



Illinois State Board of Education

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Dr. Randy J. Dunn
State Superintendent of Education

October 12, 2005

TO: Eligible Applicants

FROM: Randy J. Dunn
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): Illinois State Personnel Development
Grant: Regional Professional Development Centers

General Information

Eligible Applicants: Public school districts; special education joint agreements, cooperatives, or legal entities that employ a state-approved special education director; Regional Offices of Education (ROEs); Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs); institutes of higher education (IHEs) with personnel preparation programs; public university laboratory schools approved by the Illinois State Board of Education; charter schools; and area vocational centers are eligible to apply. In addition, eligible applicants are encouraged to submit joint applications with other eligible applicants in their areas, particularly in light of the partnership requirements of the RFP (see "Program Specifications," pages 6 and 7). If a joint application is submitted, one entity must be designated to serve as the administrative agent.

Grant Award: Four grants will be awarded in FY 2006 (year one of the project) in amounts ranging from \$266,885 to \$353,775 each. Grant award amounts in years two through five (FY 2007, FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010) are expected to range from \$375,000 to \$500,000 per Regional Professional Development Center. All grant amounts will depend on the needs addressed in each approved proposal, the size and population of the geographic area to be served, and the total appropriation for the program.

Grant Period: The initial grant period will begin no sooner than January 1, 2006, and will extend from the execution date of the grant until September 30, 2006. Successful applicants may reapply for up to four additional years, with subsequent grant periods extending from October 1 of each year through September 30 of the following year. Funding in the subsequent years will be contingent upon a sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress in the preceding grant period.

Application Deadline: Mail the **original and five copies** (six applications in all) to Kathryn Cox, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, N-253, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001, to ensure receipt no later than December 7, 2005. No FAX copies will be accepted.

Proposals may also be hand-delivered to the following locations:

Springfield Office
Information Center
1st Floor
100 North First Street

Chicago Office
Reception Area
Suite 14-300
100 West Randolph Street

Electronic Bidders' Conference: A four-week online bidders' conference will be held. Starting at 9:00 a.m. on October 24, 2005, and ending at 5:00 p.m. on November 18, 2005, bidders will be allowed to ask questions about the intent or interpretation of this RFP. No other bidders' conference will be held. All questions, responses, and suggestions will be posted at http://www.isbe.net/rpdc_bidders_conf/.

Should the conditions of this RFP change as a result of the bidders' conference, the State Board of Education will notify all recipients of the RFP of the changes.

Contact Person: For more information on this RFP, contact Kathryn Cox at 217-782-5589 or 217/782-1900 (TTY).

Background

In September 2005, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) received a five-year State Personnel Development (SPD) Grant issued by the U.S. Department of Education under Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004). The overarching goal of Illinois' SPD Grant Project is to:

Establish and implement a coordinated, regionalized system of personnel development that will increase the capacity of school systems to provide early intervening services, aligned with the general education curriculum, to at-risk students and students with disabilities, as measured by improved student progress and performance.

This goal will be accomplished through the project objectives, which are to:

1. Deliver research-based professional development and technical assistance, based on an established training framework developed through the Flexible Service Delivery and Standards Aligned Classroom initiatives, through development of regional plans that follow a common format and criteria established at the state level and are prepared in a partnership of LEAs, IHEs, regional providers, and parents.
2. Increase the participation of parents in decision-making across district sites.

3. Incorporate the professional development content into IHE general and special education preservice curricula.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of project activities.

Further details of Illinois' SPD Grant Project are available in ISBE's federal grant application, which may be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/spd_grant_abstract.pdf. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the application in preparing proposals in response to this RFP.

The purpose of this RFP is to establish four Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDCs)—one in the city of Chicago and one each in the northern, central, and southern parts of the state. (Refer to the map in Appendix A showing the proposed regional division of the state.) These RPDCs will serve as the primary mechanisms for accomplishing the goal and objectives of the SPD Grant Project.

All RPDCs will provide standardized professional development and technical assistance to educators and parents in their regions. The professional development and technical assistance will focus on designing and providing early intervening services, with an emphasis on reading instruction that is scientifically research-based; progress monitoring; response to intervention; and standards-aligned instruction and assessment. By using a standardized curriculum and a common professional development and technical assistance structure, the consistency of training will be improved, as will the systemic implementation of the knowledge and skills gained by the participants. To enhance project replicability and to ensure that evaluation can be conducted at the school and student levels, school demonstration and data collection sites will be identified within selected school districts located in the geographic area served by each RPDC.

Existing ISBE initiatives will provide the foundation for the content of the training and technical assistance provided by the RPDCs. These initiatives include the Flexible Service Delivery (Flex) Project, the Standards-Aligned Classroom Initiative (SAC), and Illinois Reading First. A brief overview of each follows.

Early Intervening Services and the Flexible Service Delivery Project

Under IDEA 2004, LEAs are allowed to use up to 15 percent of their IDEA Part B flow-through funds to develop and implement early intervening services for K-12 students not identified as needing special education or related services but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in the general education environment. IDEA 2004 also provides that, when determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, an LEA may use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as a part of the evaluation procedures.

From 1998 through June 2005, ISBE supported the Flex Pilot Project through IDEA Part B mini-grants to LEAs, and this project uses a school-based problem-solving approach to providing early intervening services to students at risk of academic failure while monitoring student progress using response to intervention (RtI). A multi-year evaluation of the project showed promising results for students who received such services. Because of these positive results and

in light of the new provisions in IDEA 2004, ISBE determined that statewide expansion of the approaches used under the Flex Project was warranted in order to provide school personnel and parents throughout the state with more equitable access to professional development and technical assistance that is critical to quality implementation of a problem-solving model using RtI.

With funding from ISBE, the school districts participating in Flex have developed high-quality, research-based professional development cycles that will be used in the SPD Grant Project as the primary training curriculum in the areas of school-based problem solving, early intervening services, and RtI. See Appendix B for further details of the Flex Project and the training cycles.

Standards-Aligned Classroom Initiative

Since 2000 ISBE has provided funding for the SAC initiative to support the ISBE goal of assisting educators in applying the principles and practices of a “Standards-Led” Educational System to improve teaching and learning. SAC is a highly effective, cost-efficient professional development initiative involving teachers and administrators, the immediate goal of which is to equip teachers with the support, resources, knowledge, and skills to align classroom-level assessment and instruction with the Illinois Learning Standards. Given that research shows that the quality of instruction has an impact on student achievement, the ultimate goal of the initiative is to improve student achievement to the extent it is measured by local and state assessments that are aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards.

The program is designed to increase teacher knowledge and skills in the areas of standards, assessment, and instructional strategies by engaging them in professional Learning Teams made up of teachers and administrators, that meet in the school for the entire school year. Experienced statewide trainers provide the initial training for the teams, and trained coaches provided by the ROEs and ISCs provide ongoing support to the teams during the school year.

The SAC training curriculum and materials are standardized, and the curriculum content goes hand-in-hand with designing interventions for at-risk students, in that such interventions must be standards-based to facilitate implementation in the general education curriculum. Therefore, the SAC curriculum will be incorporated into the professional development provided through the SPD Grant Project. Further, the expertise of the SAC statewide trainers and coaches will be tapped as the project seeks to expand upon and enhance the resources of SAC. See Appendix B for further information on the SAC curriculum.

Illinois Reading First

According to the report of the President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education (2002), evidence suggests that 90 percent of children identified as having specific learning disabilities are so identified because they have not been taught to read. In addition, Shaywitz, et al. (1992) and Francis, et al. (1996) found that approximately 75 percent of students identified as having reading difficulties in grade 3 still have reading disabilities in grade 9.

Given the wide body of research on reading and its impact on student performance, it is incumbent upon states to carry out systemic efforts to improve reading instruction in schools. The Reading First program targets high-poverty, low-performing schools that house at least kindergarten through grade 3 and are committed to carrying out activities that will result in classrooms with the following characteristics:

- Implementation of a high-quality reading program based on scientifically-based reading research that includes instructional content based on the five essential components of reading—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- Ongoing use of assessments and progress-monitoring strategies (e.g., Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, or DIBELS) that inform instructional decisions, including placement and movement in large and small group instruction as appropriate to meet students' needs.
- Clear expectations for students' reading achievement and active engagement in a variety of reading-based activities that are connected to the essential components of reading and to clearly articulated academic goals.
- Coherent instructional design that includes explicit instructional strategies, coordinated instructional sequences, ample practice opportunities, aligned student materials, and a protected block of at least 90 minutes a day for reading instruction.
- Scientifically based intervention strategies designed for students not making sufficient progress to bring them to grade level.

Although Reading First targets improvement in the foundations of reading instruction, complementary activities are needed to provide reading improvement strategies that will have a direct impact on at-risk students, including those with disabilities. Therefore, the SPD Grant Project will build upon the characteristics of Reading First classrooms through its emphasis on reading instruction that is scientifically research-based and improvement strategies that meet the requirements of Reading First. The SPD Grant Project will provide access to training for special and general education teachers in non-Reading First schools and promote high-quality reading instruction for children with disabilities and other at-risk learners on a statewide basis. For additional information about Illinois Reading First, please visit the Reading First page of ISBE's website at http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/reading/html/read_first.htm.

Program Specifications

The primary purpose of the Illinois SPD Project is to effect a significant, systemic change in how Illinois manages its special education personnel development system, resulting in an infrastructure that will last beyond the grant period. The goal, objectives, and activities of the project are linked through overarching themes of recommended practice in general and special education and personnel development, and through themes of partnership and collaboration. Criteria grounded in these themes guide the major project activities.

As discussed previously, four RPDCs will be established—Chicago, north, central, and south. Applicants must submit a proposal that identifies the geographic region to be served and that

contains a detailed regional action plan, with specific timelines across the five-year project period, describing how the program specifications below will be met.

Required Partnerships and Collaboration: Each RPDC must be a collaborative partnership of the entities listed below. One or more representatives from each of the required partners must be involved in the development of the proposal. Participants in the planning process and their roles must be described, and letters of intent to participate in the partnership must be submitted with the proposal. Required partners include:

- One or more LEAs, including special education joint agreements;
- Regional providers such as ROEs, ISCs, and Regional Support Providers (RESPROs; see Appendix B for information on RESPRO services);
- IHEs; and
- Parent entities, e.g., one of the ISBE-funded Parent Mentor Projects or the Statewide Parent Technical Assistance Center, one of the federally funded Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs), or a local nonprofit parent organization. See Appendix C for contact information for the Parent Mentor Projects, Statewide Parent Technical Assistance Center, and PTIs.

During project implementation each RPDC must also:

- Work collaboratively with IHEs to incorporate the professional development content described below into general and special education preservice curricula.
- Work collaboratively with the three PTIs to develop parent “handbooks” on the professional development topics listed above. (Funding will be provided to the PTIs for this purpose.)

Finally, RPDCs must coordinate project activities with existing ISBE training and technical assistance initiatives funded under IDEA Part B, as well as Illinois Reading First (refer to information under “Background,” pages 4 and 5). IDEA Part B initiatives include, but are not limited to:

- Project CHOICES, a statewide project that provides local, regional, and statewide training and technical assistance to public school districts and families working to increase inclusive educational options for children and youth with disabilities.
- Illinois Autism Training and Technical Assistance Project, which provides training and technical assistance focused on educating students with autism and other pervasive developmental disorders in the least restrictive environment.
- Emotional and Behavioral Disorders/Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (EBD/PBIS) Initiative, a statewide project that provides training and technical assistance to help schools and communities address the needs of students with EBD and other at-risk students.
- Parent Mentor Project and Statewide Parent Technical Assistance Center, both of which are part of a newly funded ISBE initiative. The purpose of the Parent Mentor Project is to help parents of children with disabilities to effectively navigate the educational system in partnership with school district personnel. The Parent Technical Assistance Center coordinates a system that facilitates parent access to training, information, advocacy, and leadership, including coordination of the Parent Mentor Project.

- STARNET, an early childhood special education initiative that provides regional and statewide technical assistance to early intervention and preschool staff, members of local interagency councils, and families of young children with disabilities.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance Plan: Each RPDC will be responsible for delivering regionally based professional development and technical assistance to public and private school administrators and teachers, related services personnel, and parents, as well as IHE teacher preparation program faculty, in the following priority areas:

- Response to intervention, early intervening services, and school-based problem-solving, using the Flexible Service Delivery training cycles (see Appendix B);
- Reading instruction that is scientifically research-based, including early literacy instruction, aligned with Illinois Reading First; and
- Standards-aligned instruction and assessment, using the existing SAC curriculum and training materials (see Appendix B). Delivery of the SAC training must be conducted in partnership with the existing SAC Initiative, which is operated through the ROEs. For more information, contact Jay Linksman of the Professional Development Alliance (PDA) at 815-744-8334 or jlinksman@pdaonline.org or visit the PDA website at www.pdaonline.org.

Applicants must project: 1) the number of people (e.g., LEA teams, parents) who will be trained and/or receive technical assistance each year, 2) the number of training events to be held, and 3) the amount and type(s) of technical assistance services that will be provided. Applicants must also delineate strategies to ensure that individuals throughout the geographic area to be served have equitable access to the training and technical assistance services to be provided. In addition, applicants must describe how their proposed RPDCs will facilitate opportunities for networking among and partnering of school districts that participate in the training and technical assistance activities of the project.

All professional development activities must meet the NCLB definition of professional development, in which the National Staff Development Council Standards for Professional Development are embedded (see Appendix D). Also, grantees must become approved ISBE providers of continuing professional development activities for certificate renewal purposes in the first six months of the first grant year. Information about the provider approval process, including an on-line application, is available at www.isbe.net/certification/html/providers.htm.

Services to LEA Demonstration Sites: Each RPDC will be required to work with ISBE to recruit and select district and school demonstration/data collection sites in each region, using pre-established criteria. Applicants must specify the projected number of demonstration sites to be established and served within the geographic region encompassed by the RPDC. Once the sites have been established, each RPDC will be responsible for working directly with the sites to:

- Provide training;
- Provide technical assistance, including recruitment and training of LEA coaches;
- Facilitate parent involvement in each site;
- Coordinate small group meetings of staff across sites for reflection and networking; and
- Conduct district-, school-, and student-level data collection.

Project Evaluation: Each RPDC will be responsible for carrying out evaluation activities in accordance with the project evaluation plan (see Appendix E and/or refer to ISBE’s federal grant application for the SPD Project at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/spd_grant_abstract.pdf), including the evaluation of the technical assistance and training services provided by the RPDC, as well as the evaluation of the impact of the services through data collection at the district, school, and student levels within the demonstration/data collection sites. To that end, each RPDC must establish a part-time position for a regional evaluator, who will be required to:

- Participate in a training overview before regional implementation of training,
- Collaborate with the statewide evaluation coordinator to establish the regional data collection system,
- Collaborate with demonstration/data collection site participants to implement the regional data collection system,
- Provide technical assistance to demonstration/data collection sites on the data collection system,
- Coordinate data collection efforts in the demonstration/data collection and selected nonparticipating schools (for comparison purposes) in the RPDC region,
- Keep the statewide evaluation coordinator informed of any challenges to the data collection efforts so that technical assistance can be provided, and
- Submit data at least quarterly in an agreed-upon format to the statewide evaluation coordinator.

Anticipated outcomes to be evaluated include:

- Increased knowledge and skills of personnel and parents, as measured by evaluation forms completed at the conclusion of training and follow-up observations.
- Improved school performance, as measured by student performance, retention rates, suspension/ expulsion, etc.
- Improved student performance, as measured by state assessment scores (especially reading), etc.
- An increase in the number of educators and parents with current information and up-to-date knowledge and skills regarding improving results for individuals with disabilities.
- Increased communication between parents and RPDCs, as measured by RPDC logs.
- Increased opportunity for parent input into regional professional development, as measured by the content of professional development for parents.
- Improved parent awareness of training components and increased involvement in students’ educational progress and achievement, as measured by parent surveys.
- Increased parental participation in meetings for individual students, as measured by a sampling of problem-solving meeting notes and IEPs at the building level.
- Increased knowledge and skills of IHE personnel, as measured by evaluation forms completed at the conclusion of training.
- Increased preservice training on knowledge and skills required to design and implement early intervening services, including scientific, research-based reading instruction, for students with disabilities and other at-risk students, as measured by preservice curricula content.

Coordination and Networking among RPDCs: Each RPDC will be responsible for coordinating activities with the other RPDCs in the state. This includes but is not limited to jointly developing and maintaining: 1) standardized training materials (e.g., presenter manuals and participant notebooks); 2) a training schedule; and 3) a project website, which must meet a government- or industry-recognized standard for accessibility (e.g., Bobby™, which is a web-based tool that analyzes web pages for their accessibility to people with disabilities). The RPDCs will also be responsible for collaboratively planning and conducting an annual statewide conference. RPDC coordination and networking should occur through a variety of mechanisms, including email communication, telephone conference calls, and face-to-face meetings.

Communication with ISBE: Ongoing communication with ISBE for continuous improvement will be critical in order to ensure that state priorities are addressed. Such communication includes submission of quarterly reports (format to be provided by ISBE) and participating in quarterly SPD Project Advisory Committee meetings.

Grants awarded in FY 2006 will be used for planning and initial implementation of the RPDC services. Refinement and full implementation will begin in FY 2007 and will continue through the end of the project.

It is intended that the RPDC networks will continue after the grant period ends; therefore, applicants must describe in their proposals strategies for sustaining the RPDC services without federal grant support. In addition, each applicant must describe in its proposal the local resources (e.g., in-kind contributions such as staff or building, use of equipment) that will be contributed to the project.

Fiscal Information

Up to four grants in amounts ranging from \$266,885 to \$353,775 each will be awarded in FY 2006. It is anticipated that the grants will continue for four additional years (FY 2007 through FY 2010), and it is estimated that the annual amount for each grant will be \$375,000 to \$500,000. As previously stated, all grant amounts will depend on the needs addressed in the approved proposals, the size and population of the geographic area to be served, and the total appropriation for the program.

Applicants must allocate funds for a part-time regional evaluator position and for the SAC training portion of the project. At least 7.25 percent of the total annual budget must be allocated for SAC training in each fiscal year. It is anticipated that each RPDC grantee will contribute local resources (e.g., in-kind contributions such as use of equipment, space in a building) for the project, and these must be described in the proposal.

Annual funding in FY 2007 through FY 2010 will be contingent upon the following factors:

- A sufficient appropriation for the program;
- Satisfactory progress in the preceding grant period in relation to the goals, objectives, and activities specified in the approved proposal;

- Verification of approval as a State Board of Education provider of continuing professional development activities for certificate renewal purposes;
- A continued need for grant funds as evidenced by documented refinement and full implementation of the project; and
- Evidence of the RPDC being sustainable after the end of the funding period.

Funds **may** be used for such purposes as:

- Salaries of a project coordinator, a part-time regional evaluator, and other personnel for which a need is clearly demonstrated in the proposal;
- Consultant fees to develop and implement the training and technical assistance activities;
- Substitute pay (only if school district staff are utilized as training or technical assistance providers);
- Supplies and materials costs associated with the development and provision of training and technical assistance, including translation, Braille, and audio tapes as needed;
- Costs related to travel in developing and providing training and technical assistance;
- Room/facility rental associated with provision of training;
- Interpreters and language translators at training sites;
- Project evaluation activities;
- Office space rental;
- Purchase of equipment to support activities of the project (not to exceed 3 percent of the total budget);
- Postage, printing, duplicating, telephone, and fax;
- Advertising of training and technical assistance opportunities; and
- Administrative costs (not to exceed 3 percent of the total budget).

Funds **may not** be used to:

- Supplant salaries of existing staff;
- Supplant activities and services funded by other federal, state, and local sources; or
- Cover costs of moving, remodeling, or building.

For purposes of compliance with Section 511 of P.L. 101-166 (the “Stevens Amendment”), applicants are advised that 100 percent of the funds for this program are derived from federal sources. The total amount of federal funding involved is approximately \$1,241,300 in FY 2006 and \$1,758,500 per year in FY 2007 through FY 2010.

Proposal Format

Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please use the following as a checklist in assembling your completed proposal. **Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed and will be returned to the applicant.**

The packets in Attachments 1 and 2 and Attachment 3 must be completed, signed as applicable, and submitted with the Proposal Narrative (no form is provided for the Proposal Narrative).

Please note: This RFP and all application forms are available on the ISBE website at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/spd_grant_project.htm. If accessed via the website, the forms may be filled out on the computer but must be printed and paper copies submitted with the proposal.

- ___ **1. Cover Page (Attachment 1, page 1):** Must be signed by the school district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal. One or more representatives from each of the required partners must be involved in the development of the proposal. Participants in the planning process, their titles, and their roles in the development of the application must be included.
- ___ **2. Proposal Abstract (Attachment 1, page 2):** Briefly describe the overall objectives and activities of the project. The abstract should be double-spaced using a 12-point font and should not exceed three pages.
- ___ **3. Proposal Narrative:** Follow the specifications found under “Proposal Narrative Requirements” on pages 12-14.
- ___ **4. Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 1, page 3):** Must be submitted on the form provided. Separate forms must be completed for each of years one through five. The form completed for year one must be signed by the district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal. Administrative costs and equipment costs are each limited to 3 percent of the grant budget. Funds must be allocated for a part-time regional evaluator position and for the SAC training portion of the project. At least 7.25 percent of the total annual budget must be allocated for SAC training in each fiscal year.

The payment schedule should be based on the projected date of expenditures. Salaries and fringe benefits should be requested in equal intervals on the schedule. Supplies, equipment, contracted services, and professional development should be requested in the month for which the expenditure is anticipated.

- ___ **5. Budget Breakdown (Attachment 1, page 4):** Separate budget breakdown forms must be completed for year one (maximum of \$353,775) and for each of years two through five (maximum of \$500,000 per year) of the project. Each must include detailed descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Budget Summary and cross-referenced to the project objectives. Subcontract information must be included, if applicable (see item 7 of the document titled “Certification and Assurances, and Standard Terms of the Grant” in Attachment 2).
- ___ **6. Objectives and Activities (Attachment 1, page 5):** For each component addressed under “Program Specifications,” pages 5-9, use the form provided to state the measurable objectives and outline detailed activities for accomplishing each in a time-specific format for each fiscal year (FY 2006 through FY 2010). Include the methods and procedures to be used to complete each, specify the person(s) responsible, and state the expected student and educator outcomes. Describe the planning activities to be

conducted in relation to the project components to be implemented. (**Please note:** It is understood that, as a result of ongoing needs assessment data, certain revisions to proposed activities for FY 2007 through FY 2010 may be necessary during project implementation.)

- ___ **7. Evaluation Design (Attachment 1, page 6):** Using the form provided, describe the proposed procedures for carrying out the evaluation activities delineated in Appendix E in order to determine whether progress is being made toward achieving the project’s objectives. Describe how the regional evaluator will fulfill his or her responsibilities related to collecting, verifying, and reporting evaluation data at the RPDC and demonstration/data collection site levels, including how coordination with the statewide evaluator will occur. Discuss steps to be taken in working with and providing technical assistance to the demonstration/data collection sites to implement the regional data collection activities.

- ___ **8. Certifications and Assurances (Attachments 2 and 3):** Each applicant is required to submit the certification forms attached (“Certification Regarding Debarment,” “Certification and Assurances, and Standard Terms of the Grant,” and “Certification Regarding Lobbying” (Attachment 2) and “Program-Specific Terms of the Grant” (Attachment 3)). These must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its contents.

- ___ **9. Letters of Intent to Participate:** Attach a letter of intent from each participating entity, signed by the official authorized to commit the entity to the project, that includes a brief description of the entity’s role in the project, the qualifications of the proposed staff to be involved, and the anticipated amount of time to be spent with the project activities.

Proposal Narrative Requirements

The proposal narrative should include the information requested below in the order in which it is presented. Where appropriate, describe activities for each of the five fiscal years included in the project. The narrative must be double-spaced using a 12-point font and should not exceed 20 pages.

- A. Indicate the geographic area to be served by the proposed RPDC and the professional development needs specific to educators and others in that area.

- B. Partnerships and Collaboration: Describe the required partners who participated in the development of the proposal and will participate in the implementation of the RPDC, as well as the commitment of each to the project (for example, a parent organization’s commitment to work with the RPDC in scheduling and delivering training for parents in the region). Include a description of how parents have been and will be involved in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of the project. Discuss the strategies that will be used to work with IHEs to influence preservice curricula and to work with the Illinois

PTIs in developing the parent handbooks. In addition, describe the means by which the proposed RPDC will coordinate project activities with existing ISBE-funded training and technical assistance initiatives.

- C. Professional Development and Technical Assistance Plan: Describe in detail how the professional development and technical assistance services, including services to LEA demonstration/data collection sites, will be structured and delivered and provide a rationale for the chosen approach. Include annual projections of:
- i. the number of people to be trained and/or receive technical assistance each year,
 - ii. the number of training events to be held,
 - iii. the amount and type(s) of technical assistance services to be provided, and
 - iv. the number of demonstration sites to be established and served within the region.

Discuss how the proposed RPDC will ensure that individuals throughout the geographic area to be served have equitable access to the training and technical assistance services to be provided, as well as how parent participation in the provision and receipt of training and technical assistance under the project will be ensured. This should include strategies for publicizing training events and other services of the RPDC. Provide examples of the types of opportunities to be arranged for school districts that participate in the training and technical assistance activities to network among and partner with each other. Describe the local resources (e.g., in-kind contributions such as staff or building, use of equipment) that will be contributed to the project.

- D. Project Personnel: Describe the staff and staffing patterns to be used in the provision of training and technical assistance, including how consultants will be identified and utilized. List each person to be employed by name (if known), indicate the responsibilities each will have in the project, and describe the qualifications of professional and support staff, including the experience each has had in the type of work to be performed. Indicate projected numbers of programs and people to be served by each of the staff positions and the percentage of time that each staff person will be committed to this project.
- E. Evaluation: Describe how the required evaluation activities at both the RPDC and LEA demonstration/data collection site levels will be carried out and coordinated with the statewide evaluator. (See Appendix E.)
- F. RPDC Coordination and Networking: Describe the approach to be used in coordinating activities with the other RPDCs in order to develop and maintain standardized training and technical assistance formats and materials, a master training schedule, and the project website. Discuss steps that will be taken to ensure that the website meets a government- or industry-recognized standard for accessibility.
- G. Communication with ISBE: Discuss how the requirements for regular communication with ISBE will be fulfilled, including timely reporting and interaction with the SPD Project Advisory Committee.

- H. Grantee Capability: Discuss the capacity of the entity that will administer the project to oversee and carry out a project of this magnitude and scope, including administrative, organizational, and fiscal capabilities. Describe any previous experience that the administrative agent and the required partners may have with similar projects involving delivery of professional development and technical assistance, as well as knowledge and expertise in the professional development content discussed in the “Program Specifications” of the RFP.
- I. Sustainability: Describe steps that will be taken toward maintaining the project after the end of the grant period. Provide strategies for sharing information about the project results or for replicating the project in other areas.

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated according to the criteria listed below. Applications will be reviewed and ranked in comparison to others proposing to serve the same geographic area. Final determination will be made by the State Superintendent based upon the recommendations resulting from the review process. **As stated previously, incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.**

1. **Proposed Project (30 points)**: The proposed plan for training and technical assistance, including collaboration with existing ISBE projects, consistency and comprehensiveness of training, area coverage, and involvement of all stakeholders, demonstrates a sound approach to carrying out the project. Of great importance is the extent to which the overall plan has a strong likelihood of fulfilling the Program Specifications of the RFP.
2. **Objectives and Activities (25 points)**: The objectives are clearly delineated, and the proposed activities and timelines are reasonable and clearly linked to the stated objectives, providing a coherent and logical work plan to support the accomplishment of the project goal stated herein. The sequence of relationships of major activities is clearly defined, and the activities have a strong likelihood of fulfilling the Program Specifications of the RFP.
3. **Evaluation (20 points)**: The proposed procedures for meeting the evaluation requirements are adequate and will result in determining the extent to which the stated objectives and activities will be accomplished. The evaluation procedures should be sufficient in order to determine the effectiveness of the project in such a way that information can be used to inform future planning to improve practice by ascertaining the impact of the outcomes for school personnel, parents, and students, in addition to general trends.
4. **Grantee Capability (10 points)**: The applicant demonstrates the capacity to implement a project of this magnitude and scope, including sufficient expertise; administrative,

fiscal, and staff capabilities; and commitment for successful implementation of the proposed project within the established timeframe.

- 5. Budget and Cost-Effectiveness (15 points):** The proposed budget is cost-effective and reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and expected outcomes; is of an amount that may realistically be expected to have an impact on the stated needs; and provides sufficient evidence that funds from the SPD Grant Project will supplement, rather than supplant, other local, state, and federal funding.

Regional Professional Development Center Areas



**Flexible Service Delivery Model, Standards-Aligned Classroom Initiative,
and System of Support**

Flexible Service Delivery (Flex): The Flex project began in 1998 and uses Response to Intervention (RtI) as a means of monitoring student progress while providing early intervening services to students at risk of academic failure. The purpose of the Flex model is to provide all students with more flexible and responsive educational services using a comprehensive decision-making process. This system blends general education, special education, and other support personnel expertise, services, and resources into one system that more effectively meets student needs. While the primary target population is students who are at risk of academic failure due to learning and/or behavioral difficulties and whose classroom performance is below expected levels, it is the premise of the Flex model that all learners can benefit from a more flexible intervention system.

The long-term goal of the Flex model is the improvement of learning of all students by maximizing the use of a building’s resources and services. Through the use of a systematic problem-solving process and the implementation of strategies such as collaborative teaching, peer support systems, etc., school staff will be better able to provide differentiated instruction for all students. In addition to assisting staff members in their work with individual students, the Flex model supports a school’s efforts to improve all student learning outcomes.

The following chart outlines the training cycles developed under Illinois’ Flex Project. Additional information and resources on Flex may be obtained on the project website at <http://www.fsds.org>.

FLEX TRAINING CYCLES	
Cycle	Content
Cycle I: Introductory Professional Development	Introductory activities provide the background knowledge for participants to become novice members of a collaborative problem-solving team and allow for supported practice of the process by participants. Topics include rationale for and history of a school-based, problem-solving (SBPS)/Flex model, the role of varied assessment procedures in the basic problem-solving process, use of a multilevel problem-solving process, collaboration/effective team meetings, problem-solving forms and procedures, role of special education resources, and on-site school consultation.
Cycle II: Tools for Implementing SBPS/FLEX	Activities provide participants with the tools to effectively implement a problem-solving process, primarily through the application of progress monitoring and the use of alternative assessment strategies. Such tools include defining and analyzing student concerns, progress monitoring, problem definition, measurement, graphing/charting, standards/discrepancy, progress monitoring plans, decision-making rules, environmental assessment, observation strategies, curriculum-based measurement (reading, math, spelling, written expression), phonemic

	awareness/early literacy (e.g., DIBELS), curriculum-based evaluation, task-related behavior, onsite consultation to teams, and team process.
Cycle III: Intervention Approaches and Strategies	Activities provide knowledge about a wide variety of intervention tools to address academic and social/behavioral needs. Intervention approaches and strategy topics include task-related behavior, e.g., environmental changes for school and student, topical knowledge/vocabulary; social skills training/classroom management; reading intervention, e.g., fluency, comprehension, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary; writing intervention, e.g., writing process strategies, fluency, prerequisite skill-building, sentence combining, University of Kansas writing strategies; math intervention, e.g., computation strategies, fact accuracy and fluency, problem-solving, content tools; schoolwide strategies and interventions; and homework strategies.

Standards-Aligned Classroom (SAC) Curriculum: One of the stated ISBE goals is to assist educators in applying the principles and practices of a “Standards-Led” Educational System to improve teaching and learning. Many districts and schools have begun aligning their school- and district-level curricula with the *Illinois Learning Standards*. However, one may not assume that because a curriculum topic is aligned with standards at a school or district level that classroom-level lessons and assessments on that topic are also aligned with the standards.

The SAC Initiative is designed to equip teachers with the support, resources, knowledge, and skills to align classroom-level assessment and instruction with the *Illinois Learning Standards*. Standardized training materials are used for all SAC professional development activities. The materials include a SAC coaches’ manual and a learning team notebook, which were designed using the Langevin Learning Model. The chart below provides an overview of the steps in the SAC process. Additional information may be obtained via the Professional Development Alliance website at <http://www.pdaonline.org/grants/classinitiative.htm>.

STEPS IN THE SAC PROCESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deconstructing (or unpacking) broadly stated learning standards, benchmarks, and performance descriptors to classroom-level learning targets that are clear and understandable to teachers and students. • Aligning assessments to the identified targets. • Creating aligned lesson plans or unit plans for instruction. • Evaluating student products for sufficiency and mastery of learning targets. • Engaging in ongoing job-embedded professional development on assessment, alignment, and instruction through learning teams. • Posting aligned lesson plans and assessments that have been reviewed for alignment and quality on a website accessible to all teachers.

System of Support: As part of its system for academic accountability, ISBE may place schools that are in academic difficulty in Academic Early Warning (AEW) or Academic Watch status

(AW) based on the performance of their students on state assessments. In addition, schools that use Title I funding are subject to specific federal requirements related to school improvement under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), with schools that fail to achieve standards being required to offer choice options for students and supplemental educational services.

With the passage of NCLB, schools face new achievement hurdles in reading and mathematics. All students and all subgroups of students are expected to meet or exceed state standards by 2014. NCLB requires states to set ever-increasing achievement targets starting in 2003 to move schools toward that goal. Since state AEW and AW list criteria must be merged with federal school improvement criteria, placement in AEW and AW status is projected to increase in the next few years.

State and federal laws also require that technical assistance or a system of support be established to help these schools improve academic performance. ISBE offers a regionalized system of support to assist schools in academic difficulty. Regional support systems provide improvement support to schools in AEW and AW status, as well as to assist other schools whose performance makes placement on the lists in the near future likely. It is expected that regional service providers (the RESPROs) will serve *all* schools and districts identified for support in the regions in which they are providing services.

The system of support approach includes the following components:

- A central focus on the School Improvement Plan.
- Regionalized oversight and school assistance linked to compliance monitoring.
- Use of proven approaches and standardized processes for specific improvement components.
- Customization for regional and local differences among schools and districts.
- Coordination and leverage across programs, services, and funding.
- Proactive and preventative actions designed to head off academic difficulty.
- Efficient and effective deployment of state, regional, and local staff and resources.

For more information about ISBE's System of Support and the RESPROs, contact the Federal Grants and Programs Division at 217-524-4832 or visit the System of Support page on the ISBE website at <http://www.isbe.net/sos/default.htm>.

Parent Entities Contact Information

Name	Address	Phone	Fax	Email	Site
Statewide Parent T.A. Center					
Niswander, Vicki	Parent & Educator Partnership 104 Woodcreek Court Mahomet, IL 61853	217-586-7464	217-586-7579	niswande@uiuc.edu	Statewide
Parent Mentor Projects					
Bradbury, Kris	773 W. Lincoln Building, Suite 304 Freeport, IL 61032	815-233-1128	815-233-0743	kbradbury@rampcil.org	RAMP
Bux, