proposed interventions and practices are informed by moderate or strong evidence. LEAs are allowed to propose curricula and models that are not currently included on the state's list of approved products; however, those products will be subject to the same rigorous review process and will be required to meet the thresholds for moderate or strong evidence. LEAs are required to demonstrate how they have targeted the highest percentage of disadvantaged children.

Subgrant Application Process

The state will conduct one cohort of subgrants, with a three-year project timeline. LEAs may choose to serve one to three schools (or school/Early Childhood Partner groups) based on their needs assessment in their proposed project. Subgrant projects are to begin on January 1, 2018.

The State will award subgrants to serve the following age bands:

- Birth to 5-years-old and kindergarten to grade 5: Applicants in this category will be required to demonstrate that they are serving a contiguous band of children from birth through grade 5 (Competitive Preference Priority 2). LDOE is requiring that subapplicants who wish to serve early childhood and elementary serve the full range of birth to 5-years-old and K-5th.

- Grades 6 through 8

- Grades 9 through 12

The LDOE SRCL budget will demonstrate that allocations to each age band are aligned with the stipulations outlined in the RFP. LDOE is spending 5% of the total award on state-level

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activities, while restricting 95% of the grant for subgrants to LEAs.

The following summary clarifies the distribution of funds:

Total Grant Requested: \$18,500,000.00 per year (3-year total: \$55,500,000.00)

5% of Total Grant for State-level activities: 5% of \$18,500,000.00 = \$925,000.00 per year

Subgrant allotment = 95% of \$18,500,000.00 = \$17,575,000.00 per year

15% of Total Subgrant allotment (\$17,515,000.00) for Early Childhood = \$2,636,250.00 per year

40% of Total Subgrant allotment (\$17,575,000.00) for K-5th = \$7,030,000.00 per year

40% of Total Subgrant allotment (\$17,575,000.00) for 6th-12th = \$7,030,000.00 per year

Remaining Balance of Total Subgrant allotment (\$17,575,000.00) = \$878,750.00 per year (5% of the Total Subgrant allotment)

LDOE has opted to allocate the Remaining Balance of the Total Subgrant allotment toward the K-5th age band, so this application shows the percentage allocated to that age band as 45%. This aligns with the RFP's mandate about the distribution of subgranted funds in that each age band has at least the minimum required percentage of subgranted funds.

For the middle and high school bands, LDOE has calculated **40% of the subgranted funds to be divided equally by grade level between grades 6 and 12**. These bands represent seven grades, so **each grade 6-12 will receive 1/7 of the 40% total budget**. Therefore, the middle school band, representing **grades 6 through 8, will receive 3/7 of the 40%**; the high school band, representing **grades 9 through 12, will receive 4/7 of the 40%**.

Louisiana's electronic grants management system (eGMS) is programmed to ensure accurate allocation, budgeting, and expenditure of funds by age distribution.

A very small number of schools in the state don't serve the full age bands of K-5th, 6th-8th, or 9th-12th. These schools will be able to apply to participate in the SRCL project, but they must

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partner with another school to serve one of the three complete age bands. These schools will be required to document how they will ensure transitions between the two schools are well-planned and are aligned for consistent, continuous literacy programming.

LDOE's first SRCL project required that successful subapplicants demonstrate a birth to grade 12 feeder system. By conducting the program on a cradle-to-college/career approach, LDOE was able to make refinements and learn lessons about how stronger transitions levels can be created, including through the successful Teacher Leader Program.

LDOE is moving away from the feeder system approach for this SRCL project. Best practices have been learned and implemented from the initial feeder model, and for this SRCL project, LEAs are required to conduct a needs assessment to determine where subgrant funds would most significantly impact their literacy needs. This next evolution for the project encourages LEAs to identify where the greatest level of need among the most disadvantaged students is through a needs assessment and construct targeted activities and interventions specifically for that age band. This competition has been restructured to ensure that the greatest percentage of disadvantaged students whose literacy education options are also most in need of improvement are served, aligning with Competitive Preference Priority 1. LEAs are required to select one to three of their highest need schools (or schools/Early Childhood Partner groups) serving the greatest percentage of disadvantaged students.

LEAs are encouraged to use their needs assessment or the needs assessment provided in the state's Comprehensive Literacy Plan to determine where SRCL funds can create the most improvement for the most disadvantaged students and to demonstrate why the funds are needed in their LEA. If the need and opportunity are identified in more than one age group, LEAs may apply to one or more of the three proposed age bands, with each age band area being reviewed

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independently. Separate applications will be required for more than one age band.

LEAs who participated in the prior SRCL competition are eligible to apply for the new project. They will be required to demonstrate how their proposed project does not duplicate efforts from the prior grant. Returning LEAs will be required to demonstrate that they are either serving a different population or, if they will serve some or all of the same population, that they are building upon the successes of their prior grant with new literacy programs.

Prior to the application deadline (see timeline below), the state will conduct webinars, workshops, and trainings to support subgrant applications. The RFP and all subsequent trainings will focus on alignment with the state's literacy plan and will emphasize the use of moderate or strong evidence, including information about accessing the resources identified as supported by moderate or strong evidence by LDOE.

LDOE provides highly transparent details of all application processes on its website. On LDOE's literacy web page, the SRCL 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 communication's office will post announcements in LDOE's weekly newsletters for school systems and early childhood providers directing the public to the web page. LDOE will promote the application process via e-mails, brochures, at meetings, and at public events. The competition will be announced and discussed as part of the State Superintendent's monthly conference calls with LEA Superintendents and as part of LDOE's monthly district and charter planning calls with central office supervisors.

Independent Peer Reviewer Selection and Training

A request for outside peer reviewers will be released concurrent with the release of the

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subgrant RFP. The selection criteria for outside reviewers will include: level of familiarity the state’s literacy plan; prior experience and relevant knowledge of literacy programs; expertise in literacy development; and absence of conflict of interest or connection to any curriculum or literacy-related product. Outside reviewers will be trained by state senior literacy staff on the finer points of the state’s literacy plan and the criteria that will be used to judge the quality of the applications. Training will include inter-rater reliability exercises. Outside reviewers will be grouped into panels of three with each member chosen to bring a diverse professional and experiential perspective, such as special education, ELL, grade-span specific literacy expertise, etc. The panels will be matched with a moderator from the State Academic Content Office with expertise in literacy. 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.

The timeline for the subgrant applications, peer review process, and award deadlines is:

Activity	Relevant Dates
Subgrant application is released.	Oct. 3, 2017
Request for peer reviewers announced in state and national e-newsletters.	Oct. 3-6 2017
LDOE SRCL co-directors and support staff provide webinars, trainings, and FAQs to support subgrant applicants. Dates/locations and materials, including the subapplication package, will be posted in state agency newsletters and local newspapers, prior to the events.	Oct. 9-Nov 10, 2017
LDOE will select peer reviewers. Names of reviewers will not be made available until after subgrantees are announced to prevent lobbying.	Oct. 31, 2017
LDOE SRCL co-directors provide inter-rater training for peer reviewers.	Nov. 6-10, 2017
Subgrant applications due.	Nov. 10, 2017

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Reviewers evaluate subapplicant proposals.	Nov. 13-24
LDOE selects subgrantees based on reviewers’ evaluations.	Nov. 27
State Board approves subgrant awards at its Dec. meeting, and successful applicants will be notified directly and the news made public.	Dec 12, 2017
Successful subgrant recipients will begin programming.	January 8, 2018

Subapplication Content

Applicant LEAs will be required to conduct a needs assessment to determine which of the eligible age bands – birth to 5-years-old combined with kindergarten-grade 5, grades 6-8, and grades 9-12 – demonstrate priority for SRCL funding. LEAs will discuss their local needs assessment and demonstrate how their proposed activities will address the needs identified. LEAs are allowed to submit applications for more than one age band if the needs assessment indicates that multiple age bands require SRCL support. Applicants will be required to describe what population they will serve and why the proposed programs and practices address the needs of that population. Included in this discussion, the LEA will address how it will meet the needs of disadvantaged students and young children, including English Learners and those with disabilities (Competitive Preference Priority 1), and LEAs will be required to prioritize serving the highest percentage of disadvantaged students.

Applicants will be required to outline their proposed programs and practices through their own local literacy plan, demonstrating alignment with the state’s literacy plan. Their literacy plans will be created with the same three core areas emphasized in *Louisiana Believes* and the state’s literacy plan: Standards and Curriculum, Assessment, and Professional Development.

