Ohio Comprehensive Literacy State

Development Grant Application

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INTRODUCTION

Ohio has established pockets of excellence across the state increasing literacy achievement for students. It is time to scale the success stories statewide. Ohio's current data reveals targeted, intensive work is required across the state to support schools and districts in the implementation of high-quality instruction and the development of strong systems to raise literacy achievement. In 2023, the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (Department) published a case study on one of the 2017 Early Literacy Pilot sites. Riverside Elementary School saw dramatic increases in student literacy achievement following the implementation of strategic literacy structures, such as high-quality tier 1 literacy curricula and aligned intervention programs, data-based decision making, and professional learning paired with coaching. The percentage of Riverside grade 3 students proficient in English language arts increased dramatically in 2019, meeting the state benchmark and outperforming the state average. Fifty percent of Riverside Elementary School students were proficient in English language arts in grade 3 in 2015, increasing to 91% proficient in 2019. Evidence of impact on student achievement and analysis of the levers and factors for success has bolstered the statewide conversation around literacy instruction in Ohio. The shift is from one of isolated policies and programs to the importance of aligned systems to support implementation, leading to the historic state investment in Ohio's literacy efforts in 2023.

Implementation of literacy improvement efforts is just beginning for many of Ohio's 1,000 plus school districts, community schools, and early care and education programs. Schools and districts are receiving state funds to subsidize the cost of core curriculum and instructional materials and reading intervention programs. Educators are receiving stipends for completing professional learning in the science of reading, highlighting the value and importance of improving educator capacity to support literacy improvement. However, scaling improvement

through Ohio's prior efforts (e.g., 2016 Early Literacy Pilot, 2018 Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant, and 2020 Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant (CLSD)) has highlighted the need for supports toward full implementation. Ohio's 2024 CLSD proposed project aims to support Ohio districts, schools, and early care and education programs by providing intensive and targeted implementation support. The focus is highlighting effective implementation and ensuring Ohio's focus on language and literacy instruction is aligned with the science of reading and positively impacts classrooms, schools, families, and communities.

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 1: Coordination with Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). Ohio aims to create a comprehensive statewide support system for educators, encompassing pre-service preparation and extending through professional practice. In pursuit of this objective, the Department will coordinate with Ohio Department of Higher Education and the Ohio State Board of Education to update state licensure and certification standards in literacy instruction for early education through grade 12 (Salinger et al., 2010).

Coordinate with IHEs to Strengthen Pre-Service Courses. The Department and its partners will support IHEs in revising and enhancing pre-service teacher preparation curricula to ensure all educators are well-prepared to implement evidence-based literacy practices (Driver et al., 2014; Pittman et al., 2020, 2022; Spear-Swerling, 2004; Washburn et al., 2011) and foster family engagement strategies to improve literacy outcomes (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). The Department will support the development of systems for collecting and analyzing data on the effectiveness of revised literacy courses and teacher preparation programs. This data will inform continuous improvements, with a feedback loop where educators, IHEs, and other stakeholders regularly review, align, and refine literacy practices, courses, and programs. Subgrantees will be encouraged to identify an IHE to collaborate with for ongoing professional learning to

incorporate evidence-based instructional practices into coursework and learning applications (Binks-Cantrell, 2012; Moats & Foorman, 2003). These partnerships will enable pre-service teachers to apply evidence-based literacy methods during their field placements, with aligned supports provided by IHE faculty and veteran school-based mentors (Peltier et al., 2020).

Review and Update State Licensure or Certification Standards. Ohio aims to pursue revisions of its PreK-12 Reading Endorsement to ensure closer alignment with reading science. Ohio's PreK -12 Reading Endorsement is a credential that educators with at least a bachelor's degree may add to their current teaching license. To add the PreK-12 Reading Endorsement to a teaching license, educators are required to complete an approved PreK-12 Reading Endorsement licensure program at an IHE and earn a passing score on two Ohio approved standardized tests. The approved PreK-12 Reading Endorsement licensure program and the two standardized tests must be aligned with Ohio's Reading Competencies – standards for what preK-12 teachers should know about teaching reading.

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 2: Addressing the Impact of COVID-19.

Ohio is addressing the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on students, educators, and underserved populations by implementing evidence-based instructional practices and support mechanisms such as professional learning, coaching, and ongoing educator support. Ohio's preliminary data shows that all subgroups of students have surpassed pre-pandemic literacy proficiency levels. However, Ohio still has 40% of third graders not reading at grade level and roughly 300,000 students in kindergarten-grade 4 not reading at grade level. Gaps exist between subgroup populations including students with disabilities, multilingual learners, students of color, and students living in poverty. The Department has put in place literacy professional learning specific to teachers serving students with disabilities and multilingual learners.

Bolstering coaching will ensure ongoing support for educators and leaders to promote student access to grade level content regardless of reading ability and to appropriate interventions to improve reading ability. The Department has outlined tutoring guidance, Subgrantees will be encouraged to include tutoring partnerships with IHEs and local libraries. This is another program to help close the gaps and accelerate learning.

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 3. Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities. Ohio believes in equitable access to high quality education for all students. The Department will focus literacy improvement opportunities for prekindergarten-grade 12 students living in rural settings, multilingual learners, and with disabilities.

Support for Applicants in Rural Settings. Ohio has 231 districts and 37.6% are considered rural. They serve 17.1% of Ohio's students, an average of 1,211 per district. Due to size, rural districts typically have fewer staff performing more roles and limited capacity to plan and write for competitive grants. The Department will support these applicants by making technical assistance available. The Department will strive to streamline the Request for Applications and project activities to ensure that success in application and implementation is driven by need and willingness to support student learning. This includes providing prescribed project activities, approved vendors, embedded training, and step-by-step implementation guidance. Clear guidance will reduce barriers to the application process and foster successful implementation.

Supports for Applicants Serving Multilingual Learners. The Department provided training on Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for educators of multilingual learners in Spring 2024. Over 100 educators and coaches engaged in these trainings, increasing statewide knowledge and the awareness of how educators can address the needs of multilingual learners. The Department

will build on this work by leveraging the Ohio English Learner Advisory Committee to market and support this grant opportunity. Upon award, the Department will contract with national experts to support literacy achievement for multilingual learners and address the need for teaching foundational skills like phonics and vocabulary in addition to instruction in speaking and understanding English and connections to home languages. Family engagement supports will also be offered in Ohio's most common languages.

Support for Applicants Servings Students with Reading Difficulties, including Dyslexia.

The Department is committed to meeting equity challenges by improving literacy achievement for all students. *Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement* calls for district and school leaders to partner with families in the use of technically sound assessments and standards-aligned curricular materials to implement evidence-based reading instruction for all learners, including students with dyslexia. Opportunities for collaboration and efficiently matching resources to student needs will be addressed through improving integrity of implementation, MTSS, and family and community collaboration at Literacy Implementation Sites. The Department will leverage the Ohio Dyslexia Committee and its members during the pre-application process to ensure support for applicants who serve large numbers of students with reading difficulties, including dyslexia.

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY 4: Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning. Ohio is committed to supporting a diverse educator workforce and professional learning to strengthen literacy instruction. Ohio's proposed project has been designed with the intention of promoting teacher recruitment and retention by strengthening district and school leadership capacity to support effective literacy instruction across all grades. The Department is particularly interested in building Literacy Implementation Sites where teachers, who may need support with

implementing teaching methods aligned with the science of reading, have ongoing access to professional learning and coaching. The Department promotes the use of the Reading-Tiered Fidelity Inventory (R-TFI) (St. Martin et.al., 2023) for building and district leaders to rate the strength of current systems for literacy achievement. System components align to the proposed project design and include Team-Based Leadership, Tiered Delivery System, Selection and Implementation of Instructional Methods, Interventions, and Supports, Comprehensive Screening and Assessment System, and Continuous Data-Based Decision-Making.

SECTION A: NEED

Part 1: Ohio's Literacy Needs Assessment. As Ohio began its recovery from the pandemic, inequities in literacy achievement were more apparent than ever. All subgroups of students were negatively impacted as evidenced by lower scores on literacy and math assessments in 2020 as compared to pre-pandemic years. Preliminary reports of 2023 fall testing data include positive data points and suggest that on average, students are demonstrating increasing levels of reading achievement on par with pre-pandemic levels but there remains considerable variability across Ohio's districts and among student demographic subgroups. Specifically, districts that experienced the greatest declines in reading achievement during the pandemic appear to demonstrate slower rates of recovery compared to districts that experienced smaller declines.

In 2023, 1,711 of Ohio's elementary, middle, and high schools were high-needs schools (as defined in the grant notice inviting applications), serving over 712,000 (43%) of Ohio's students. While 31% of white, non-Hispanic students attended high-need schools, the same was true of 81% of black students, 60% of Hispanic students, and 54% of multiracial students in 2023. Two-thirds (66%) of English learners attended high-needs schools as did almost half (49%) of students with disabilities. Specific needs according to grade bands are described below.

