

Abstract

The state of Georgia proposes a Striving Reader Comprehensive Literacy Program consistent with the Georgia State Literacy Plan that will concentrate funding and technical support in the neediest schools. Funding will allow Georgia to leverage state infrastructure built during Reading First, enact lessons learned nationally through Early Reading First, provide comprehensive professional learning for teachers of adolescents for the first time, and equip classrooms of children living in poverty with extensive literacy resources. A comprehensive, birth-through-grade-12 approach to literacy is a necessary condition for Georgia to achieve the promise of the Common Core State Standards. Project objectives include developing a system for providing evidence-based professional learning at all levels, ensuring that teachers use data to provide instruction targeted to the needs of students, and implementing technology applications that enhance instruction and support student engagement with text.

The project will entail three staggered cohorts, each consisting of one urban district, two suburban, and six rural—27 LEAs in all. It is estimated that 8,850 teachers and 177,000 students will participate. Each LEA will receive full funding in year one, partial funding in year two, and minimal funding in year three. Year three funding will include costs associated with data collection and the evaluation of the project. Graduated funding will ensure their continuation with local funds.

Georgia will focus its activities on building capacity in these LEAs. To achieve that, the state will provide technical assistance electronically, throughout the course of the project. This will enable access for all of Georgia's eligible schools, regardless of location, and eliminate the time and expense of travel.

The project maximizes potential for building pedagogical content knowledge and skills associated with literacy achievement across time and across content areas. Professional learning for administrators, teachers, early childhood providers, and parents will be vertically articulated and consistent with research. Professional learning will be designed directly for the project by three PL architects so that it can be tailored to the needs of project sites. It will combine knowledge building and book studies with curriculum supports so that teachers can learn through scaffolded use of high-quality print and electronic texts provided through the project. Professional learning for teachers will be collaborative and ongoing, building LEA structures for continuous teacher collaboration.

A major focus of professional learning will be using data to inform instruction. LEAs will provide assurances and leadership for teachers to enact tiered instruction. That tiered instruction will be supported through project curriculum resources. Introduction of computer-adaptive testing for ELLs and for adolescents will help teachers move from the requirements of existing state standards to the Common Core standards. Electronic test reporting will allow the state to build LEA capacity to interpret data and use it for goal setting and for tracking progress toward goals. The project evaluation will provide both formative and summative assessment information about teacher learning and student achievement.

The Georgia Department of Education has the capacity to administer this project. Project staff have strong management skills and strong knowledge of literacy research. Careful stewardship of previous federal funds has ensured that the state is prepared for an SRCLP project that increases student achievement.