Within their local literacy plans, LEAs will be required to demonstrate how their proposed practices are supported by moderate or strong evidence and how data from the project will

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inform continuous improvement, including a required annual plan update. LEAs are encouraged to utilize programs and practices already designated by the state as supported by moderate or strong interventions; however, LEAs are also allowed to propose programs and practices that have not yet been assessed by the state. Applicants proposing new programs and practices will be required to defend, within their applications, how these practices are supported by strong or moderate evidence, and the state will review these proposed practices against the same review criteria used to assess the pre-designated evidence-based practices.

As applicants for subgrants defend their selection for population served, based upon their own needs assessment, and define the interventions proposed, they will also demonstrate how they will leverage existing resources to align with their proposed plan and how they will use grant funds to access new resources. As a component of this review of resources, subapplicants will be required to address how they will sustain programming and interventions after the completion of the three-year funding period.

LDOE will provide data indicators required for measurement with the project and require that applicants provide both baseline and goal projections on those indicators within the subgrant application. The LEAs will agree to participate in the national program evaluation and provide data for GPRA measures. The local literacy plans must include a plan for measuring program effectiveness and utilizing this data for continuous improvement. The subgrant applicants must address privacy requirements in data tracking and must also include plans for how parents, community members, and stakeholders will be informed about the program's outcomes.

Subgrant applicant LEAs will be required to outline a plan for professional development within the local literacy plan. The LEA will be required to demonstrate knowledge of the state's professional development resources and approved vendors. If the LEA proposes to utilize

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resources outside of those outlined by LDOE, the applicant must demonstrate why these interventions will be effective and how they align with moderate or strong evidence. LEAs that propose partnerships with teacher preparation programs that allow teacher preparation candidates to participate in SRCL-related professional development will receive additional points.

LEA-wide buy-in will be a key part of the local literacy plan. The LEA must demonstrate how they have included multiple and diverse voices in the creation of its local literacy plan and how they have used this process to generate consensus and buy-in for the proposed activities.

Finally, the subgrant applicant LEA will be required to demonstrate a well-planned budget for its proposed activities. The budget must be sustainable and aligned with the funding allocations mandated by the SRCL requirements. LEA budgets will be required to adhere to the supplement, not supplant requirement.

SEA Plan for Subgrants (2)

LDOE will create a rigorous and comprehensive scoring criteria for reviewers to ensure the subgrant competition advances the goals of the SRCL project.

Evidence Base

Reviewers will be fully knowledgeable of the state's resource for moderate or evidence based curricula and interventions, as well as the criteria by which those ratings were determined. The selection criteria will require that subapplicants demonstrate either the use of the state's predetermined evidence-based practices provided in the state's Literacy Plan, or they will be required to demonstrate how new curricula and interventions meet the requirements for moderate or strong evidence. Qualifying selections from the What Works Clearinghouse will be allowed, and reviewers will be qualified to assess the evidence standards.

Alignment of Literacy Plans

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Reviewers will be thoroughly trained in the state's Comprehensive Literacy Plan, as well as the three *Louisiana Believes* core components: Standards and Curriculum, Assessment, and Professional Development. Because all subapplicants will be required to submit local literacy plans aligned with the state's literacy plan and the *Louisiana Believes* priority areas, a scoring rubric will grade the local plan against the state's plan. Subapplicants that demonstrate the greatest alignment with the state's plan will be scored highest.

Interventions for Birth through 5-years and Kindergarten through Grade 5

Reviewers for the birth through grade 5 age band will have prior knowledge of early childhood programs and will be trained to identify cohesive early childhood and elementary education strategies. LEAs applying for funding to serve young children are required to demonstrate a plan that follows children on a continuum from birth through grade 5, a philosophy that has precedent in LDOE's Early Childhood Education Unification efforts. Although the funding for these age spans will be allocated separately to maintain the federal requirements of funding percentages, LEAs proposing to serve young children must serve both birth through 5 and kindergarten through grade 5, and as such, they are also able to access the largest grants (Competitive Preference Priority 2).

To ensure differentiated and age-appropriate services to both Birth to age 5 and kindergarten to Grade 5, LDOE is requiring that any successful LEA subgrant recipients outline a plan for serving both groups. Nonprofit partner providers with a demonstrated record of effectiveness are allowed and encouraged, but the LEA is required to demonstrate a contiguous and comprehensive local literacy plan to ensure alignment between services for birth to 5 years and kindergarten through grade 5. The LEA must outline a plan to coordinate services between early childhood and elementary providers, and their local literacy plan must demonstrate coordinated

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curricula, instructional models, data collection, and goal-setting that is aligned.

Relevance of Evidence to Proposed Interventions

The subgrant applications will center on the LEAs local literacy plan. The plan will detail which interventions are chosen, how they are evidence-based, and how they align with the LEAs needs assessment. Reviewers will be trained to prioritize subapplicants serving greater percentages of disadvantaged children (Competitive Preference Priority 1). Reviewers will also be able to identify a clear connection between the subapplicants proposed activities and the evidence-base that the subapplicant discusses in the proposal.

(c) SEA monitoring plan

During its prior successful SRCL grant, LDOE developed a comprehensive monitoring plan and protocol for ensuring SRCL subgrantees are implementing program activities according to the intent and purpose of the subgrant. Over the course of the program's implementation, the state has made modifications and adjustments to the monitoring plan. Through this process, it has developed a fully-informed and well-documented plan to ensuring fidelity of implementation for SRCL projects, as well as the comprehensive collection of outcome data proposed by the project.

Each subgrant will be awarded based on a scoring rubric which measures how its interventions and practices include literacy instruction that is aligned with the state's literacy plan. As discussed through this application, the state has provided to subgrantees a selection of interventions and practices that are supported by moderate or strong evidence. It will also assess subgrant applications that propose new interventions and practices and will award subgrants based on the extent to which the applicant demonstrates compatibility with moderate or strong evidence. Subgrantees proposing to serve young children must demonstrate a plan to serve birth through age five, as well as kindergarten through grade 5 in a manner that is differentiated and

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appropriate. In keeping with these parameters for a successful subapplication grant, the state will implement its SRCL monitoring plan to ensure that the subgrant activities are implemented with fidelity and remain aligned to the proposed local literacy plan, which aligns with the state's literacy plan. The monitoring plan also includes financial components to ensure the fund distribution remains compliant with the SRCL requirements by age group. Continuation of LEA subgrant awards is contingent upon performance, fidelity to proposed subgrant activities, and adherence to the approved subgrant budget.

Monitoring Procedures and Related Activities

LDOE's monitoring procedures for SRCL provide that each subgrantee receive a comprehensive desk monitoring every year and additionally an on-site compliance review at least once during the period of the subgrant. The desk monitoring includes a review of both financial and programmatic activities. The SRCL **financial desk review** includes financial documentation aligned to program purpose and expenditures (evidence includes an audit of a samples of monthly claims to determine whether costs are allowable and relevant to the approved SRCL budget and project plan. The SRCL **programmatic desk review** includes items such as data collection required for evaluation and performance reports and support structures to ensure successful transition between grade levels. The SRCL **onsite review** includes verification checkpoints in the use of evidence-based practices (e.g., high-quality curriculum, standards-based assessments, effective professional development) described throughout this proposal.

SRCL monitors work very closely with the LDOE's program office to review fiscal and programmatic indicators to determine which subgrantees need closer evaluation, assess the quality of their SRCL plans and ensure implementation activities sufficiently meet the SRCL program goals. LDOE has developed standard monitoring tools and instruments to ensure

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consistency and fidelity when assessing, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting results of full and effective program implementation.

Specific Monitoring and Resolution Steps:

1. SRCL monitors will conduct a SRCL fiscal and program desk review and an on-site program review during scheduled quarter of monitoring using the appropriate monitoring protocols.
2. SRCL monitors review the results of evidence collected through the desk audit and/or on-site reviews, then prepare monitoring reports & send to LDOE's SRCL Program Staff for review.
3. If monitoring activities reveal no findings, a written notice of closure along with a completed monitoring report is disseminated to the local program administrator for inclusion in the subgrantee's annual SRCL monitoring files.
4. If monitoring activities reveal findings of non-compliance, a Notice of Action and Summary of Findings report is issued with instructions on the required steps the program must take toward immediate correction of any findings noted. The Notice of Action will include a corrective action plan (CAP) template, outline of activities requiring correction, and a due date for submission to the SRCL monitoring team leader at LDOE.
5. The SRCL monitor conducts a monitoring closeout conference call, as needed, to discuss any findings or concerns with the contractor.
6. Together, the assigned SRCL monitor and SRCL program staff member will determine whether the activities developed by the subgrantee and included in the subgrantee's CAP will be sufficient and rigorous enough to correct the findings of noncompliance.
7. Once the CAP activities are agreed upon and approved by all parties, the SRCL monitoring team leader will send a written notification the subgrantee confirming the approval of

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the CAP which are then available for immediate implementation toward full correction of all findings of non-compliance.