Birth through Kindergarten Entry: Children in high-quality rated early childhood education programs perform significantly better on Ohio's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment than their peers, specifically on the Language and Literacy portion of the assessment. There continues to be a need to reach more students with quality early education programs and literacy instruction.

1. Ohio's Poverty Report indicated that in 2021, 324,795 (41%) of children under the age of six were living at or below the 200% Federal Poverty Level.

2. In 2023, Ohio served over 118,000 children birth through age five through federal and state early learning programs, representing 14% of children in that age group.

3. Ohio serves over 25,000 infants and toddlers in Early Intervention; 41% have substantial adaptive, cognitive, communication, physical or social-emotional developmental delays.

4. Just over 33,000 children with disabilities receive educational interventions between ages 3 and 5 in preschool special education programs.

5. In 2022, 193,000 (39.7%) of Ohio's students in kindergarten-grade 3 were not on track for reading on grade level. This is a notable increase from 2018 when 31.3% of kindergarten-grade 3 students were not on track. More than 59,000 of those students were kindergartners, entering a foundational year of learning already behind in language and literacy skills. Improving students' literacy skills by third grade is no small challenge. There is a critical need to improve language and literacy support for young students prior to kindergarten entry.

Kindergarten through Grade 12: Data suggest that Ohio students who enter kindergarten on track in language and literacy are seven times more likely to go on to score proficient on Ohio's third grade English language arts assessment compared to students who are not on track. However, Ohio still has significant numbers of students who are not on track relative to language and literacy skills when they enter kindergarten. In the 2023-2024 school year, more than 59,000

(53.7%) of Ohio's students entered kindergarten not on track in language and literacy, as measured by the statewide Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. For certain subgroups, the rate was higher: 79.6% of Ohio's English learners, 74.3% of Ohio's students with disabilities and 67.4% of Ohio's economically disadvantaged students were not on track in language and literacy. The potential impacts of early reading difficulties extend to other academic areas as well. A longitudinal examination of Ohio state test data suggests that students' scores in reading and math are highly correlated. Kindergarten students who are "on track" for grade-level reading proficiency are *2.7 times more likely* to be proficient in 3rd grade math compared to students whose reading diagnostic scores were "not on track". Additional key data points are:

1. In Ohio, students proficient in reading by third grade are nearly 3 times more likely to graduate on time compared to their peers who are not proficient in reading by third grade.

   a. Statewide in the 2022-2023 school year, over 47,000 (37.7%) of Ohio's third graders were *not* proficient on Ohio's English language arts test, putting their on-time graduation at risk.

   b. Half (50.7%) of the third graders in high-need schools were *not* proficient on Ohio's English language arts test, compared to 23.6% in non-high-need schools.

2. Large numbers of students are not reaching proficiency throughout their academic careers.

   a. Statewide, more than 342,000 students were not proficient on Ohio's English language arts tests in grades 3-8 and high school. Among these struggling readers, 71.9% are economically disadvantaged, 32.9% have disabilities and 7.6% are multilingual learners.

   b. Ohio sees the cumulative effects of lagging in language and literacy skills by the time a student reaches high school. In 2023, only 61% of the students taking Ohio's high school English Language Arts II end-of-course high school exam scored proficient.

   c. An estimated 3 out of every 5 struggling readers in Ohio attend a high-need school.

3. Equitable access to evidence-based reading instruction and educator supports

    a. Data from a 2023 statewide survey regarding the usage of high-quality instructional materials for reading instruction indicated that only 32.5% of schools use a core curriculum that is fully aligned with the state-approved list and 29.5% of schools use curriculum that is partially aligned, but that 38% of schools use K-5 curriculum that is not at all aligned. As many Ohio schools and districts will begin to adopt and implement new curricula, educators will need access to curriculum-based professional learning and coaching supports to ensure the delivery of high-quality reading instruction for all students.

    b. Across the state, educators and building administrators are required to complete training in the science of reading. In addition, teachers who provide instruction to students in grades K-3 and special education teachers who provide instruction to students in grades K-12 are required to complete dyslexia-related professional learning. To date, over 23,000 K-3 teachers have completed this training, but only 1,000 administrators have met this requirement so far. To apply knowledge gained from these trainings, teachers and administrators will need additional support in translating this knowledge into practice.

    c. The extent to which schools and districts have literacy coaches to further support professional learning and teachers' instructional practices varies widely across the state. Approximately 40% of Ohio's schools and districts do not have a literacy coach. Although large urban districts, particularly the eight largest urban districts in Ohio, reported having the highest number of literacy coaches, suburban districts have between 1-2 literacy coaches per district on average, and many rural and small-town districts reported having someone whose time is only partially committed to the role of literacy coach.

Part 2: Gaps and Weaknesses in Services, Infrastructure, and Opportunities. Ohio has identified specific gaps and weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities that will be addressed by the proposed project. This was done by revisiting stakeholder feedback in the development of the State's Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and identifying the characteristics of highly successful districts. This review, along with consideration of recent student data and information about schools and districts' needs for high-quality instructional materials and supports, identified gaps and weaknesses in literacy instruction and infrastructure that include:

1. *Learners who "start behind, stay behind."* State data annually show that large proportions of kindergartners are not on track for grade level reading when they start school. Students who enter kindergarten with poor reading skills are likely to continue to experience reading difficulties and are also likely to struggle in other academic areas, including mathematics achievement. Early literacy must be a primary focus.

2. *Job-embedded supports for teachers.* Many schools and districts will be adopting new curriculum that aligns to state requirements and will require curriculum-based professional learning and coaching to ensure effective and sustained implementation.

3. *Building principal and district-level knowledge.* Successful schools and districts have strong building leadership teams that have a deep understanding of effective reading instruction and can thus actively support educators to implement those practices. Currently, district administrators are completing science of reading professional learning trainings but must receive additional supports to enhance their capacity to lead.

4. *Well-designed MTSS.* Data from Ohio Dyslexia Pilot Project (2015) showed that districts that implement a tiered system of literacy supports can increase the percentage of proficient readers and decrease the percentage of students requiring more intensive supports. The

number of early learners who require reading support suggests that most districts do not yet have a strong MTSS.

5. *Strong family and community partnerships.* Families and community partners were not being appropriately leveraged as partners in literacy improvement.

SECTION B: PROJECT DESIGN

To address the needs identified in Section A of this proposal, Ohio's root-cause analysis informed the proposed project design. The needs assessment indicated weaknesses in integrity of implementation, leadership support, MTSS, and family and community engagement. Through proposed subgrants, Ohio expects to provide intensive services to support 50,000 students, 3,000 teachers, and 1,000 administrators and support staff. Ohio has designed a project focused on sustained professional learning to support schools and districts in improving these components of their literacy system. Aligned to these components, Ohio has five goals to measure project success (All measures will begin with subgrant implementation in year 2):

Part 1: Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes.

Goal 1: Professional Learning. Annually, 90% of educators at Literacy Implementation Sites will demonstrate improvement in implementing reading instruction with integrity, as evidenced by results of 3-times yearly walkthroughs using a common tool disseminated by the Department.

Goal 2: Coaching. 100% of K-12 Literacy Implementation Sites will create, implement, and sustain coaching plans aligned with their professional learning (either curriculum-based and/or intervention-based) to refine adult implementation and improve student literacy outcomes.

Goal 3: Leadership Support. 100% of Literacy Implementation Sites will have a building leadership team supporting implementation of reading components of a MTSS framework.

Goal 4: MTSS. Annually, beginning in year 2, Literacy Implementation Sites will demonstrate at least 10% improvement in implementation measures. This goal will be evaluated in early childhood education programs using *Ohio's Ready School Guide for Language and Literacy* and in K-12 school sites using the R-TFI (St. Martin et al., 2023).

Goal 5: Family and Community Engagement. 80% of Literacy Implementation Sites will develop a bi-directional, tiered family and community engagement system that can be used to share information and receive input about curriculum, instruction, and interventions, and can be leveraged to share all important information with a variety of stakeholders. This goal will be evaluated in early childhood to grade 5 school settings using the Family and Community Engagement for Early Literacy (Boone & Wellman, 2018) and in Birth-Kindergarten Entry sites using a scale from *Ohio's Ready School Guide for Language and Literacy*. A tool will be developed or adapted for use in grades 6-12.

To achieve these goals, Ohio will focus activities on five objectives. Activities are described in the Management Plan.

Objective 1: Professional Learning. 100% of K-12 Literacy Implementation Sites will engage in professional learning aligned to the high-quality literacy curriculum for core instruction and intervention. This includes all teachers, intervention specialists, gifted intervention specialists, teachers if multilingual, paraprofessionals and building leadership. **Measures:** Objective 1 will be measured using attendance records and professional learning satisfaction surveys.

Objective 2: Coaching. 100% of K-12 teachers will receive tiered coaching support aligned to the Ohio Coaching Model. **Measures:** Objective 2 will be measured using coaching logs and educator surveys. The quality of the objective will be evaluated through data analysis reports comparing pre- and post-implementation coaching needs, surveys gauging participant

satisfaction and perceived effectiveness of coaching supports, observational data gleaned from learning walks, and analyses of student achievement data to assess the impact of coaching.

Objective 3a: Leadership Support. 100% of K-12 Leadership Implementation Sites will develop a master schedule that allows for daily instruction in the components of literacy and tiered intervention at each grade band. **Measure:** Implementation of this objective will be measured using building walkthrough tools.

Objective 3b: Leadership Support. 100% of K-12 Literacy Implementation Sites will provide time for teacher teams to plan and design literacy instruction, revise teaching tasks, discuss implementation challenges, and extend content and pedagogical understanding of evidence-based instruction. **Measures:** This two-part objective will be evaluated by progress towards full implementation as demonstrated by identified items on the R-TFI (1.9-1.13) and reviews of master schedules using a state developed rubric.

Objective 4: MTSS. 100% of Literacy Implementation Sites, located throughout Ohio's 16 regions, will function as incubators of effective language and literacy implementation from early care through grade 12, through the delivery of high-quality, job-embedded curriculum-based and/or intervention-based professional learning, and data-based decision making. **Measures:** This objective will be evaluated through site participation in three professional learning components: 1) curriculum-based and/or intervention-based professional learning, 2) a CLSD Networked Improvement Community, 3) professional learning and technical assistance to support instructional enhancements for multilingual learners or students with disabilities, or progress towards the development and implementation of multi-disciplinary teams.

Objective 5a: Family and Community Engagement. 100% of Literacy Implementation Sites will develop and implement a plan/partnership agreement to work with a community partner to

enhance its own implementation of instruction aligned to evidence-based practices and to disseminate practices among family and community partners. **Measures:** This objective will be measured annually through subgrantee reports that include a section specific to family and community engagement activities aligned with the partnership agreement. Activities common across grantees will be used to establish implementation networks.

Objective 5b: Family and Community Engagement. Annually, representatives from at least 25% of Literacy Implementation Sites will complete professional learning provided by a grant-funded expert in family and community engagement. **Measures:** This objective will be measured through participation reports provided by the vendor.

Meeting these goals and objectives will lead to the following outcomes:

Outcome 1a: Student Outcomes. Through improvements in integrity of implementation, coaching, leadership support, MTSS, and family and community engagement, from school year 2025-2026 to school year 2028-2029, participating Literacy Implementation Sites will increase the percentage of students proficient in reading in grades 3 through high school on the state English language arts assessment or on track in reading for prekindergarten through grade 2 by 5 percentage points per year or reach at least 80%.

Outcome 1b: Adult outcomes. 100% of educators will implement instructional practices aligned to professional learning as measured by building level instructional items of R-TFI and leadership team reports of school-wide observations.

Outcome 2a: Student Outcomes. To ensure literacy improvement activities impact all students, by school year 2028-2029, 90% of students with disabilities in participating Literacy Implementation Sites will demonstrate improvement in their approved universal screening measure(s) by at least 5% annually from 2025-2029.

Outcome 2b: Adult Outcomes. 100% of the Literacy Implementation Sites use data-based decision making through a problem-solving model by analyzing assessment data to support students through tiers of instruction.

Outcome 3: Student Outcomes. As part of the commitment to disseminate successful learning and strategies, by school year 2028-2029, statewide public-school districts and community schools will increase the percentage of students in grades 3-high school proficient on the state's English language arts tests or on track in reading for preschool-grade 2 by at least 10%.

The goals, objectives, strategies, and activities outlined above align to *Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement* that specifies the use of the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). Ohio ensures all learners are represented and supported throughout a language and literacy continuum, providing specific recommendations for learners having difficulty reading or writing. Partnerships and collaboration of general and special education practitioners and stakeholders are key and build implementation capacity through Ohio's infrastructure supports. Ohio is in the process of reconvening the State Literacy Team to revise and update its state comprehensive literacy instruction plan *(in accordance with the Application Requirements part (c) as specified in the notice inviting applications for this grant)*. Additionally, in the development of this proposal, the Department has consulted and will continue to partner with the Ohio Department of Children and Youth, the state agency with a shared responsibility for administering early childhood education programs and is responsible for administering childcare programs *(in accordance with the Program Requirements part (c) as specified in the notice inviting applications for this grant)*.

Part 2: Project Design Components. Ohio has considered the statewide needs assessment, lessons learned from past and current literacy, equity projects (see Section A, p. 11), evidence-

based language and literacy instruction The Department plans to operationalize knowledge from implementation science to offer structures for supporting, scaling, and sustaining literacy improvement efforts within a MTSS framework (Bertram et al., 2015; Fixsen et al., 2009; Freeman et al., 2015; Horner et al., 2007; Metz & Bartley, 2012; Moullin et al., 2019). Based on these priorities, Ohio has developed a design focused on providing Literacy Implementation Sites with professional learning and coaching to improve integrity of implementation, literacy leadership support, MTSS, and family and community engagement.

The project will amplify the efforts and goals of *Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement* by developing a robust system of supports for literacy implementation to be scaled and piloted by Literacy Implementation Sites representing geographically and economically diverse high-need schools across Ohio. This approach will allow Ohio to scale evidence-based language and literacy practices throughout the state and enable local education agencies to deploy evidence-based comprehensive literacy instruction programs.

Ohio has tested components of effective implementation through prior grant and state efforts. All five components proposed in this application reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practices, leveraging the knowledge of how effective innovations flourish based on implementation science. Lessons learned from these opportunities have contributed to the development of this proposal. Districts and schools in Ohio who have shown improvement in literacy outcomes have invested time and resources improving integrity of implementation. This proposal aims to scale these efforts and develop effective literacy implementation sites that impact literacy outcomes birth through grade 12. Ohio proposes to select districts and schools across its diverse regions to become Literacy Implementation Sites. These sites will engage in building and sustaining effective implementation of five key components outlined below.

Curriculum-based Professional Learning. The first component of effective literacy implementation is the provision of curriculum-based professional learning**.** Districts and schools identified for this project will engage in job-embedded curriculum-based professional learning to support the full implementation of high-quality instructional materials within MTSS (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2009). Each site will be required to select an approved vendor to provide high-quality professional learning in the core curriculum and instructional materials approved for English language arts instruction and evidence-based reading intervention programs. Sites will create professional learning plans based on their specific needs and robust systems for monitoring progress using classroom walkthroughs, coaching logs, and building and grade level team problem solving meeting agendas and notes. Subgrantees will purposefully provide and sustain curriculum-based professional learning for all teachers and administrators using frameworks such as Guskey's Five Levels of Professional Learning Evaluation (Guskey, 2002, 2023). Literacy Implementation Sites will utilize various data sources to measure participants' reactions, participants' learning, organizational support and change, participants' application of new knowledge or skills, and student learning outcomes. This approach will facilitate deliberate backwards planning for ongoing professional learning. Each year, sites will submit updated Local Literacy Plans to the Department, which include a professional learning plan that outlines SMART goals, reports implementation data, student outcome data, and identifies specific action steps for continuous improvement. The Department will provide support through the development of a literacy professional learning guide and a literacy implementation road map, as further described in Section C, p. 26. These resources will undergo testing and refinement in partnership with Literacy Implementation Site educators,

administrators, and regional collaborators. Finalized resources will be available for state dissemination to scale and sustain literacy improvements.

Coaching. The second component of effective literacy implementation is high quality literacy coaching. Districts and schools identified for this project will implement Ohio's Coaching Model to refine adult implementation and improve student outcomes (Allen et al., 2011; Brownell et al., 2017; Hasbrouck & Michel, 2021; Kraft et al., 2018; Matsumura et al., 2013). Sites will partner with Department-approved professional learning vendors to support curriculum-aligned professional learning through the provision of virtual and on-site coaching, as further described in Section C, p. 26. Drawing upon various adult and student data gathered sources, including the R-TFI and *Ready Schools Guide for Language and Literacy*, Literacy Implementation Sites will identify coaching supports aligned with their district's curriculum-based professional learning plan. Sites will co-design coaching plans with vendors, to address core instructional needs and provide intervention support. These plans will address team-based leadership, tiered delivery systems, selection and implementation of instructional methods, interventions and supports, comprehensive screening and assessment systems, and continuous data-based decision making (St. Martin et al., 2023; Walpole et al., 2010). Literacy Implementation Sites will actively participate in professional learning opportunities and Communities of Practice focused on Ohio's Coaching Model. Sustainability and internal capacity will be prioritized through the deliberate development of teacher leadership and peer coaching skills.

Leadership Support. The third component of effective literacy implementation is strong, consistent leadership. Applicants will be required to ensure building leaders have completed Ohio's asynchronous Introduction to the Science of Reading for Administrators course.

Following award, the Department and its partners will provide training and technical assistance for administrators to support the development of:

- A system for data-driven professional learning to increase staff capacity in literacy systems and instruction.

- District, building, and teacher-based teams to promote the implementation of literacy resources, instruction, and systems.

