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July 25, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Education Study Committee

FR: Pamela Herman, J.D.

**RE: COMMITTEE REQUEST: PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
APPLICATION FOR FUNDS FROM THE FEDERAL STRIVING READERS
COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY PROGRAM**

In November 2010, the US Department of Education (USDE) informed a member of the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC) staff that the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) had been awarded a \$150,000 formula grant to assemble a state literacy team and to develop a comprehensive state literacy plan for submission to USDE for a larger discretionary grant under the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program.

At the May 2011 meeting of the LESL, Secretary-designate of Public Education Skandera informed the committee that PED had applied for a \$15.0 million, five-year grant from Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program. The Secretary-designate told the committee that PED expected to hear whether the application was funded in August 2011.

In response to a request from the Chair at the June 2011 LESL meeting for a copy of the application, PED has provided a copy of the narrative portion of the proposal (see Attachment).

New Mexico Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program

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New Mexico Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program

Project Narrative

INTRODUCTION

During the 2011 legislative session, New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez developed the “Ready for Success” initiative. Based on the premise that research shows until third grade, children learn how to read, but beginning in fourth grade, children read to learn, the critical component of the Ready for Success initiative was reading. If children do not have the core, fundamental reading skills, they will struggle not just in more advanced reading, but in other subjects as well, such as math and science.

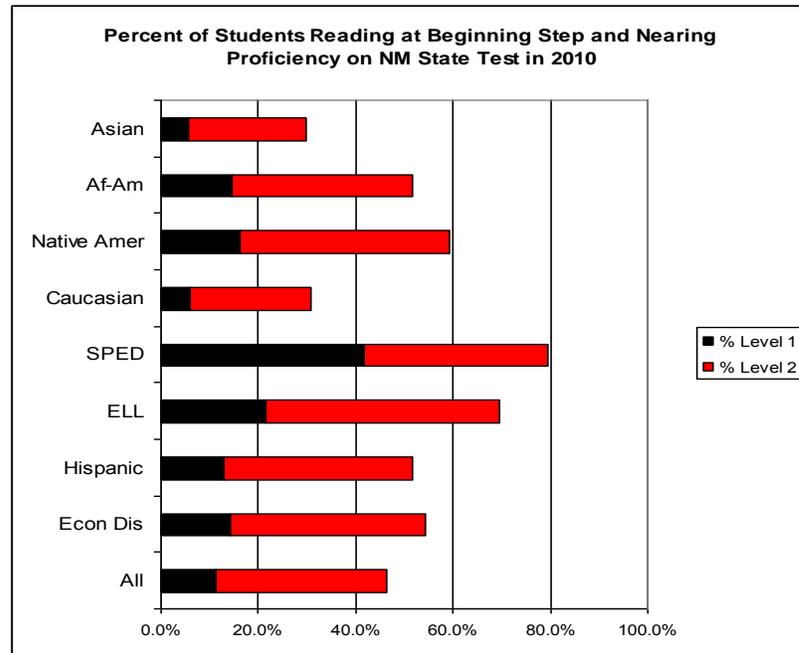
With approximately 320,000 K – 12 students, New Mexico’s demographics are distinctive: 57% of the State's K – 12 students are Hispanic, 29% are White, 11% are Native American, 3% are Black, and 1% are Asian or of other backgrounds. New Mexico is ranked 36th in overall population size, has the fifth largest land mass in the U.S. (121,665 square miles), and ranks 45th in the nation in population density. Further, with only 6.3 people per square mile, New Mexico faces unique challenges in educating students in rural areas. New Mexico has been a majority-minority state since its inception with 22 distinct Indian tribes, pueblos, and nations.

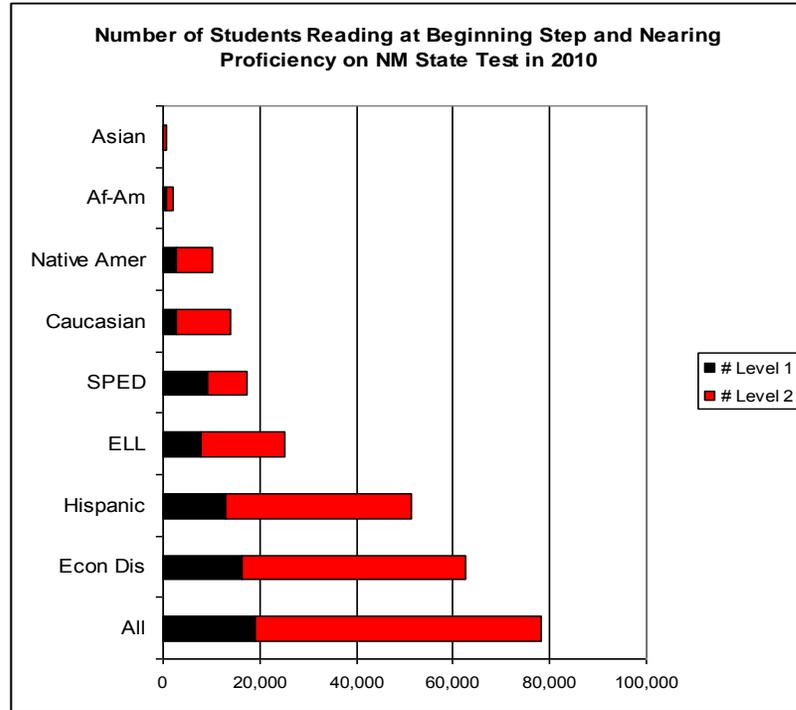
According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), nearly one-half of New Mexico’s fourth grade students are unable to read at a basic level and only 26 percent demonstrated proficiency in mathematics. In eighth grade, more than one-third of students are unable to read at a basic level and 41 percent score below grade level in math. The NAEP data correlates to the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment results in the following way:

- Grade 4: New Mexico reading proficiency = NAEP scale score of 210 relative to NAPE basic at 208 and NAPE proficient at 238.

- Grade 8: New Mexico reading proficiency = NAPE scale score of 248 relative to NAPE basic at 243 and NAPE proficient at 281.

New Mexico state student achievement data shows that almost 50% of our 3 – 8 students are not proficient readers. In real numbers, that means that almost 80,000 students annually are not reaching proficiency in literacy.





The overall goal of this program is to significantly increase the number of New Mexico students who score proficient on the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment, with a specific emphasis on the achievement of our most disadvantaged students.

These data points are underscored by New Mexico schools AYP status. In 2010, 547 of New Mexico's 827 schools did not make AYP. Specifically:

- School Improvement I: 75 schools;
- School Improvement II: 104 schools;
- Corrective Action: 60 schools;
- Restructuring I: 69 schools; and
- Restructuring II: 239 schools.

For too long, New Mexico has lacked a consistent, statewide approach to the literacy challenge facing our students. Through the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program

(SRCL), the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) will implement a statewide literacy framework that focuses on the following priorities: Absolute Priority 1: improving learning outcomes from birth through grade 12 with an emphasis on the outcomes of disadvantaged students, Absolute Priority 2: enabling data-based decision making, and Competitive Preference Priority: expanding the use of technology to not only increase student achievement and engagement, but to also increase teacher effectiveness.

Through SRCL, NMPED not only intends to implement a statewide framework for improved literacy outcomes, but to also usher in a new era that emphasizes the notion that all students, regardless of background, can become proficient readers and writers. What is outlined in this proposal will become the framework for literacy reform in New Mexico. The Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program will enable New Mexico to jump start this critical work and lay the foundation for a long-term literacy initiative. Ensuring that all New Mexico students have every opportunity necessary to become a proficient reader extends far beyond the bounds of one program or funding source. Further, through SRCL, New Mexico intends to create a cadre of experts in our schools that understand how to make instructional decisions based on data, train teachers on how to effectively deliver interventions, increase the use of technology to support teachers and learners, and engage families in a meaningful manner so that children are supported in their homes.

In year one of the program, New Mexico intends to serve up 25,000 students. In year two, that number will increase to 50,000 students. With an average school size of 386 students statewide, approximately 65 schools will be served in year one and 130 schools will be served in year two. As part of the program, all participating students will be screened, and the State anticipates that between 30 – 40% of the students screened will need further intervention. As

implementation of the program precedes in years three – five, the budget allows for the full K – 12 population to be screened using short cycle assessment tools.

STATE-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

In an effort to maximize resources, NMPED will use the first year of the SRCL grant award as a planning year. Specific activities in year one will focus on the development of a statewide literacy plan. The literacy plan will serve as the framework for the subgrant competition. And to ensure that the students and schools most in need are served, NMPED will frame a needs assessment for applicants based on the New Mexico Standards Bases Assessment (SBA) data. Key components of the literacy plan will be:

- The development of specific student outcomes for students aged birth – grade 12 that will be measureable against specific targets;
- The development of a subgrant competition so that the largest number of disadvantaged students can be served through this program;
- Alignment of activities under this grant to New Mexico’s school grading initiative so that the lowest performing schools and students are prioritized;
- Alignment to School Improvement activities underway;
- Adoption of short-cycle assessment tools that are valid and reliable and provide baseline, diagnostic, and progress monitoring data;
- Adoption of proven and evidence-based intervention programs that integrate technology and classroom instruction to maximize student learning and ensure that students are being supported in a manner that best meets their individual learning needs;
- Professional development not only on the best practices of literacy instruction, but also on data based decision making;

- Development of specific activities to support disadvantaged students that are evidence based and can be measured for specific student learning outcomes; and
- Literacy development beyond the schoolhouse door -engaging families beginning at birth in the literacy development of their children.

The activities and components outlined above are intended to not only maximize the number of students and schools served, but to also create seamlessness across the birth – college and career-ready continuum. To ensure that success is achieved, NMPED will look to existing resources and structures to support the work undertaken as part of the program. In addition to aligning activities under the School Improvement Grant program (for schools receiving resources and for those that are not), to after-school programs, to community-based programs that seek to increase family engagement, all of these various resources will be critical.

Assessments

The SBA provides annual data on student proficiency in reading in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11. In addition to using the SBA to determine student proficiency rates, beginning in the 2011 – 2012 school year, the SBA will also be used to measure student growth as part of New Mexico’s school grading initiative. The current SBA is based on the New Mexico Standards for Excellence. Further, beginning in 2009, all LEAs were required to adopt or develop a uniform curriculum aligned to the New Mexico academic standards. This has been a critical step to providing our K – 12 students with a fully aligned standards and assessment system.

A good accountability system recognizes both achievement and progress. Rewarding achievement maintains high standards and expectations, while capturing progress gives credit to schools for improving the learning of struggling students, even if they aren’t yet on grade level but making progress. Aligning activities under the SRCL to New Mexico’s school grading

initiative will allow participating schools to not only measure student proficiency, but also student growth on the SBA. A 2008 report by the Regional Education Laboratory Southwest found that “Formative assessments help educators target instructional practices to meet specific student needs and monitor and support student progress toward valued state learning outcomes.”

Because a key pillar of NMPED’s literacy framework includes data based decision making, NMPED will procure short cycle assessment tools that participating schools and districts can use to support teaching and learning. These assessments will then be available for use by subgrantees.

Assessments are only as powerful as the data they yield, therefore, NMPED will prioritize technology-based short cycle assessment tools that not only provide teachers immediate and actionable data, but also support the implementation of a three tiered literacy intervention program. The 2003 book *Assessments for Learning: Putting it into Practice* detailed that when teachers can use data to drive instruction, outcomes for students increased significantly, as did their own practice and effectiveness.

Assessments used for screening can also be administered throughout the year for ongoing progress monitoring. In addition, a variety of curriculum-embedded, criterion reference assessments along with ongoing diagnostic assessments will regularly track student progress and provide ongoing progress monitoring. A variety of reporting tools will be made available to teachers to use for progress monitoring and data-driven decision making. Because the accompanying evaluation will be based on both SBA data and short cycle assessment data, it is critical that the data these assessments yield is valid, reliable, and consistent across the state.

Any short cycle assessment adopted by New Mexico will be aligned and correlated to the SBA so that students, parents, teachers and administrators all know that a proficient Lexile or

scale score on the short-cycle test will (with 80+% probability) result in the student scoring at reading proficiency on the New Mexico state test.

It will be critical for the short-cycle assessment to have the breadth of test items to be accurate from Kindergarten through grade 12. This will ensure consistent and accurate scores for students of multiple grade and reading levels. This approach will also provide educators with consistent data for measuring reading proficiency and progress at grades 9-10, where there is no NM state test.

Ensuring the right students are placed in the appropriate intervention programs and at the right point of entry is critical to student success. However, in addition to providing reliable interventions that meet individual student learning needs, the State will work with LEAs to provide the appropriate accommodations necessary so that all students needing intervention can fully access the curriculum and interventions. NMPED will utilize computer-based screening tools to assess students' reading skills and place them in the appropriate literacy intervention programs along with an electronic reading inventory that will assess students' reading levels and report them as Lexile® measures. As Lexile® measures are recognized across the nation, they will provide NMPED with another measure to use to evaluate student performance.

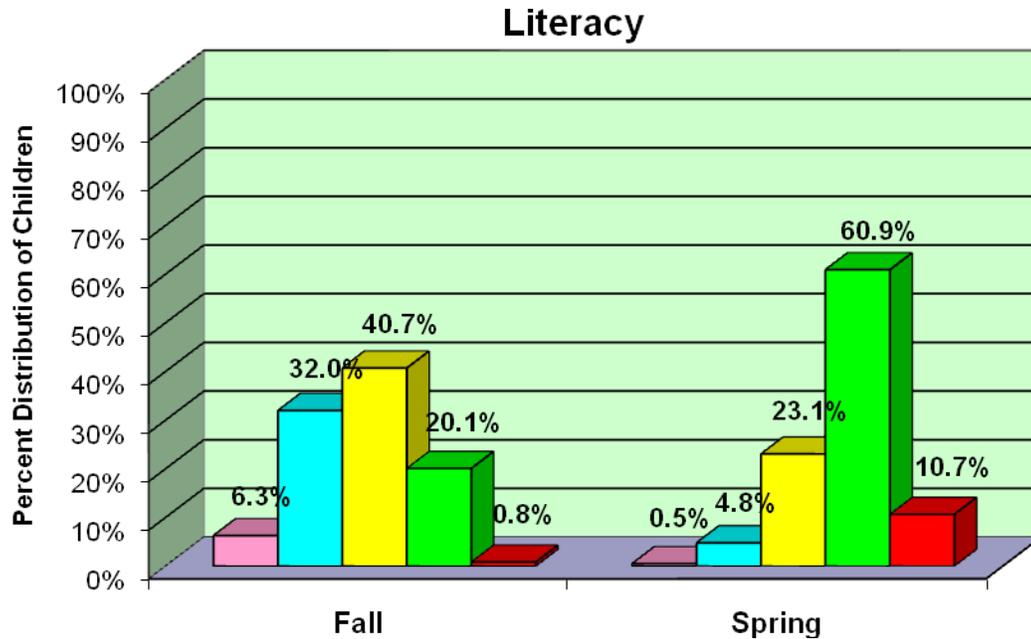
If students score BR (Beginning Reader) to 400 Lexile®, teachers will administer a foundational reading assessment to determine the students' word reading efficiency. The foundational reading assessment uses various discrimination tasks to determine whether the root cause of a student's reading difficulty is an inability to decode. Based on these two assessments, teachers will be able to place students at one of two points of entry in the intervention software. By administering the reading inventory and foundational reading assessment three to four times per year, teachers will be able to provide progress on foundational literacy skills and reading

comprehension. Ongoing diagnostics on students' instructional strengths and weaknesses will be collected through the instructional software performance data on a daily basis and reported in the form of electronic reports to teachers, administrators, and parents.

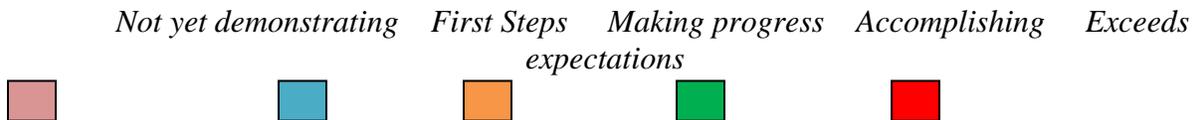
For the youngest New Mexicans, the State has been offering pre-k since 2005. Standards requiring all lead teachers to have bachelor's degrees and licensure in early childhood education are being phased in over time, such that teachers must meet this requirement within 5 years of their New Mexico pre-k site being established. The New Mexico pre-k program has identified several essential elements that are required in all State funded programs. Those elements are:

- Family and Community Collaboration;
- Professionalism;
- Health, Safety, and Nutrition;
- Child Growth, Development, and Learning;
- Developmentally Appropriate Content and Learning Environment and Curriculum Implementation;
- Assessment of Children; and
- Evaluation and Continual Improvement of Children.

Rather than develop a new model for early childhood sites, NMPED will use the framework already in place to support activities under the SRCL program. Data from the 2009-2010 school year showed that in the fall, 20.1% of pre-k participants were meeting expectations. In the spring, that number rose to 60.9%.



*Early Learning Outcomes
New Mexico PreK – PED Programs
Fall-Spring Comparison SY2009-2010
n=2163*



Specifically, in terms of assessment, NMPED currently utilizes assess oral language skills using the New Mexico Child Observational Assessment. This tool incorporates both observational and portfolio assessments of 3 and 4 year olds participating in the New Mexico pre-k program. In addition to measure of oral language skills, the New Mexico Child Observational Assessment also assesses listening, reading, and writing skills. This assessment is administered in both the fall and spring, so both student proficiency and growth data is available. In an effort to increase consistency, NMPED will continue the use of the New Mexico Child Observational Assessment as part of the SRCL program. As is currently the practice in the New

Mexico pre-k program, as well as the Head Start programs operating across the State, literacy development will be infused through family engagement programs.

Interventions

New Mexico will also focus on using a three tiered model for Response to Intervention to accelerate the literacy achievement of our disadvantaged students in grades 3 – 12 through the use of research and evidence-based programs that incorporate adaptive technology, comprehensive reporting with embedded and real time professional development to allow progress monitoring, and teacher support materials and professional development to ensure effective classroom instruction to meet the differentiated needs of each student in the classroom. Targeted interventions have the capacity to generate detailed reports that allow teachers to identify and measure proficiency of individuals and groups of students, as well as to identify and measure skill areas where students require further improvement. This project will also include district and state level progress monitoring with real time data related to the number and progress of students placed within each of the tiers and their progress between tiers.

The research is clear: technology is an effective tool to impact and accelerate literacy achievement in struggling students. NMPED will utilize technology to deliver personalized instruction using adaptive technology that customizes and scaffolds instruction based on student response. As a result, each student's experience with the technology will be meaningful and engaging, as the lessons will be tailored specifically to meet their individualized needs. Technology will also help to ensure that students requiring accommodations will still have access to a reliable intervention program. While the three tiered system is critical to meeting student needs, LEAs must also work to ensure that participating students can access the intervention in a meaningful manner.

A tier I inquiry-based learning curriculum aligned to Common Core Standards will be delivered digitally to provide students with the opportunity to engage meaningfully in real-world problem solving and the development of 21st Century skills. While there are many skills students need to be successful, productive citizens in the 21st Century, there is one core competency essential for success – literacy. For Tier I, NMPED will expect LEAs to rely on comprehensive English Language Arts programs and tools designed to accelerate students by preparing them with the literacy expertise necessary for college, careers, and life. By utilizing digital English Language Arts resources, students will develop skills in navigating the web, asking relevant questions, and reaching group consensus via technology—all necessary skills for the 21st Century.

Tier II individualized and personalized instruction will address the needs of students whose literacy achievement is below the proficient level. Recognizing that raising achievement is everyone’s task, NMPED will utilize a comprehensive system of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development proven to raise reading achievement for students in grades 3 – 12. A web-based instructional system will provide individualized and personalized instruction through adaptive instructional software, high-interest literature, whole- and small-group direct instruction in reading and writing skills, and algorithmic grouping support for data-driven differentiation. The core components of this system are designed to address literacy and language problem areas for intensive, accelerated, and extensive reading instruction. The Tier II reading intervention program scaffolds students to become independent readers, thinkers, and writers who can unlock, question, comprehend, and respond to increasingly complex text.

Tier III instruction includes a foundational reading program for the most challenged struggling readers in grades 3 – 12. Intentionally metacognitive, this system helps students to

understand the English language system and uses a combination of software-based and teacher-led instruction that will provide students with adaptive, individualized learning as well as teacher-mediated direct instruction, guiding students along a systematic path from phonemic awareness to fluent reading.

A single management system, for all three Tiers of instruction, will provide rapid time analysis, immediate feedback, and targeted instruction for personalized academic support. The system will use technology to measure over 250 data points relative to student reading achievement and works with all of the instructional programs. The software generates detailed reports that identify and measure skills students have mastered, as well as areas where they require further instruction and practice. By utilizing one instructional management system, differentiated instruction for all students is possible by providing over 40 detailed reports on student achievement. Reports link student performance data to specific lessons for instruction. Because data is so quickly obtained and shared, ELL and Special Education students can be quickly placed in intervention programs as appropriate.