8. The subgrantee is required to submit evidence of correction to LDOE's assigned contact person at set intervals along with any documentation to validate compliance.

9. Once correction is achieved for each area of non-compliance, the SRCL monitor or assigned monitoring team leader will issue a written notice of closure.

Coordinated Monitoring and SRCL

The Division of Statewide Monitoring at LDOE is responsible for the managing the monitoring oversight and follow-up activities for all federal programs administered by the agency. The agency's current structure for federal program monitoring follows a risk-based selection process, which includes both compliance and performance risks to determine a local education agency's level of risk for annual monitoring and the level of intensity of the monitoring experience. In addition to our coordinated risk-based monitoring selection process, LDOE also allows for the integration of targeted monitoring activities of subgrant awards, like SRCL, which follow a more strategic plan for monitoring program implementation. As part of these coordinated monitoring efforts, expert program staff and experienced monitors have folded the SRCL monitoring requirements into our existing model of coordinated federal program monitoring without compromising the integrity of the program goals. Each SRCL subgrantee is monitored annually according to program requirements to ensure full and effective program implementation with the goal of improving student outcomes in literacy.

The purpose of the Coordinated Monitoring model is to create efficiencies within the Division of Statewide Monitoring. By conducting Coordinated Monitoring, LDOE is able to generate significant savings in staffing because it does not have separate individuals visiting and

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talking with schools about each funding allocation separately. By consolidating efforts, qualified monitoring staff can consolidate monitoring activities. This consolidation also minimizes the interruptions and inconveniences for LEAs, which can address all of their monitoring requirements through a small team of individuals and through site visits that address all of their monitoring needs, rather than having separate site visits for each activity.

(d) Alignment of Resources (10 points).

Serving the Most Disadvantaged Children

In Louisiana, 71% of children enrolled public are economically disadvantaged, a number 5% higher than the national average. Adding to this the numbers of children who are otherwise disadvantaged, such as English Learners and children with disabilities, Louisiana has statistically among the highest percentages of students who meet this priority of any U.S. state.

LDOE intends to target even greater percentages of disadvantaged children above its already high figures. Each subapplicant will be required to target the greatest percentages of disadvantaged children in their subgrant application, detailing how many of the children they proposed to serve meet the definition of disadvantaged and how they are maximizing the impact of improved instruction for that population. The subapplication reviewers will be trained to analyze these projections, and the scoring rubric will weight higher percentages of disadvantaged children serve with additional points. In other words, if two subapplications score the same in all other components of their proposed application, the one that is improving instruction to the greatest percentage of disadvantaged children would receive priority for funding.

LDOE's goal is that at least 80% of the total number of children served through the subapplicants will qualify as disadvantaged, either because they live in poverty, have disabilities, or are English Learners. This percentage is greater than that of the overall student population,

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reflecting the state's emphasis on serving disadvantaged students.

Distribution of Funds

LDOE has allocated 5% of the total requested funds for technical assistance, contractual services as detailed in this proposal, and management costs for the proposed project. The balance of 95% will flow through to subgrant recipient LEAs and any nonprofit early childhood partners approved in their subgrant proposals to implement their local literacy plan with the goal of improving instruction and increasing student achievement.

LDOE is requiring that all subgrant applicants submit itemized budgets showing where funds will be spent. As part of the comprehensive technical assistance given to subgrant applicants, LDOE will provide extensive support and assistance in budget development, including providing samples of successful budgets. The Project Co-Directors 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 sign assurances with their application that they follow the funding distribution and allowable expense guidelines.

SRCL subgrant financials will be handled through the Louisiana's electronic grants management system (eGMS), which is programmed to ensure accurate allocation, budgeting, and expenditure of funds by age distribution. This system is used to manage several of the state's funding initiatives with LEAs and was used with success for the 2011 SRCL competition. eGMS tracks changes made within the system, and LDOE has two program staff and two fiscal staff who review and oversee each budget. eGMS prevents subgrantees from overspending in any age band, ensuring fidelity to the required funding distribution. LDOE will consider budget revisions only if they maintain the appropriate distribution of funds across the age ranges as prescribed.

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Specifically, the distribution and amount of subgrants will follow these parameters:

Birth through Grade 5: For its proposed SRCL subgrant project, LDOE is requiring that LEAs proposing to serve any population Grade 5 and below must serve the entire span of birth through grade 5. The LEA can either include its own birth to age 5 programs, if it has them, or partner with another nonprofit early childhood education provider with a demonstrated record of effectiveness, as measured by Louisiana's Early Childhood Performance Profiles. Subgrantees will be required to demonstrate high percentages of disadvantaged children. Subapplicants will be required to construct their budgets such that **15% of the subgranted funds are expended upon activities for birth to 5-years-old and 45% of the subgranted funds are expended upon activities for students in kindergarten through grade 5.**

LDOE will award a total of 30 subgrants within this age band. The average grant size will total \$351,500.00, which is broken down to \$87,875.00 for birth to age five and \$263,625.00 for kindergarten through grade 5. The total for these age bands will be \$10,545,000.00.

Grades 6-12: For the middle and high school bands, LDOE has calculated **40% of the subgranted funds to be divided equally by grade level between grades 6 and 12.** These bands represent seven grades, so **each grade 6-12 will receive 1/7 of the 40% total budget.** Therefore, the middle school band, representing **grades 6 through 8, will receive 3/7 of the 40%;** the high school band, representing **grades 9 through 12, will receive 4/7 of the 40%.**

For Grades 6 through 8, LDOE anticipates awarding 25 grants with an average grant amount of \$120,514.00. This represents a total of \$3,012,857.00 of the total grant award. LDOE also anticipates 25 grants for grades 9 through 12, but because there are more grades in this band, the average grant amount is higher at \$160,686.00, for a total of \$4,017,143.00 of the grant award. These two total grant awards combined represent 40% of LDOE's total SRCL budget.

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Sufficiency Distribution of Funds

The average subgrant award will range from \$120,514.00 for LEAs proposing to serve only grades 6-8 to \$386,650.00 for LEAs proposing to serve Birth through grade 5. Through the prior SRCL grant, LDOE was able to create a wealth of resources for literacy activities that are already available to these LEAs at no cost. Based upon LDOE's experience with the prior SRCL project and with careful consideration of the investments a subapplicant would be required to make to implement a competitive subgrant proposal with fidelity, such as purchasing new curricula or contracting approved professional development vendors, LDOE believes that the proposed subgrant awards are of sufficient size.

Through its experience with the previous SRCL project, LDOE learned that limiting the subgrant recipients to working with existing staff and not using grant funds to hire new staff aids in project sustainability. Subgrant applications that focus on building capacity of current staff and resources will be evaluated more favorably than those that opt to spend funds on positions that will be unfunded when the grant is complete. Through technical assistance leading up to the subgrant competition, LDOE will help LEAs understand that the overall goal of the project is to build upon the capacity of existing personnel and systems, finding ways to do the work better rather than finding more people to do the work. In this way, the LEA is creating systems that will benefit all future students, extending the impact of their SRCL projects in perpetuity.

Through its last SRCL project, LDOE observed that subgrant recipients that invested in professional development and high-quality, evidence-based tools and materials not only had more sustainable projects but also achieved better results during the grant period. LDOE will provide technical assistance with case studies of previously successful and unsuccessful LEA SRCL project. LEAs will be trained to design projects that maximize current resources and

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invest in activities and materials that will last longer than the grant period.

(e) Adequacy of resources

The proposed SRCL project will provide a total of 80 subgrants to LEAs, including LEAs partnered with Early Childhood Education providers, to serve one to three schools (or school/Early Childhood Partner groups). LDOE anticipates 30 subgrants for Birth to Grade 5, and 25 subgrants each for Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12. In total, the project will serve an estimated 96,400 Louisiana children, most of which will be disadvantaged. The average cost per child per year is \$191.91.

For SRCL subgrantees, LDOE will achieve the following objectives:

1. Subgrantees use a high-quality, evidence-based curriculum aligned with the state Standards.
2. Subgrantees use approved tools to conduct assessments that are aligned with the state Standards and use real-time data for decision-making and adjustments to practices.
3. SRCL LEAs, teachers, and staff receive professional development to support their execution of the Standards and Curriculum and the Assessment Components of their SRCL plan.

LDOE's plan achieves these high level objectives at a cost less than half of its per child cost for its successful 2011 SRCL project. The reason these costs are so low is because LDOE is leveraging the innovations it achieved in the last project and expanding their depth and breadth while also implementing improvements based on the lessons learned from that project.