- A master schedule that allows for adequate core instruction and intervention/enrichment.

- A school culture that is characterized by data-based decision-making and effective communication practices to support literacy instruction and systems.

- A building walkthrough tool designed to assess key instructional shifts aligned with reading science.

Building and district leadership will commit to providing teachers with continued access to literacy training, developing and sustaining a supportive culture for effective instructional improvements, promoting collaboration between special and general educators, maximizing use of flexible schedules to address the needs of learners with reading difficulties, and ensuring staff buy-in for making significant instructional shifts (Grissom et al., 2021).

Strong MTSS for Literacy. The fourth component of effective literacy implementation is establishing a strong MTSS for literacy. By ensuring the integrity of implementation activities and the use of state-approved core curriculum, intervention, and assessments, Literacy Implementation Sites will develop strong Tier 1 instruction and a flexible continuum of supports (Haager et al., 2007; Leonard et al., 2019; McIntosh & Goodman, 2016; Vaughn & Fletcher, 2020). To realize a robust system of supports across tiers, Literacy Implementation Sites will develop or review their process for using universal screening data to evaluate the effectiveness of

core instruction, decision rules to select interventions, and progress monitoring to determine the need for intensifying interventions (Burns et al., 2016; Coyne & Harn, 2006). Literacy Implementation Sites will use data to personalize instruction to meet diverse learner needs. Using grant funds, the Department will employ a data consultant to provide professional learning and technical assistance to support Literacy Implementation Sites in aligning intervention to decision rules. The data consultant will support sites to review student screening and outcome data to determine if instruction is resulting in improved outcomes. If adjustments are needed, the data consultant will help sites use adult implementation and other student data to identify opportunities for improvement in the interventions provided or how they are implemented.

Family and Community Engagement. The final component of effective literacy implementation is partnerships for family and community engagement. Ohio aims to cultivate developmentally and culturally appropriate practices for cross-sector collaboration and family and community engagement, ensuring continuity of relationships and services from birth through grade 12 (O'Brien et al., 2014; Semke & Sheridan, 2012; Sheldon, 2007; Sheldon & Epstein, 2002; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). The Department and partners will provide opportunities for Literacy Implementation Sites to engage in a range of activities designed to enhance family and community engagement. The Department will develop a toolkit of resources and strategies to support family and community engagement practices, as further described in Section C, p. 29. Principals will receive targeted support as essential collaborators in fostering an inviting environment for family and community involvement. (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016; Jung & Sheldon, 2020). Each Literacy Implementation Site will establish a bi-directional, tiered family and community engagement system to communicate about core literacy instruction and interventions, involve families as stakeholders for curricula decisions, communicate student

progress, and equip families to support their children's literacy development at home (Bachman & Boone, 2022). Sites will also commit to engaging in a collaborative partnership with an IHE, a library, or another community partner to provide services such as family and caregiver engagement, summer programs, after-school programs, or high-quality tutoring.

Part 3: Promising Evidence. The design components of the Literacy Implementation Site project are grounded in promising evidence. Each component has been studied by national researchers and tested in Ohio schools. From 2016-2020, the Department conducted a pilot study with PreK to grade 3 classrooms in 16 geographically diverse schools. Experimental and quasi-experimental research suggests positive outcomes between teacher professional learning, teaching practices, and student outcomes (Darling-Hammon et al., 2017). This approach aligns **professional learning** with the curriculum teachers use daily, fostering relevance and immediate applicability. Research indicates that combining evidence-based curriculum materials and curriculum-focused professional learning is effective and positively impacts students' achievement (Taylor et al., 2015). Studies show that embedding professional learning alongside curriculum promotes sustained teacher engagement and collaboration, leading to deeper understanding and implementation of instructional strategies (Brownell et al., 2017).

Coaching is a well-researched area. Research suggests content-specific coaching, focused on student outcomes, produces larger gains than general coaching (Kraft et al., 2018). Other studies suggest coaching leads to enhanced instruction. Walpole et al., (2010) identified coaching for collaboration, differentiation, and leadership support predicted educator collaboration, use of explicit reading instruction, classroom management, and enhanced use of formative assessments. Research consistently suggests that strong leadership is critical to school improvement efforts. **Effective leaders** positively impact student achievement by setting clear goals, aligning

resources, overseeing curriculum implementation, participating in learning, and ensuring an orderly and supportive environment (Robinson, 2007). The Wallace Foundation's research underscores the importance of principals as critical levers of change. A leader who understands the components of literacy extends their influence through teacher motivation and instructional quality. Strong leadership supports data-driven decision-making, continuous professional learning, and inclusive stakeholder engagement. Meta-analyses reveal that transformational and instructional leadership styles are particularly effective, emphasizing vision, support, and accountability in fostering school improvement (Grisson et al., 2021).

Systems change is predicated on school leadership teams building a tiered continuum of support with increasing intensity based on need (McIntosh & Goodman, 2016). In an **MTSS framework**, educational equity relies on all students having equitable access to high-quality reading instruction. This starts with delivering comprehensive, effective, and consistent Tier 1 instruction to every student (Coyne et al., 2022). For students needing extra help with reading, targeted interventions ensure every student receives the appropriate level of support. Tiered instruction and intervention ensure that all students receive the appropriate level of support.

Research on school **family and community engagement** underscores its significant impact on student achievement, behavior, and overall well-being. Results indicate increased teacher engagement with families was linked to robust transformational leadership within partnerships. Collaborative leadership by principals correlated with the quality of partnership program organization. Strong leadership also influences the percentage of teachers actively engaging with families (Jung & Sheldon, 2020). School policies incorporating parental involvement are the first steps for basic partnerships. However, principals' support and active facilitation of research-

based structures are essential for the success of the program and overall student outcomes (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016).

SECTION C: MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Department will work effectively with internal and external partners to ensure successful management of the proposed project. This plan includes fiscal systems and controls, appropriate staffing and clearly defined responsibilities, monitoring of implementation and milestones, continuous improvement, and quality assurance for proposed project products and services.

Part 1: Budget, Timelines, and Milestones.

Budget: The Department has successfully implemented billions of dollars in federal grants, as well as many specific federal grants, and is committed to ensuring the project is delivered on budget and in full compliance with state and federal fiscal and accounting laws and regulations. The Office of Fiscal Services, Office of Grants Management, and Office of Budget and School Funding, which includes procurement and financial program management, oversee standard protocols to ensure that grant funds are expended and accounted for in full compliance with federal regulations and consistent with grant requirements. Staff from these offices are integral parts of the project team and continuously involved in grant administration, including:

- *Grants and Contracts Workgroup:* The Department CFO and Grants Administration and Procurement leads reviewed and approved this application prior to submission.

- *Support for Requests for Application and Requests for Proposal:* The Grants Administration and Legal Counsel Offices, along with Department leadership, reviewed and approved the Request for Application for subgrants. The Procurement team collaborates with the Literacy team to develop all Requests for Proposal to solicit new contracts.

- *Review of Subgrant Reimbursements:* To ensure all expenses are allowable and within budget, all subgrantees will be paid on a reimbursement basis through the Department's ED STEPS One Funding system. The Literacy team reviews and approves subgrant budgets prior to subgrantee spending, and Grants Administration oversees system checks to ensure reimbursement requests are within budget, documented properly and for approved uses.

- *Review of and Contract Payments:* The Budget and School Funding and Legal Counsel Offices develop contracts following vendor selection aligned to 2 CFR 200.317-326 requirements. The Literacy team reviews invoices to ensure deliverables are complete, and the Fiscal Services Office processes payments in the Department's Invoice Workflow System and monitors to ensure all payments are compliant with state and federal requirements.

- *Monthly Budget Meetings:* Leaders from the Literacy team and the Budget and School Funding Office meet monthly to ensure grant spending is on track and aligned to the approved budget, and to plan for upcoming subgrants or contracts. Budget and School Funding provides quarterly spending reports for federal reporting.

In addition to highly qualified teams ensuring fiscal compliance, the Department utilizes a number of systems to facilitate monitoring and processing of grant expenditures, including: (1) *ED STEPS One Funding Application,* a new platform, expected to be fully functional by July 2025, will allow districts to develop one comprehensive plan for student growth, leverage federal and other resources to create programs based on available funding to better serve students and communities, and support districts and schools to coordinate administrative planning with program planning and implementation; (2) *OhioBuys,* Ohio's online purchasing platform supports integrated vendor solicitation and submission and approval of requisition workflows;

and (3) *Invoice Workflow System,* the Department's invoicing system, manages invoices, approvals, and supporting documentation.

Timelines and Milestones for Key Project Activities: The Department proposes to develop tools and provide intensive support for subgrantee implementation and statewide improvement. Key activities and their providers are described in this section. Figure 1 shows the timeline for implementation of supports (T= training, X = final products completed.). All vendors will be identified following procurement policies aligned to 2 CFR 200.317-326, as described in Part 1.

Key Activity	FY25 Q1	FY25 Q2	FY25 Q3	FY25 Q4	FY26 Q1	FY26 Q2	FY26 Q3	FY26 Q4	FY27 Q1	FY27 Q2	FY27 Q3	FY27 Q4	FY28 Q1	FY28 Q2	FY28 Q3	FY28 Q4	FY29 Q1	FY29 Q2
1. Implementation Road Map		X	Pilot/Refine						Publicly available with professional learning guidance									
2. Coach Training				T	T				T	T			T	T			T	T
3. Literacy Pathway Training - Administrators			T	T														
4. Walkthrough Tool & Training			X	T			T				T				T			
5a. Multilingual Learner Supports		T			T	T	T			T	T	T						
5b. Students with Disabilities Supports					T	T	T									T	T	T
6. Intensifying Intervention					Pilot Supports							PD and Coaching						
7. Family and Community Engagement				Resource Development, Professional Learning, Coaching Cohort														
8. Update Reading Endorsement	Update policy and support coursework revision																	

**Professional Learning and Coaching**

**Key Activity 1: Development and Testing of an Implementation Road Map.** The Department will develop a toolkit to help schools and districts assess their current implementation stage and determine their next steps for supporting, scaling, or sustaining implementation of high-quality instructional materials and evidence-based practices. This toolkit will include supportive resources for curriculum-based professional learning and coaching and integrate connections to existing resources, such as the guides for school leaders on implementing _Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement_ and newly developed resources such as the guide for literacy professional learning. _Responsibilities:_ The Department, CLSD Technical Assistance Specialists, and state-funded partners will collaborate to develop the Implementation Road Map, collect feedback from subgrantees, revise the tool, and disseminate it statewide.

**Key Activity 2: Coach Training.** K-12 subgrantees will be required to have a literacy coach in their building. The Department has developed a literacy coaching framework using student data to drive coaching actions, informed by the student-focused coaching model (Michel & Hasbrouck, 2022). The Department's Instructional Coaching for Literacy Handbook will be leveraged to develop a robust training series for literacy coaches in participating schools, including ongoing support and technical assistance as they implement coaching throughout the grant period. _Responsibilities:_ The Department will identify vendors to provide training in data-driven coaching. The Department, led by the Senior Research Strategist, will collaborate with vendors to ensure the quality and completeness of training content. The grant manager will oversee procurement and contract monitoring.

**Leadership Support**

Key Activity 3: Literacy Improvement Pathway Training. All subgrantee principals and building leadership teams will participate in Literacy Improvement Pathway training. Ohio's Literacy Improvement Pathway series enhances principal and building leadership capacity to build a robust MTSS. Grounded in the research collected by Dr. Timothy Shanahan, the Literacy Improvement Pathway supports school leaders in increasing language and literacy achievement with all learners. *Responsibilities:* State-funded partners will provide the three-part Literacy Improvement Pathway series to enhance the knowledge and skills of school leaders to implement evidence-based practices in building a MTSS. The Ohio Literacy Lead will develop a professional learning sequence and resources for administrators to support data-driven professional learning, teaming structures, a master schedule, and a school culture that is characterized by data-based decision making and effective communication.

Key Activity 4: Walkthrough Tools. Training and implementation of grade-band specific walkthrough tools. The Department will develop and provide training on the use of common grade-band specific walkthrough tools to support planning, reflection, and collaboration in the implementation of classroom practices, aligned with the science of reading and the curricular materials in use. By using these tools, the Department aims to ensure that instructional practices at Literacy Implementation Sites are grounded in evidence-based approaches to improve the effectiveness of teaching methods and support student learning outcomes. *Responsibilities:* The Department will disseminate grade-band specific walkthrough tools. Site administrators and coaches will attend sessions on use of the tools, which are aligned with curriculum standards and reading science. Technical assistance will be offered to help sites recalibrate teaming structures to facilitate discussions on observational data and promote reflections on instructional practices within Teacher-Based Teams (TBTs). Sites will receive training and technical support on how to

use data to identify areas for professional learning and tailor support to specific grade levels or grade level bands. Technical assistance will be provided to guide resource allocation and support based on the specific needs identified through the walkthroughs. Sites will be encouraged to use walkthrough data to recognize and celebrate high-quality instructional practices and teachers, creating opportunities to scale successes across classrooms, grades, and schools. CLSD-funded staff will provide a series of trainings for administrators and coaches on Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Professional Development (Guskey, 2002; Guskey 2023). These sessions will be designed to enhance the utilization of adult implementation data for planning targeted professional learning activities and coaching opportunities.

MTSS

Key Activity 5: Content-Specific Subgrantee Implementation Supports. In addition to networks providing general support for implementation, the Department will provide optional professional learning and technical assistance for targeted implementation needs including improving literacy instruction for multilingual learners and improving literacy instruction for students with disabilities, through instructional supports and MTSS. *Responsibilities:* Supports will be provided by content-area experts. The Department will identify a qualified vendor to provide professional learning and coaching to improve instruction for multilingual learners. The vendor providing expertise in multilingual learners will provide two professional learning and planning sessions and three office hours during the subgrant application period to help applicants understand their needs and develop plans to address them. The vendor will provide professional learning series in years 2 and 3, and support group and individualized technical assistance based on subgrant need in years 4 and 5. State-funded specialists will provide the All Students Can Read series, targeted toward teachers supporting students with disabilities and at-risk for

dyslexia for subgrantees, in years 2 and 4 and provide coaching sessions at least quarterly to help subgrantees use existing resources to plan tiered instructional supports.

Key Activity 6: Supports for Intensification of Intervention. This professional learning support focuses on supporting intensifying interventions to accelerate student progress through targeted approaches. Participants will explore data-driven decision-making, tiered interventions, and collaborative problem-solving to address the diverse needs of students requiring additional support. By emphasizing the importance of continuous monitoring and adaptation, the professional learning and follow up support aims to equip educators with the tools necessary to enhance student learning outcomes. *Responsibilities:* CLSD-funded and state-supported specialists will develop and provide professional learning and support resources to guide schools and districts to identify needs and intensify instruction for students who require intervention.

Key Activity 7: Family and Community Engagement Resource Development and Training. The Department and its partners will develop a toolkit of resources and tools to support family and community engagement practices birth through grade 12, including case studies of successful practices tested and scaled through family and community engagement coaching support through the grant. In addition to the toolkit, the Department and contracted partners will provide targeted professional learning, coaching, and technical assistance to support subgrantees to develop a bi-directional tiered family and community engagement system, including targeted supports for principals. *Responsibilities:* The Department will identify a vendor with family and community engagement expertise to lead work in developing or adapting two targeted professional learning series (and adapting each series for asynchronous learning), supporting a coaching cohort based on district need during each year of the grant, and collaborating with the Department to develop a suite of family and community engagement resources to be housed on

the Department's website. The Department will manage and support this work to ensure high quality products aligned to Ohio's literacy priorities, and the grants manager will manage the contract to ensure timely completion and invoicing for deliverables.

Key Activity 8: Updates to Ohio's PreK-12 Reading Endorsement. As described in Competitive Priority 1, the Department will pursue revisions of its PreK-12 Reading Endorsement to ensure closer alignment with reading science. *Responsibilities:* The Chief of Literacy and Literacy Policy Administrator will collaborate with the Ohio State Board of Education and Ohio Department of Higher Education to ensure required coursework and assessments to obtain a PreK-12 Reading Endorsement are aligned with the science of reading.

Subgrant Selection, Implementation and Monitoring. Described in greater detail in Appendix A, Subgrant Implementation Plan, the subgrant period will take place from July 2025 to June 2029. Applicants will be invited to request the funds necessary to implement a menu of allowable required and optional activities for which they submit a well-formulated plan.

In year 1, the Department will award $57,000,000 in subgrants to eligible entities. Funding will be distributed across years 1-5 as funds are made available to the state. Awards will include, at minimum $8,550,000 (15% of subgrant awards) for Birth-Kindergarten Entry subgrants, $22,800,000 (40% of subgrant awards) for K-5 subgrants, and $22,800,000 (40% of subgrant awards) to be allocated equitably among grades 6-8 and 9-12 subgrants. The remaining 5% of subgrant awards, $2,850,000, will be allocated through sub-grants among the age-bands equitably based on need. Based on similar activities in prior grants, the Department estimates awarding approximately 18 preschool grants, with an average size of $475,000, 30 grades kindergarten-5 grants, with an average size of $760,000, and 20 grants each to grades 6-8 and

grades 9-12 with an average size of $570,000. The Department will set minimum and maximum awards to ensure project feasibility and equity.

Prior to releasing the request for applications, the Department will update its guidance for Local Literacy Plan development and provide training to prospective applicants. The application period will be open from January to March 2025. Applicants will be required to submit a proposal that addresses the subgrantee application requirements listed in the federal Notice Inviting Applications, describe site needs and how they will be addressed through allowable grant activities and use of funds, and include a local literacy plan. The Department will give priority in awarding subgrants to eligible entities serving children from birth through age 5 who are from low-income families and to local education agencies (LEAs) serving a high number or percentage of high needs schools, as defined in the Federal Notice Inviting Applications. The Department will also give priority to applicants that will use funds to implement evidence-based activities. In addition to prioritizing applications from high-need schools, aligned to CLSD Federal Notice Inviting Applications, the Department will use geographic state educational regions to prioritize distribution of grants and ensure representation of rural districts.