The diverse New Mexico student population, while a tremendous asset to our future, also presents some unique challenges. New Mexico will prioritize interventions that embody the research around best practices for teaching ELL and special needs students through individualized instruction that supports building background knowledge and academic vocabulary and allowing for the tiered and scaffolded instruction critical to New Mexico's Response to Intervention approach to literacy instruction. With regards to ELL, software will provide translation capabilities to help students with beginning and intermediate English proficiency levels experience success.

In consideration of tools, NMPED will focus on the core elements of instruction to ensure that target intervention were developed on the principles of universal design, including best practice teacher-directed instruction, maximized student engagement, and individualized instruction using adaptive technology designed to accelerate students to mastery. NMPED will look toward interventions that have been research-tested and practice-validated with consistent evidence of effectiveness across the country in a variety of educational contexts and with various student populations. Highest priority will be given to technology tools that are evidence-based and that meet gold or silver research standards and with high internal and external validity, such as a proposed technology intervention that has been proven effective in 37 studies, five peer-reviewed journals and the What Works Clearinghouse.

Additionally, NMPED will prioritize interventions that provide research-based literacy instruction through adaptive technology and supported classroom instruction that has been proven effective in raising student achievement. These interventions employed for Tier II and II students will accelerate literacy development in students struggling to read and learn in grades 3-12, in essence serving as a bridge to the Common Core State Standards, accelerating students who are significantly below grade level to the point where they can learn the Common Core State grade-level standards alongside their peers.

The intervention needs among children aged birth – five vary from those of older students. Specifically, the categories of intervention extend well beyond the classroom into the home. In the current New Mexico pre-k program, literacy interventions are based on student data that is collected in the fall. The interventions delivered are then aligned to the areas in which the student was showing deficiency.

The National Early Literacy Panel recommended several intervention categories, including:

- Code-focused interventions: Interventions designed to teach children skills related to cracking the alphabetic code. Most code-focused interventions included PA instruction.
- Shared-reading interventions: Interventions involving reading books to children. These interventions included studies of simple shared reading and those that encouraged various forms of reader-child interactions around the material being read.
- Parent and home programs: Interventions using parents as agents of intervention. These interventions may have involved teaching parents instructional techniques to use with their children at home to stimulate children's linguistic or cognitive development.
- Language-enhancement interventions: Studies examining the effectiveness of an instructional effort aimed at improving young children's language development.

NMPED will support participating early childhood subgrantees to develop their intervention practices so that they are reliable, meet student needs, and align to identified best practices. Additionally, a Pew Center on the States policy brief in 2010 found that children are not only better prepared for school, but achieve at higher levels when their families are involved. As such, NMPED will look to support subgrantees in their efforts to engage families as part of the intervention activities in programs serving children aged birth – five.

Professional Development

New Mexico will provide ongoing professional development, both face-to-face and online in order to provide teachers of all levels with the instructional strategies they need to address the diverse needs of our students. Job-embedded professional development will be a critical component to increasing teacher's effectiveness. In addition to job-embedded

professional development, the professional development will include program dependent professional development before, during, and after use of selected materials, program independent professional development related to improving instructional skills in reading or related skills such as assessment and classroom management, and online professional development. Online and on-demand professional development will allow for teachers and schools leaders to access resources immediately and at all times. For example, a teacher could access video modules that aid her development of lesson planning to support her instruction before or after school.

The importance of professional development to the overall results that will be achieved under this program cannot be overstated. A 2007 Regional Education Laboratory Southwest report found that teachers who receive substantial professional development – an average of 49 hours – can boost their students’ achievement by approximately 21 percentile points.

Because New Mexico data is clear that our 4th and 8th grade students are of particular concern, NMPED will also implement job-embedded professional development for teachers in grades 3, 4, 7, and 8. Addressing the literacy deficiencies on students in the 4th and 8th grades will require seamless implementation of effective literacy strategies in the preceding grades to maximize student learning opportunities. The reasoning for focusing job embedded professional development in grades 3, 4, 7, and 8 is simple: what happens in grade 3 will have a direct impact on student outcomes in grade 4 and what happens in grade 7 will have a direct impact on student outcomes in grade 8.

In addition to professional development on literacy instruction itself, New Mexico is committed to providing our teachers with professional development on the Common Core Standards and the grade specific implications of those standards on English Language Arts and

literacy instruction. We plan to support our teachers across New Mexico, birth – grade 12, with understanding and internalizing the cumulative progression of the Common Core Standards, which will enable them to meet the college and career readiness expectations by the end of high school.

Because not all New Mexico teachers are familiar with short cycle assessment data, and how to leverage data to drive instruction, NMPED will prioritize professional development on data-based decision making. A 2006 report by the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning non-profit found that when data collection and analysis are purposeful, educators are better able to identify patterns of outcomes and design strategies to enhance student learning. Building the capacity of our school leaders to run data discussions, and building the capacity of our teachers to interpret and act of data, will be key to ensuring that the implementation of a three tier instructional model is effective and productive for students. Resources such as a robust online professional development tool that provides instructional video, management tools, and instructional materials will provide NMPED with the capacity to support this critical professional development and allow the option of college credit granting course opportunities to the teachers of New Mexico. Further, because the State is prioritizing technology based professional development resources, our ability to disseminate these tools to a geographically diverse set of teachers and school leaders will be greatly enhanced.

Technical assistance to subgrantees will extend beyond traditional professional development for teachers. Because school and district leaders are critical to academic success, NMPED will provide technical assistance to school and district leaders to build their capacity to support their teachers. Through the SRCL literacy program, New Mexico wants to build

capacity across the State to sustain the activities outlined in this proposal and the statewide literacy plan long-term. Ongoing technical assistance will enable that sustainability.

Evaluation

To ensure that NMPED and participating LEAs and early childhood providers are maximizing SRCL resources and improving the outcomes of readers, the State will contract with an independent evaluator. In addition to key research questions outline below, NMPED will look to see if specific student outcomes aligned to the priorities of this program were accomplished.

- Did student literacy achievement, and specifically the achievement of disadvantaged students, improve?
- For students already showing proficiency, did they continue to achieve high levels of achievement?
- Did teachers become more effective in the basic tenets of literacy instruction? And did their ability to make data based instructional decisions increase?
- Did technology enhance overall student outcomes and teachers practice?

Specifically, NMPED will ask the evaluator to provide reports and data on the following research questions to determine if the achievement outcomes for students and teachers outlined above were met:

- What are the effects of the intensive, targeted reading intervention on student reading achievement? Specifically, are short-term effects evident during the intervention, immediately after the intervention, and after one year of completion of intervention?

- How does the intensive, targeted reading intervention differentially affect subgroups of students (English language learners, students in special education, students receiving free/reduced-price meals, and ethnic minority students)?
- What is the association between the intervention effects and program implementation- are changes in reading achievement associated with variation in program implementation?
- How does implementation of the intervention affect teachers' beliefs and perceptions about reading instruction? Additionally, are teachers implementing the interventions with fidelity?
- Do students' attitudes towards reading and school change as a result of the intensive reading intervention?
- What contextual factors are involved in the implementation of the intervention (i.e., factors that promote or hinder successful implementation of the program)?

In order to perform the evaluation properly, key data points will be collected through several reporting mechanisms already in place across New Mexico. Those data points are:

- Student ID, name, grade, schools, teacher, and time frames in the program,
- Usage data at the student, class/teacher, school, and district levels to measure dosage of treatment,
- Implementation fidelity metrics at the student, class/teacher, school, and district levels, and
- Student pre-test, progress monitoring, and post-test gains data to measure gains plus the accuracy of placement within the program. I encourage selection of assessment tools that permit measure of gains along a single, vertical scale to measure growth and proficiency.

The results of the evaluation will be used to inform practice at both the state and local level to ensure that teachers are improving in their practice, and that students are making continuous improvement. Ideally, the results of the evaluation will inform NMPED on the effectiveness of selected short cycle assessments and intervention and instructional programs.

The results of the evaluation will be based on annual data from the SBA, specifically data on student's proficiency rates in grades 5, 8, and 11. Currently, 59.1% of 5th grades students are proficient or advanced, 60.5% of 8th grade students are proficiency, and 54.8% of 11th grade students are proficient. All data evaluated and reported will be disaggregated for disadvantaged students. Additionally, New Mexico will also be able to look at growth for the lowest achieving students through our school grading program and incorporate that data into any report and evaluation.

Because the SBA is a "static" measure that only looks at student proficiency once per year, NMPED will utilize data points collected through short cycle assessments that will be procured and implement through the SRCL program. Specifically, progress monitoring will be required for Tier II and Tier III students. Looking at the growth of those students in grades 5, 8, and 11 will allow for a more complete picture of student achievement and growth.

For 4 year olds, NMPED will look at data collected through the New Mexico Child Observational Assessment. Data from the 2009-2010 school year showed that in the fall, 20.1% of pre-k participants were meeting expectations. In the spring, that number rose to 60.9%.

This tool incorporates both observational and portfolio assessments of 3 and 4 year olds participating in the New Mexico pre-k program. In addition to measuring oral language skills, the New Mexico Child Observational Assessment also assesses listening, reading, and writing skills. This assessment is administered in both the fall and spring, so both student proficiency

and growth data is available. As part of the SRCL program, NMPED will expand the use of this assessment to all subgrantees.

Because NMPED intends to use funds from the SRCL program over five years, we will work with our evaluator to develop their evaluation in a manner that incorporates several years of student data. This will allow the State to determine if teacher practice has truly changed and had an impact on student achievement. During year one of the grant, NMPED will work to contract with an evaluator that is familiar with New Mexico's demographics and unique challenges and design and robust and valid evaluation. Years two – four of the grant will allow the evaluator a significant data set to determine final outcomes in year five, but to also provide interim data to NMPED and participation LEAs and early childhood providers. These interim data points will provide time to adjust practice in classrooms if we do not see students progressing.

Dissemination of Results

Currently, State statute [§22.2.C.11] requires publication of the LEA report card in a “newspaper of general circulation” annually. NMPED has provided camera-ready LEA report cards to districts that included the school report card elements, causing these LEA reports to be lengthy. With the spinoff of the school report cards into a new format, the LEA report will shrink in length and still meet both federal and state requirements, and will save publication costs.

NMPED is currently partnering with our Family Parent Involvement Advisory Council to get input on changes that can be made to the current School Report Card so that parents have easy to understand information on a school's grade, as well as ideas on how they can get involved to support their children and their child's school.

To ensure that the SRCL outcomes are provided in a transparent and accessible format, NMPED will incorporate results from this program into current LEA and school report cards. Too often, we require LEAs and schools to repeat the same information over and over in different formats. It creates confusion for teachers and school leaders, but also makes it difficult for stakeholders to understand and engage upon. The new School Report Card we are developing will include a section specific to the SRCL program (where applicable for participating schools) and share not only disaggregated student outcomes, but also provide families with ideas of how they can engage their children at home. This link to family involvement mirrors our school grading system and the information dissemination activities being undertaken there.

SUBGRANT COMPETITION

As NMPED intends to use the first quarter of the of the SRCL grant as a planning period to develop a comprehensive statewide literacy plan, the subgrant awards will be announced in winter 2012 and LEAs will have access to their first period of financial support for the remainder of the 2011 – 2012 school year.

In an effort to ensure that the students most in need of instructional support and intervention are served, NMPED will structure its subgrant competition so that LEAs applying will be required to center their applications on student achievement data. Looking at both proficiency and growth rates on the SBA, NMPED will prioritize awards to LEAs and early childhood providers who serve a significant number of disadvantaged students.

In addition to priorities focused on serving disadvantaged students, NMPED will also prioritize applications that have a detailed plan for the following factors:

- A description of the evidence based implementation model for the chosen intervention;

- An assurance from the applicant of implementation fidelity; and
- Periodic reports to NMPED containing the following data:
 - Training and skill level of the teacher;
 - Accuracy of student placement in the program; and
 - Implementation fidelity metrics (e.g. minutes per week, sessions per week).

Because New Mexico is a geographically and demographically diverse state, NMPED will fund applicants that represent that diversity. In our first subgrant award, NMPED will work to awards grants to LEAs that serve rural, urban, suburban, and disadvantaged students. This diversity in funding will also allow New Mexico to determine if the practices outlined in our statewide literacy plan will serve all of our students effectively.

Statewide, there is not a consistent approach to short cycle assessments and the data they yield. As such, NMPED plans to adopt short cycle assessments that participating subgrantees will utilize. As LEAs measure growth and progress, NMPED wants to ensure that long-term goals are consistent and that the data being shared is comparable across schools, LEAs, and the state as a whole.

To ensure that funded subgrantees have the capacity to fully and successfully implement a SRCL program, NMPED will look at evidence of past work. Specifically, NMPED will consider how LEAs and early childhood providers have spent past federal dollars (e.g. Title I, IDEA, Reading First, Early Reading First, School Improvement Grants, Head Start, Child Development Care Block Grant) and the outcomes associated with those dollars. While fiscal accountability is critical, it is not the overarching goal of the SRCL program. As such, NMPED will also look at past and current activities supported by the programs outlined above and their impact on student achievement. Additionally, LEAs that develop a coherent literacy strategy to

create a infrastructure to seamless move students along the literacy continuum will be prioritized in the subgrant awards process.

A key component of the New Mexico literacy plan will be implementation of a three tiered intervention program. Regardless of the intervention being used in an LEA for struggling readers, all LEAs will be required to implement data driven decision making, universal screening for all 3 – 12 students, and progress monitoring for Tier II and Tier III students. If over time Tier II and Tier III students are not making progress towards becoming a proficient reader, NMPED will work directly with LEAs to either restructure the current intervention program being used, or to implement a different intervention program that has more promising results.

Needs Assessment

As part of the subgrant competition, applying LEAs and early childhood providers will be required to complete a detailed needs assessment. The needs assessment will have four main focus areas for LEA applicants:

- The extent to which high-poverty schools and students will be served;
- The extent to which the subgrant application has an emphasis on the reading skills of 4th and 8th grade students (the two grades where New Mexico as a whole see a significant decrease in achievement);
- The extent to which the subgrants application has outlined specific professional development needs; and
- The extent to which the LEA has a specific plan to engage communities and families.

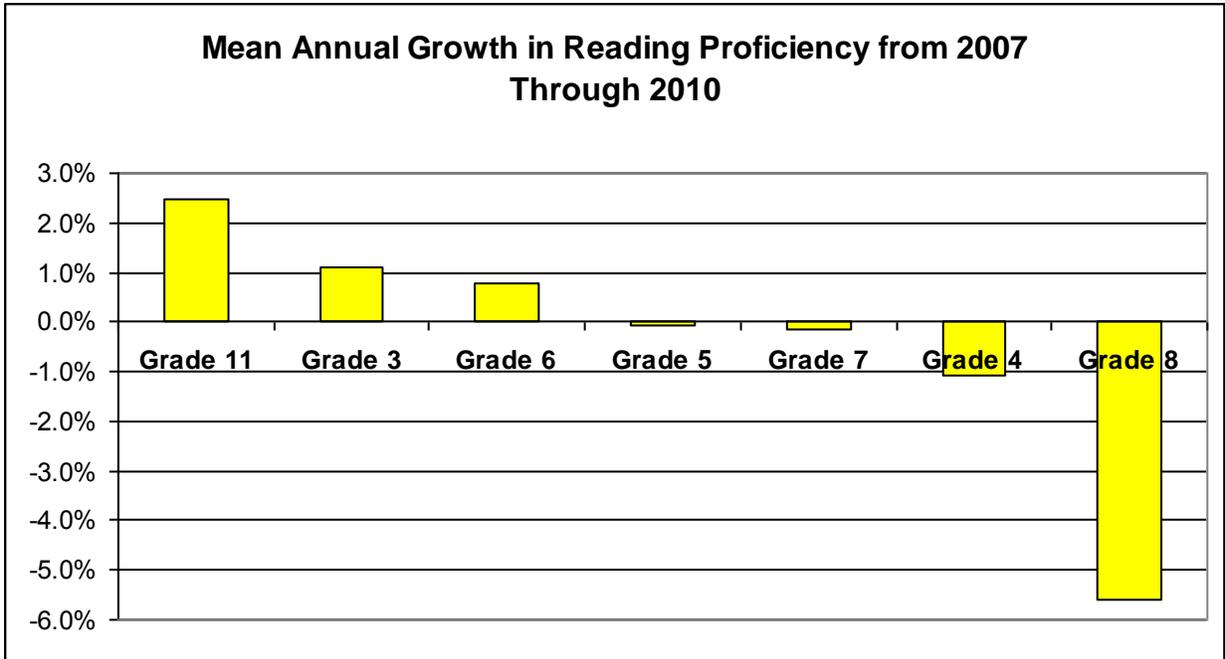
The needs assessment will have four main focus areas for early childhood applicants:

- The extent to which high-poverty schools and students will be served;

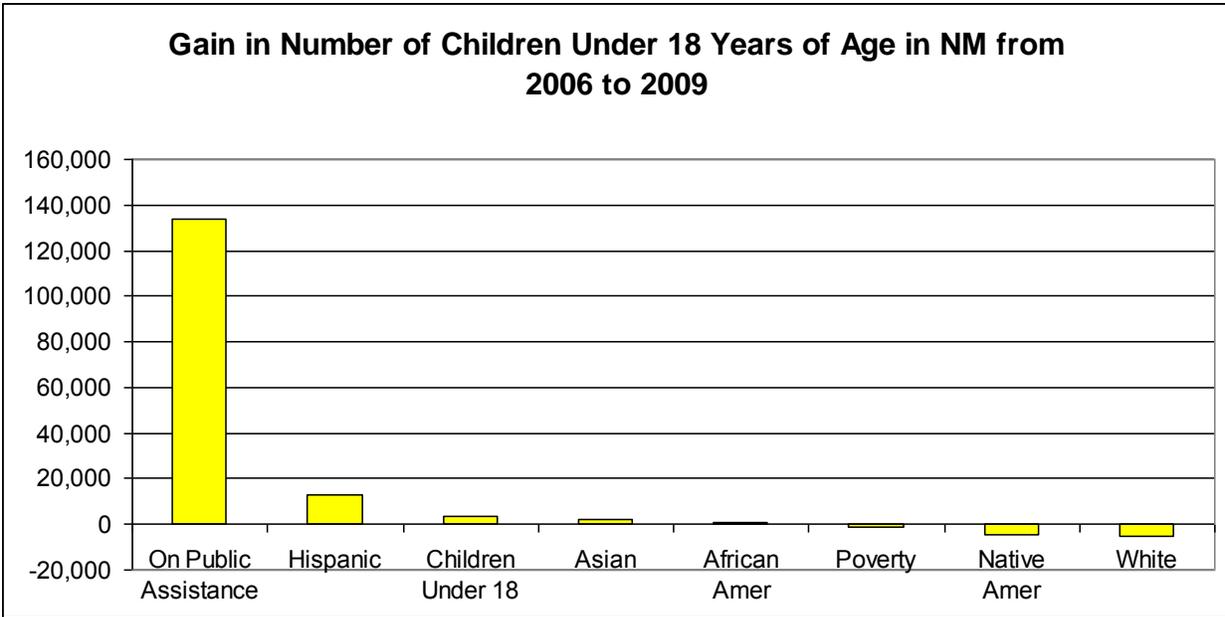
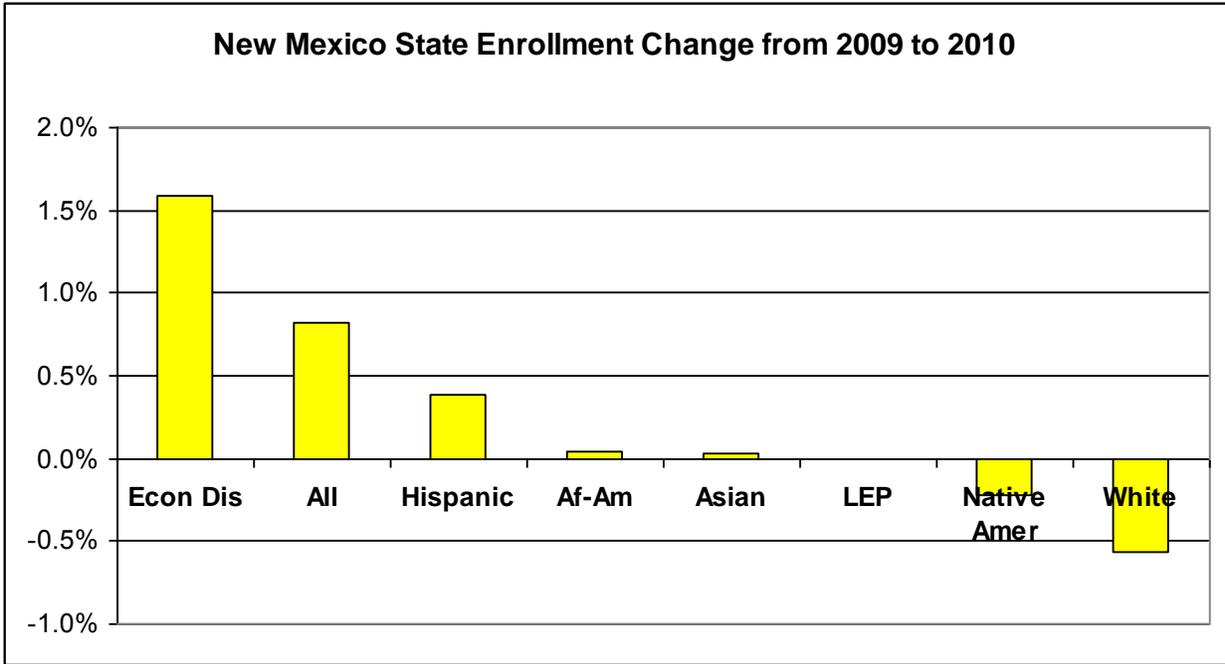
- The extent to which the subgrant applicant has an emphasis on the pre-reading skills of students at risk for academic failure in elementary school;
- The extent to which the subgrants application has outlined specific professional development needs; and
- The extent to which the early childhood provider has a specific plan to engage communities and families.

While research is clear that teachers are one of the most critical factors in a student's achievement, high-poverty students have unique needs that will require the support of parents and communities. A 2001 report by the National Governor's Association found that early reading success is the strongest predictor of future academic outcomes. Further, the report stated that a literacy-rich environment at home increases the likelihood of academic success. Ensuring that SRCL resources extend beyond the classroom will increase the likelihood of success of the program and future student achievement. In particular, for the youngest New Mexicans, family engagement is critical to their future success in grades K – 12 and beyond to college and career.

In terms of students in grades 4 and 8, NMPED will work side-by-side with subgrant applicants to develop comprehensive plans to assist those students. A needs analysis on 8th grade data showed that 28 schools in New Mexico contain 40% of the students reading below grade level in 2010. Because participating LEAs will be using short cycle assessments, NMPED will be able to closely monitor the progress of students in 4th and 8th grade. As students grow and learn, the State will be able to observe the best practices related to instruction and data-based decision making taking place in schools and share those examples to other schools that may not be progressing as quickly.



In addition to prioritizing the outcomes of students in grades 4 and 8, NMPED will also emphasize serving students living in poverty. This emphasis extends across all of our student subgroups, and the need is real and significant. From 2006 – 2009, the number of New Mexicans qualifying for and utilizing public assistance has increased significantly. Further, economically disadvantaged students are our fastest growing subgroup.



Analysis of New Mexico data from the American Community Survey of the United States

Census Bureau

Because NMPED is committed to a successful implementation of the SRCL program that ensures increased reading achievement for students, the State proposes to award the subgrants to cohorts of LEAs and early childhood providers. For example, Cohort 1 would receive funds for implementation during the 2012 – 2013 school year, and cohort 2 would receive funds for the 2013 – 2014 school year. This will allow for a staggered implementation and maximize NMPED’s ability to provide the technical assistance required to support LEAs and early childhood providers.

Future cohorts would be funded so that priority would be given to applicants that were not previously funded. Cohorts would be funded through continuation dollars (as available) to support the continued implantation of the program. This funding model will also allow for decreased program costs over the 5 years of the grant as the initial professional development costs associated with training on short cycle assessment tools and interventions will decrease. Further, by utilizing a training-of-trainers model, NMPED will build capacity and see overall professional development costs decrease.

This approach is similar to the approach New Mexico used during the Reading First program. The State found that we were able to maximize the number of students served, while also ensuring that teacher’s practice was built and sustained.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The overall goals of the SRCL program are to improve instructional practices to support increases in immediate and long-term student achievement. Coordination and integration of the multiple project players and components will be critical to the success of the project, yet the nature of the evaluation requires that the project organization be designed to maintain the conditions needed for an unbiased examination of results. As a result, we have established an

organization that allows for coordination by an overall Literacy Project Director. The management system has four major objectives:

- completion of high quality technical work;
- completion of contract work on time and within budget;
- efficient assignment of individuals to specific tasks to ensure that the needs of the project and the professional needs of the individuals are met; and
- provision and maintenance of effective internal and external communication channels.

To ensure that NMPED fully and successfully implements the SRCL program, the State will hire a full time Literacy Project Director.

- Literacy Project Director: The project and implementation director will be responsible for overall project direction, monitoring, coordination, stability, and assured success. The Director will be housed at Public Education Department and will provide services statewide. The annual salary in years one – two of the program will be \$61,578 per year with a benefits calculated at 23%. The annual salary of the Director in years three – five of the grant will be \$65,565 (a 5% increase).

While NMPED has not hired the Literacy Project Director, the State has identified several high quality candidates and intends to begin the vetting process now. The candidates that NMPED is considering come from diverse backgrounds, but all have served as classroom teachers and/or reading coaches. Prioritizing expertise and experience in effective literacy development and instruction will be critical to the overall success of the program. Over the course on the summer, the State will work to fully identify and select a Literacy Project Director so that once SRCL awards are made, NMPED can immediately begin implementation.

Critical to the success of the project will be the support and guidance of the State Literacy Taskforce. The State Literacy Taskforce is comprised of members that represent expertise related, but not limited to: literacy development and instruction, the evaluation of effective literacy programs, implementation of response to intervention models, screening and progress monitoring measures, interventions for disadvantaged learners, and teacher and school leader professional development.

The State Literacy Taskforce will not only help shape the statewide literacy plan that will form the basis of activities under this program, but will also work with the Literacy Project Director on implementation of the grant. Because the Taskforce will be comprised of members with various expertise, this will help to ensure a diversity of perspectives when fully developing the statewide literacy plan and subgrant application.

In addition to the Statewide Literacy Taskforce, there are several other committees' in New Mexico that will advise and guide the work of this project, providing diverse perspectives to the design and implementation of our plan. These committees include: the New Mexico Early Childhood Advisory Committee, Higher Education Early Childhood Task Force, Title I Committee of Practitioners, English Language Arts Common Core State Standards Committee, New Mexico P-20 Taskforce, Data Warehouse Council, NM Indian Education Advisory Council, NM Bilingual Education Advisory Council, NM Hispanic Education Advisory Council, Special Education State Advisory Council, and the New Mexico Parent Teacher Association. The goal in involving other committees and teams will be to coordinate work across the state and align goals.

Additionally, NMPED will work to engage the business community and other community stakeholders. This will not only create the potential for additional support, but also enable long-

term sustainability by increasing awareness to the importance of literacy and the impact it has on the future workforce.

A key tool to be used to monitor the progress and quality of the project is a work plan that specifies project activities, responsible staff, timeline, and a measurable indicator of completion of an activity. Throughout the project, the project and implementation director will maintain quality by holding study leaders to high standards for the quality and timeliness of work for which they are responsible. Project management meetings will be held with key team members on a regular basis to communicate and monitor progress and identify any issues requiring attention before they turn into problems requiring resolution. Key team members will review all products and plans so that the collective high expectations of the group are communicated to each staff member.

The work plan that will be undertaken to accomplish this project is ambitious, but achievable. Detailed below are the key activities and milestones for the first two years of implementation.

Summer/Fall 2011	Winter 2012	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Hire Project Director; Appoint Taskforce	Cohort1 implements	RFP for Cohort 2	Summer academy for subgrantees for detailed implementation planning	Cohort 1 and 2 implement	Cohort3 implements
				RFP process for Cohort 3	
Develop Literacy Plan and subgrant competition				Evaluation begins	Evaluation continues
RFP process for evaluator, assessment tools, intervention tools, PD					
RFP for Cohort 1					

ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

The statutory requirements of the SRCL program require 15% of the funds to be spent on students aged birth – 5, 40% of the funds to be spent on children in grades K – 5, and 40% to be spent on children in grades 6 – 12. Creating a seamless, statewide continuum of literacy instruction for children from birth to college and career will further underscore the need to spend SRCL resources adequately across all grade levels. New Mexico intends to meet these funding requirements fully. However, through our subgrant competition, we anticipate applicants that will propose to only serve children aged birth – 5, or LEAs that have a tremendous need in the elementary grades and as such, may only propose to serve students in grades K – 5. To ensure that the State meets the requirements, New Mexico will fund subgrants so that when all SRCL dollars are spent, we will have met the 15-40-40 requirement.

The budget was developed to accomplish three key goals:

- Serve the maximum number of students possible;
- Allow for costs to decrease overtime, therefore creating sustainability; and
- Provide adequate resources to accomplish the intended student and teacher outcomes.

Because developing effective and reliable assessments and interventions is time consuming and costly, NMPED will partner with providers that have evidence based tools available. Details on the budget are outlined in the Budget Narrative section of this proposal.

Because literacy does not happen in a silo, NMPED will look to fund subgrants that align the use of SRCL dollars to other State and Federal programs. Specifically, if an LEA applying has School Improvement Grant funded schools, NMPED will look for assurances that the activities under both programs are aligned. Additionally, for early childhood providers, NMPED will look to see that the current literacy activities happening will complement any new activities undertaken as a part of this program. A key priority under NMPED's SRLC grant is implementing a three tiered intervention model. As such, alignment to Title I and IDEA Part B Coordinate Early Intervening Services will be considered when awarding subgrant awards to LEAs.

New Mexico House Bill 2, signed by Governor Martinez on April 8, 2011, ushered in a new era of fiscal accountability for New Mexico schools and districts. Under HB 2, NMPED is working side-by-side with LEAs to ensure that state and federal budget dollars are being spent in a manner that maximizes their impact to the classroom and on student learning. This unprecedented budget review process will enable the State to work with LEAs to align other state and federal dollars to the activities outlined as part of this proposal so that they can be sustained long-term, irregardless of SRCL funding. NMPED is committed to creating a program that is sustainable and effective.

Five guiding principles are driving this process. Those principles are:

1. Student Achievement Drives Spending:

- Student interests and their academic success are the key drivers of education policy and spending.
- Budget decisions are aligned with their individual Education Plans for Student Success (EPSS).
- Budget expenditures are focused on proven programs and research-based strategies to increase student learning gains and accelerate progress in classrooms.

Review Process: To ensure these principles guide the budget process, analysts will review the amount of funding allocated for direct instruction and focus on where the district is prioritizing funding to meet appropriations for the coming fiscal year.

2. Classroom Dollars Come First:

- Classroom spending that directly benefits students and teachers is the foremost priority and the least at risk of cuts in challenging fiscal times.
- Administrative costs are kept at a minimum and administration is streamlined wherever and whenever possible.
- When cuts must be made, instruction and services most critical to raising student achievement, increasing graduation rates and providing opportunities for student success are preserved.

Review Process: To ensure these principles guide the budget process, analysts will take a comprehensive look at local budgets, review operational FTE and compare to prior year allocations and determine whether administrative costs are kept as low as possible.

3. Transparency and Good Policy Govern Budget Making:

- Procurement and administrative procedures, such as travel for personnel, are transparent and follow established best practices.
- Audits are submitted in a timely fashion to the Public Education Department and findings are addressed quickly.
- Invoices for state and federal reimbursements are submitted as expenses are incurred to ensure adequate cash balances.
- Waste and fraud are aggressively rooted out to increase accountability in budgets.

Review Process: To ensure these principles guide the budget process, analysts and program staff will review administrative expenses, examine the number of teachers moving through the 3-tier system and verify audits are submitted in a timely fashion to the Public Education Department and findings are addressed quickly. If districts are requesting emergency supplemental, analysts will review what types of reductions the district is proposing.

4. Academics Inform Long-Range Planning:

- Education spending decisions are based on long-term student achievement goals outlined in individual Education Plans for Student Success (EPSS).

Capital expenses support a district's academic priorities.

Review Process: To ensure these principles guide the budget process, analysts and program staff will ensure budgets are aligned with long-term Education Plans for Student Success (EPSS).

5. Budgets Reflect Reasonable Allocations for Student and Teacher Services:

- Students with special needs are accurately identified and receive critical services in line with generally accepted teacher caseloads under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Bilingual multicultural programs focus first and foremost on academic and language development.
- Professional development for teachers is high quality, content-based and meets the needs of a school's classrooms and students.

Review Process: To ensure these principles guide the budget process, analysts and program staff will audit units – where warranted – for membership, special education membership and related services, English Language Learners and teacher training and experience to verify counts are accurate and follow established best practices.

As part of the process NMPED will undertake to ensure that resources subgrantees receive are adequate, LEAs will be required to report on their spending under the SRCL program and how those dollars and use of dollars align to the five guiding principles outlined by the State.

The scope of subgrant awards will vary based on the number of students a LEA or early childhood providers proposes to serve. For example, a district such as Albuquerque Public Schools currently educates 95,934 students, versus a district such as Roy Municipal schools which current serves 58 students. The amount, and type, of resources needed to serve the students in these town districts will vary significantly. NMPED will provide subgrants of sufficient scope and size to meet the unique needs of each applicant.

GPRA MEASURES

GPRA Measure	NMPED Evidence
The percentage of 4 year old children who achieve significant gains in oral language skills.	New Mexico Child Observational Assessment for 4 year old children.
The percentage of participating 5 th grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on State English language arts assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA.	5 th grade NM Standards Based Assessment results reported for both proficiency rates and growth rates for students moving from nearing proficient to proficient.
The percentage of 8 th grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on State English language arts assessments under section 11(b)(3) of the ESEA.	8 th grade NM Standards Based Assessment results reported for both proficiency rates and growth rates for students moving from nearing proficient to proficient.
The percentage of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on State English language arts assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA.	11 th grade NM Standards Based Assessment results reported for both proficiency rates and growth rates for students moving from nearing proficient to proficient.

CONCLUSION

New Mexico is committed to increasing the literacy outcomes for all students. Our state-level and NAPE data are clear that the problem is systemic. As stated earlier, NMPED sees this program as the catalyst for change. The State is committed to implementing every component of the framework articulated.

New Mexico also recognizes that change will not happen immediately, but a sense of urgency must be present. Our current fourth grade students will graduate from high school in 2020. On the 2010 New Mexico SBA, only 42.8% of our 4th grades were proficient. That number decreases to 38% when looking specifically at the outcomes of our economically disadvantaged students, 29% when looking at the outcomes of our ELL students, and 33% when

looking at the outcomes of our Native American students. In order to prepare all students to be college and career ready, New Mexico is committed to striving to proficiency for all students.

New Mexico Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program Application

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