LDOE is providing at its own cost, without using 2017 SRCL funds, the fundamental tools which are already assessed as high-quality and evidence-based. SRCL funds will support refinement, expansion, and technical assistance for these tools. The LEAP 360 Assessment tool and accompanying data management tools are provided at no cost to districts, as are strong curriculum tools like the ELA Guidebooks. Professional Development is based in the Teacher

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Leader Program, and LDOE is investing SRCL funds in building the capacity of its Teacher Leaders to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project at each of the SRCL schools.

Subgrantees are encouraged to invest their SRCL funds in tools and training that build the schools' overall capacity to provide a high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction program, supported by strong or moderate evidence, and rooted in a local literacy plan that is aligned with the state's Comprehensive Literacy Plan. Allowable Expenses include:

- Tier 1/evidenced based curriculum, including at infant-toddler and PreK levels
- High-quality literary and informational texts to implement ELA Guidebooks/Tier 1 curriculum in birth to grade 12 and to build children's knowledge, enlarge their experience, and broaden their worldviews.
- Evidenced-based intervention materials to support implementation of ELA Guidebooks/Tier 1 curriculum in birth to grade 12 that have been approved by a state review process.
- Purchase additional seats, above what the state is already providing, for content experts, PD training to certify local staff and pay for materials (texts, copies for redelivery), leave time, and travel to attend the trainings
- Contract with approved vendors in PD Vendor Catalog or out-of-parish state-trained and certified content experts to deliver PD locally for needs identified through the use of the LDOE PD Planning Guide
- Provide substitute pay and/or stipends for professional development

(f) Quality of the project design

LDOE's proposed SRCL project builds upon the successes and lessons learned from its prior SRCL project, as well as the gains the state has made in ELA programming over the last decade.

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The state's plan for distribution of funds is designed to ensure LEAs target the highest need students, and the project is designed to align not only with LDOE's Comprehensive Literacy Plan but also to fit in the context of the state's larger education reform initiative *Louisiana Believes*. The project focuses on the three core elements of *Louisiana Believes*: Standards and Curriculum, Professional Development, and Assessment.

This application has demonstrated a large number of resources that LDOE has in place to support the proposed project, as well as outlining additional advancements that the state will undertake with the new SRCL project. Resources already in place to support the proposed project include:

- A comprehensive Teacher Support Toolbox, which includes ELA Guidebooks with daily lessons developed and reviewed by highly-effective teachers and reviewed curricula demonstrating which curricula are supported by strong or moderate evidence.
- A Teacher Leader program, which ensures that every school has a highly effective teacher who receives additional training and support from LDOE and who is responsible for bringing those training resources back to the school and providing technical assistance and support for all of the other teachers.
- LDOE's Division of Strategic Research and Analysis, which provides real-time feedback and access to assessment data within LDOE to allow for data-driven decision making.
- Consistent standards across the Birth to 12th grade continuum and a Comprehensive Literacy Plan aligned with those standards.
- A Curriculum Implementation Scale which allows districts to assess the quality of their curricula across all levels, the extent to which they are informed by strong or moderate evidence, and the fidelity with which they are implemented.

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- Professional development tools, including professional development guides for all levels along the Birth-12th continuum.

New for 2017 SRCL: This project will build upon these foundations, adding these innovations:

- The ELA Guidebooks will be continuously updated, and additional support materials will be added to make this resource more comprehensive.

- The Curriculum Implementation Scale will be further supported with ongoing curriculum reviews and additional training to use the tool.

- Additional training will be offered for interventions supported by evidence.

- Teacher Leaders will be appointed as local, school-level leaders for implementing the Comprehensive Literacy Plan and will receive additional supports and technical assistance to insure implementation with fidelity at their school sites.

- LEAs will receive technical assistance directly from the state and through Teacher Leaders on appropriately staffing interventions to ensure maximized efficacy.

- Literacy specialists will review the state's current assessment tools and adjust to ensure alignment with strong or moderate evidence.

The proposed activities are all designed to build capacity within each LEA and school to continue the program. The program is designed to rely upon building sustainable resources, rather than adding a corps of staff who will be unfunded after the project period. Rather, the project relies upon building tools and capacity across the state at the district and LEA level, centered around the state's Comprehensive Literacy Plan and the corresponding local literacy plans. Through the proposed SRCL project, these plans will be implemented successfully, and their ongoing execution will become a part of the schools' and districts' core programming.