The Department will review proposals and award subgrants in April and May. Beginning in August 2025, subgrantees will participate in Regional Literacy Networks and a Statewide Networked Improvement Communities to support implementation. In the Regional Literacy Network, led by a ReadOhio Literacy Specialist, subgrantees will work with neighboring districts to address problems of practice. CLSD Technical Assistance Specialists will run at least six Networked Improvement Communities. Sub-grantees will be divided based on implementation focus and needs. Both networks will have at least three meetings each year. Subgrantees will also participate in bimonthly grant compliance meetings with the grants

manager and Literacy team, to receive guidance and provide feedback on their required grant activities and provide regular written activity reports during the school year.

Part 2: Integration of Performance Feedback and Continuous Improvement. Performance feedback to inform continuous improvement is a critical component of Ohio's project design as the anticipated outcomes of this grant are to develop Literacy Implementation Sites to inform the professional learning and resources offered by the Department and regional support system to increase literacy outcomes for children and students throughout the state. Subgrantees will use student and adult implementation data to determine whether their implementation is having the desired impact and, if not, allowing them to make adjustments/improvements based on the information gathered. Meanwhile, the state will use data reported by subgrantees to adjust the work that supports the subgrantees and regional literacy networks and that informs the development of statewide resources and support.

Literacy Implementation Sites will use a problem-solving model to continually monitor implementation and adjust as necessary. The state improvement process relies on teacher-based teams and building leadership teams to regularly meet, review both student and adult data related to implementation and outcomes, discuss successes and challenges, and make course corrections. In addition, participating schools or early childhood education programs will establish school literacy leadership teams (which may be made up of the school's building leadership team if appropriate). Each Literacy Implementation Site will utilize the data sources in the table below, in addition to any other identified and relevant local data, to engage in this process.

Birth-Kindergarten Entry	Developmentally appropriate progress monitoring or screening tool (Infants/Toddlers), Preschool Early Literacy Indicators (PELI, 3–5-year-olds)

Kindergarten-Grade 5	Approved curriculum-based measure (3 times/year) that includes basic early literacy skills and a progress monitoring component
Grades 6-8	Approved curriculum-based measure (once/year) that includes basic early literacy skills; progress monitoring tool aligned to intervention
Grades 9-12	Ohio's State Tests for English Language Arts, in conjunction with Early Warning Indicators, progress monitoring tool aligned to intervention
Adult Implementation Data	Measures of MTSS* (Ready Schools Transition Guide for Language and Literacy (birth-K entry) Reading-Tiered Fidelity Inventory (grades K-12) Walkthrough data using a common, high-quality walkthrough form, such as the Instructional Practice Guide (Student Achievement Partners)

The Department will ensure subgrantees have training in the use of these measures.

State Engagement in Continuous Improvement. The Department will regularly connect with subgrantees to plan for ongoing improvement of support activities. Yearly, in June, grantees will complete a brief self-assessment survey describing their level of implementation of instructional materials. Sites will submit survey updates in November and March, allowing leadership to identify strengths, weaknesses, and next steps. CLSD Technical Assistance Specialists will group sites into networks by implementation support needs.

The Department will use the self-assessments and MTSS measures to identify its own continuous improvement processes. Self-Assessment data will guide the Department's network support activities. Data from the R-TFI and *Ready Schools Guide for Language and Literacy* will be collated, and the lowest scoring items will be considered as topics for guidance, professional learning, or areas where Department staff will grow to better support subgrantee sites.

Part 3: Staffing. All Department staff outlined in the table below have extensive experience leading largescale federal and state grants. See Appendix B for resumes and additional details.

Name	Affiliation	Background	Time	Role
Department's Literacy Achievement and Reading Success Unit				
Dr. Melissa Weber-Mayrer, Chief of Literacy		Ph.D. Reading for Early and Middle Childhood, leads implementation of all Ohio Literacy Projects	In-kind (as needed)	Project Director
Sherine Tambyraja, Sr. Research Strategist		Ph.D. in Speech and Hearing Science with extensive experience research and data analysis	In-kind (~25%)	Principal Investigator
Melissa Babcock, Associate Administrator		Master of Science in Literacy Education, led implementation 2019 CLSD Grant, manages Literacy team and development of supports	In-kind (~40%)	Lead Implementation & Resource Development
LM Clinton, Policy Administrator		Juris Doctorate, oversees implementation of Dyslexia Supports and Third Grade Reading Guarantee, manages Literacy Policy team	In-kind (~20%)	Lead Higher Ed Policy Revisions
Katie Dean, Grants Manager		15 years in grants management, including $50+ million in federal awards.	50%	Oversee subgrants, contracts & reporting
Literacy team – 7 members		Expertise in Birth-Grade 12 implementation & policy, HQIM, coaching, and professional learning	In-kind (as needed)	Implementation and Resource Development
Data Consultant – To be hired, experience: literacy data analysis & problem solving, reading science, professional learning			100%	MTSS Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance Specialists, State Support Teams: Experienced literacy consultants, 1 expert in birth-kindergarten entry, 1 expert in kindergarten-grade 12	100%	Network and Implementation Technical Asst.
ReadOhio Network, State Support Teams and Educational Service Centers: 33+ staff, coordinate, and deliver regional professional learning supports and networks	In-kind	Regional Support for Implementation

Part 4: Ensuring High Quality Services and Products.

Subgrantee Monitoring and Continuous Improvement. In addition to the continuous improvement activities described in Part 2 of the Management Plan, the Department will conduct ongoing monitoring with grantees. Regular monitoring activities will include submission of annual budget narratives, including any revisions since the initial grant application, submission of an implementation self-assessment and two updates each year, and submission of an annual monitoring survey. The monitoring survey will include a financial transaction report for the period; reports on literacy implementation activities and progress in improving educator capacity, shared leadership, the MTSS, and family and community engagement; and results of a fidelity of implementation tool (the R-TFI or Ready Schools guide) and plan to address items to improve from the tool. High-risk grantees will participate in an on-site visit where Department staff will observe literacy and content-area instruction and intervention, discuss professional learning and MTSS with key staff, review financial documentation, and meet with site leaders. The grants manager will lead monitoring and compliance activities review and approve all grant budgets. CLSD Technical Assistance Specialists will support development of the subgrantee self-assessment, and CLSD Technical Assistance Specialists and the Department will support review and operationalizing of the self-assessment and updates. The Department will review

literacy content in annual monitoring surveys and at on-site visits, and the grants manager will lead a review of fiscal compliance and completion of required activities. The Department will annually update monitoring processes, protocols, guidance documents, and rubrics based on feedback from program administrators and subgrantees.

Project products and services. The Department will use established tools to ensure the quality of professional learning and support resources developed as part of this project. Professional learning will be reviewed using the Observation Checklist for High-Quality Professional Development and Quality Matters Continuing Education and Professional Development Rubric, or similar tool. Resources developed as part of this project will be reviewed by the Department and state experts, who were not part of the development, for quality, clarity, and accessibility prior to being shared with subgrantees. Subgrantees who use the resources will provide feedback through survey tools. Resources will be revised prior to being released to broader state users. High-quality contractual services will be ensured through procurement processes aligned to state and federal regulations designed to identify the highest quality provider for solicited activities. Following vendor selection, the Department will meet with service providers to clarify needs and expectations related to each product. Throughout implementation, the Department will meet with service providers to provide feedback and guidance, and the grants manager will not approve invoices until services and products are reviewed to meet quality standards.

Conclusion: The Department has strong internal management processes, an experienced team of literacy experts with a history of providing high quality products to support professional learning and implementation across the state and beyond, a clear plan to guide subgrant activities and provide subgrantee supports, and familiarity with an array of local and national experts to provide contracted services. The Department has successfully used previous federal grants to

demonstrate the effectiveness of evidence-based practices, including high-quality instructional materials, literacy coaching, and the use of universal screening and diagnostic tools and interventions in a MTSS, to drive broad changes in implementation across the state. This CLSD grant will allow the Department to improve the quality of implementation, identify the most impactful levers of support, and ensure every student reaps the benefits of high-quality materials and systems for literacy instruction.

SECTION D: PROJECT SERVICES

As part of Ohio's project design, project services are planned to have an impact on teachers, leaders, students and families (See Section B, Part 2). The CLSD grant will provide in-depth opportunities for Ohio schools to build capacity of five components of effective implementation: curriculum-based professional learning, coaching, leadership support, strong MTSS, and family and community engagement. These components include evidence-based strategies that support systems building (e.g., screening, progress monitoring and tools to support effective implementation of tiered instruction) and instruction (e.g., explicit, systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing). Additionally, the state government's commitment to the science of reading, led by Ohio Governor DeWine, places clear emphasis on ensuring every child and student becomes a proficient reader ready to enter society and the workforce. This support increases the likelihood of success and the positive impact on literacy for the state.

Part 1: Likely Impact of Services Provided by Proposed Project. Ohio's proposed project has been developed based on knowledge of the most current research, Ohio data (Section A), and lessons learned through recent and past state literacy initiatives. Implementation support is crucial because it ensures evidence-based instructional strategies are consistently and effectively

transferred to practice, maximizing intended impact. Ongoing district and school support fosters the refinement of the problem-solving model, helping to address challenges and improve outcomes over time (Freeman et al., 2017). This project leverages the principles of implementation science which supports successfully integrating evidence-based practices into school settings, ensuring their efficacy and sustainability. When districts and schools understand the full scope of implementing evidence-based practices, they are better equipped to remove the barriers to implementation. This helps bridge the gap between the research about the practices and implementation of the practices, improving student outcomes (Fixsen et al., 2009). Therefore, to ensure that the state's ReadOhio efforts are successful, there must be support for implementation and opportunities for districts and schools across the state to see evidence of success. This project will allow the Department to determine the impact of implementation components on students' literacy achievement and identify scalable implementation practices statewide.

Ohio has focused on improving literacy outcomes for decades. In 1990, Ohio legislation and administrative regulations required phonics instruction for students in kindergarten to grade 3. In 2012, Ohio legislation codified practices like screening and intervention in kindergarten through grade 3 with Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee. In 2020, Ohio's dyslexia support laws created requirements for dyslexia screening measures, professional learning for identifying dyslexia, requirements for instructing students with dyslexia, identification of a structured literacy certification process for teachers, and the establishment of an Ohio Dyslexia Committee. In 2023, Ohio enacted an additional set of laws focused on strengthening instruction, including requirements for the use of high-quality core curriculum and instructional materials and reading intervention programs as well as professional learning in the science of reading.

In addition to these legislative activities, Ohio has implemented federal grants to improve literacy outcomes, most recently the 2019 CLSD grant. Grant activities focused on helping schools and districts implement literacy coaching and MTSS. Through the grant, the Department identified a need for more robust and deep supports that help sites identify and address ongoing needs and challenges as they implement high-quality instructional materials, coaching, leadership support, MTSS, and family and community engagement activities. Sites had tools necessary to plan and begin implementation but needed additional guidance to sustain and improve implementation (Freeman et al., 2017). The successes of some CLSD sites demonstrated exemplary implementation that is replicable and scalable. Northridge Local Schools, a current CLSD grantee, saw improvements in student literacy achievement following the implementation of a project that integrated curriculum-based professional learning, literacy coaching, and multi-tiered systems of support, while also building robust school and district leadership structures and promoting family and community engagement.

In Year 2, Northridge Local Schools adopted and implemented new core curriculum and intervention programs, bolstered by systems level support to guide selection processes and curriculum-based professional learning to strengthen implementation. The district's literacy coach was instrumental in aligning coaching supports with job-embedded professional learning to guide educators, leaders and staff in aligning instructional practices, implementing new programs and curricula, and delivering instruction and interventions with integrity. Walkthrough forms were developed and used to facilitate learning walks and grade-level conversations to enhance the implementation of district-selected reading curricula and instructional practices. Curriculum specific walkthrough forms were also used to collect adult implementation data, which informed ongoing professional learning and coaching efforts. Northridge's building and

district leaders participated in professional learning and training to build their knowledge and support the development of systems to drive literacy improvement. Northridge developed and implemented a robust multi-tiered system of support, focused on using student data to drive instructional decision making in tiers 2 and 3 through multidisciplinary teams. Northridge has worked to build the capacity of family and school staff to share responsibility and work together as equal partners in improving school and student outcomes. The district has developed resources and tools to support family engagement and literacy learning at home to engage and leverage families and caregivers as collaborative partners. As the district continues to build upon its success in literacy, Northridge understands there is room for growth related to leveraging parent and community engagement and will build supports into future literacy plans.

Governor DeWine visited Northridge to see firsthand implementation effects. In 2022-2023, 24% of kindergarten students at Northridge Elementary School students were considered on-track in reading at the beginning of the school year. By the end of the 2022-2023 school year, 83% of students were on track. The school also improved efforts to install and implement a robust MTSS. At the start of grant activities, Northridge Elementary averaged 13% implementation of the components necessary for a healthy literacy system. In the spring of 2023, the school achieved 50% implementation of MTSS components. This improvement in the health of literacy systems through the R-TFI, combined with improvement in student, signals the likely impact when replicating and scaling literacy improvement focused on the integration of key implementation levers including curriculum-based professional learning, coaching, MTSS, with robust systems of school and district leadership and family and community engagement.

Ohio now is positioned to learn from the diverse activities of the districts and schools involved in grants and initiatives to develop a highly impactful CLSD project that targets real-time needs in

implementation. Thus, while more broadly focused on approach than previous projects, the CLSD project's potential impact will support LEAs in their most immediate needs and shape the legacy of Ohio's literacy impact across the state.

Part 2: Extent to which Training or Professional Learning Services will be of Sufficient Quality, Intensity, and Duration to Lead to Improvements in Practice. The Ohio project poses several professional learning services outlined below that demonstrate the extent to which these opportunities will be high-quality, of the appropriate strength, and length. The Department will use the existing regional structure, expertise within the agency, and national implementation experts to support the activities outlined in Section B.

Enhancements of Regional Literacy Networks. Sixteen regional literacy networks are in place across Ohio, bringing together neighboring districts and schools as a community of practice or networked improvement community focused on literacy improvement. The Department has partnered with Learning Forward since 2020 to provide professional learning and coaching support to specialists leading regional literacy networks, building capacity around implementing networks focused on continuous improvement. The Department will build upon this foundation to provide targeted support to each regional literacy network, including annual planning and goal setting based on a common needs assessment and implementation using common tools developed by the state-wide ReadOhio Network.

Implementation of Statewide Networked Improvement Communities. The Department has facilitated various statewide networking opportunities that have been leveraged to allow districts to problem solve common, discrete implementation topics. The Department will recalibrate and enhance these opportunities as networked improvement communities, focused on problem solving implementation topics related to the curricula or intervention program common to a

subgroup of grantees. This will allow the Department to provide targeted support to each networked improvement community, learn from common trends or barriers and support implementation of curriculum-based professional learning and coaching within sites.

Statewide Training and Technical Assistance. Ohio proposes training and technical assistance services to improve the implementation of evidence-based language and literacy instruction across the state. Training and technical assistance is available from the Department in three forms: universal, targeted and intensive. Activities described below represent training and technical assistance directly supported through the proposed CLSD grant but do not reflect the full scope of training and technical assistance provided through *Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement* and the Department.

- ***Universal Training and Technical Assistance*** will be available to CLSD subgrantees and other LEAs across the state. State-level activities under the CLSD grant supporting universal training and technical assistance will include:
  - ***Resources and Materials:*** Producing resources and materials to develop understanding of and alignment to *Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement*;
  - ***Courses:*** Developing courses for in-service educators, administrators and coaches on evidence-based language and literacy strategies identified in *Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement* for birth-grade 12, including high-quality instructional materials, instructional coaching for literacy, and support for students with disabilities; and
  - ***Web-based Resources:*** Enhancing resources on the Department's website based on the implementation in participating districts, schools, and early care and education sites, including regular spotlights, case studies, and integrated mini-courses through Literacy Academy on Demand.

In addition to the universal supports provided above, the Department plans to continue hosting the annual *ReadOhio Literacy Academy*, a statewide professional learning event initiated through the 2019 CLSD Grant, with state funds. Ohio's aim is to enhance and grow the birth through grade 12 literacy academy to include more LEAs and partner organizations from across the state, enhance networking and showcase opportunities, develop understanding of the components of comprehensive literacy instruction birth through grade 12, and highlight successes in local implementation.

- ***Targeted Training and Technical Assistance to CLSD Subgrantees*** will be available throughout the grant period to educators, administrators or coaches outside of Literacy Implementation Sites.

  o *Training and Support for the Facilitation of the R-TFI.* The Department will provide training and support to subgrantees for the R-TFI for K-12 subgrantees.

  o *Training and Support for the Facilitation of the Ready Schools Literacy Transition Plan*. The Ohio Department of Children and Youth in collaboration with the Department will provide training and support to birth-kindergarten and K-5 subgrantees by facilitating the Ready Schools Transition Plan and promoting collaboration birth through school entry.

  o In addition, the Department will ensure effective subgrantee implementation by providing intensive training and supports in instructional coaching, literacy leadership, the common walkthrough tool, supports for educators of multilingual learners, and intensification of intervention through a robust MTSS, as described in key activities 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the Management Plan.

- ***Intensive Training and Technical Assistance to CLSD Participating Schools and Early Childhood Education Programs*** will be available to select subgrantees based on the risk

assessment conducted by the Department and ongoing continuous improvement efforts throughout the grant period. Aligned to Ohio's theory of action and project design levers, this may include on-site, need-specific support focused on the 5 components of effective Literacy Implementation sites.

- **<u>Part 3: Extent that Services Reflect Up-to-date Knowledge from Research and Effective Practice.</u>** Research conducted through experimental and quasi-experimental design suggests that effective implementation of curriculum-based professional learning, coaching, leadership support, MTSS, and family and community engagement equips school systems to foster student success. Curriculum-based professional learning ensures that teachers have the knowledge and skills to implement new curricula effectively and adapt teaching strategies to meet diverse student needs (Brownell et al., 2017).

Coaching is a bridge between professional learning and classroom practice. Research indicates that content-specific coaching improves teacher implementation of new strategies through personalized, job-embedded support and feedback (Kraft et al., 2018). Coaches play a vital role in helping teachers translate theory into practice to enhance instructional quality, leading to student achievement.

Influential school leaders ensure the sustainability of literacy initiatives by creating a shared vision, establishing clear goals, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. They strategically allocate resources, secure professional learning opportunities, and support collaborative structures (Robinson, 2007). Strong leadership is associated with increased teacher motivation, commitment, and a positive school climate, which all contribute to the successful implementation of MTSS (Grisson et al., 2021).

Schools with robust MTSS frameworks demonstrate improved student outcomes, reduced behavior problems, and increased graduation rates. Research emphasizes the importance of fidelity to the MTSS framework, which includes adhering to evidence-based practices, maintaining a structured problem-solving process, and ensuring interventions are implemented as intended (Coyne et al., 2022).

Schools that build strong partnerships with families and communities are better equipped to support student learning and well-being. Evidence-based engagement strategies include regular communication, parent education programs, and involving families in decision-making processes. Research suggests that when families and communities are actively involved in the educational process, students exhibit higher levels of academic achievement, better attendance, and improved behavior (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016; Wang & Shikh-Khalil, 2014).

SECTION E: PROJECT EVALUATION

<u>Part 1: Evaluation.</u> The evaluation of this project is designed to be a comprehensive evaluation examining both process (implementation) and impact (outcomes). The quasi-experimental research design to test the main impacts uses methods and analytical approaches that meet the *What Works Clearinghouse Standards 4.1*. The purpose of the evaluation will be formative and summative. Knowledge gained from the evaluation will support continuous improvement for the Literacy Implementation sites and examine long-term impacts on student outcomes.

The theory of change that will be evaluated is as follows: Activities and services outlined in the grant include a range of professional learning and coaching supports specific to the implementation of effective reading instruction, building leadership support, strengthening schools' MTSS within schools, and designing family and community engagement plans. As a result of those activities and services, Literacy Implementation sites will implement their reading

curriculum with integrity, bolster their MTSS, build the leadership and capacity of school leaders and develop and implement family engagement practices that are responsive to students and families. Through these changes and increase in knowledge and improved practices, students' reading achievement will increase (See Appendix M, Logic Model).

Implementation data for all activities (e.g., professional learning, coaching) will be collected by Department staff. Student and educator data will be provided by the Department. Ohio's State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) which includes detailed data on student attributes, statuses, course and program participation, academic performance, attendance and behavior at multiple points during each school year. In the SLDS, students are linked to their educators. Teacher data elements include demographics, degree attainment, experience, and credentials. A reference table in Appendix D describes the outcomes, research questions, and data sources central to the evaluation.

Part 2: Methods of Evaluation are Thorough, Feasible, and Appropriate to the Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes of the Proposed Project. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine the extent to which the activities performed by the Literacy Implementation Sites are associated with change in systems-level and educator-level practices, and therefore associated with improved reading achievement for students in grades preK-12. Given the requirement to select and provide services to schools and districts based on high-need status as subgrantees, random assignment is not feasible. Therefore, impacts on student outcomes will be assessed using a *Comparative Interrupted Time Series (CITS)* design. The context of this project is particularly well-suited for the CITS design, which is appropriate when the treatment (i.e., targeted educator supports) is implemented at an aggregate level (i.e., not the student-level), and when there are multiple data points of the same measure available. In this case, student-level data

of state tests is collected every year. Finally, it is required that the comparison group also have the same number of data points on the same measure, which will also occur because of required state testing. There are several ways to determine the comparison group. This project will use a proximity approach and select comparison schools from the same geographical area of the state as the treatment schools. The specific approach for estimating treatment effects (i.e., baseline mean model, baseline linear trend model or school- and year fixed effects model) will be determined upon closer review of the pre-implementation data of the intervention and comparison schools. Effects are estimated via CITS using regression analysis; for this project a multi-level regression will be used to account for the nested nature of the data. Structural equation modeling will be used to address questions of relative impacts of each implementation activity.

Part 3: Evaluation Methods for Providing Feedback and Assessing Progress Toward Outcomes. Implementation data will be collected annually and will be used to evaluate progress towards the project goals. Implementation data will primarily consist of attendance data and feedback surveys from the trainings and professional learning opportunities specific to curriculum implementation, receipt of coaching, leadership, MTSS, and family and community engagement. If attendance levels are below expectations and/or the feedback from these trainings indicates areas of improvement, the Department will use that data to inform adjustments or changes that may need to be made as the grant period progresses. In addition, student-level progress monitoring data will be collected three times a year to evaluate incremental gains in student literacy outcomes at the Literacy Implementation Sites.

The R-TFI (St. Martin et al., 2023) provides a formative assessment of change in global teacher practice from participation in the grant activities. The R-TFI measures the presence of evidence-

based practices in reading instruction, including the use of a continuum of intervention support to meet the needs of struggling readers, and a data-driven evaluation process for ensuring positive student outcomes. The R-TFI provides a formative assessment on the impact of project participation for building leaders. This measure captures both teacher behavior and the extent to which students are served within an MTSS framework. A brief description of additional data to be measured for the formative and summative evaluations is below.

Implementation Data: Attendance at Professional Learnings. Educator attendance at the professional learning and trainings will be monitored. Feedback surveys will also be administered at the trainings to ensure participants feel the trainings are informative. Both types of data may be used as moderators in subsequent analyses.

Implementation Data: Coaching Logs. A coaching data dashboard will serve as the primary data collection method for implementation of the instructional coaching provided to Literacy Implementation Sites. Literacy coaches, teachers and building administrators will have access to the data dashboard. After each coaching session, the coach will log the date, start time and end time. A drop-down menu will allow the coach to enter information about the topic of the coaching session for that day (e.g., baseline data, progress monitoring data), as well as specifics about the data that were discussed and how to use student data to inform instruction.

Implementation Data: Coaching Feedback. A teacher survey will be developed to assess the social validity of the coaching framework. The survey will measure educators' perceptions of student-focused coaching they receive, the acceptability of the coaching framework's components, processes, and outcomes, and feedback for changes or improvements.

Impact Data: Teacher Outcomes. Teacher knowledge will be measured prior to and after participation in professional learning to determine effectiveness of the trainings. Change in

teachers' instructional practices will be measured with a high-quality walkthrough tool, at least thrice yearly. Teacher-level outcome data may also be used as moderators in analyses focused on student outcomes.

Impact Data: Student Reading Outcomes. Curriculum-based measures (CBM) will be the formative assessment for student outcomes in reading achievement. Progress-monitoring data from approved CBMs will be measured throughout the academic year and facilitate preliminary analyses regarding associations between student-focused coaching and student outcomes. The frequency and type of CBMs will vary by grade bands. The use of standardized CBMs to assess children's reading skills is well supported in the research literature (e.g., Stecker et al., 2005).

Impact Data: Student Reading Outcomes. English Language Arts Assessment will be an additional measure of student reading achievement. Ohio's State Test for English language arts measures student proficiency on Ohio's Learning Standards for English Language Arts. This test is administered once a year. Standardized scores are used to determine the extent to which a student has achieved grade-level reading proficiency.

Impact Data: Systems-Level Outcomes. The Reading-Tiered Fidelity Inventory (R-TFI; St. Martin, Harms, Walsh & Nantais, 2022) was developed to measure the presence of evidence-based practices in reading instruction, including the use of a continuum of intervention support to meet the needs of struggling readers, and a data-driven evaluation process for ensuring positive student outcomes. Developed in 2015, the R-TFI was designed to assess the implementation of reading systems in a way that aligns with the structure of the research-validated school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI). The Elementary-Level Edition is comprised of 53 items related to Tier 1 (core instruction and universal supports), Tier 2 (strategic intervention), and Tier 3 (intensive, individualized

intervention) supports. The subscales of Teams, Implementation, Resources, and Evaluation align with the structure of the school wide PBIS TFI. Research supports the content validity and response-process validity of the R-TFI (St. Martin et al., 2023).

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce appreciates the opportunity to apply for funding to continue making an impact on learners in Ohio birth through grade 12. Governor DeWine's ReadOhio initiative has state leaders in alignment and focused on statewide literacy proficiency. Refining and supporting implementation structures will ensure all learners have the opportunity to lead successful lives.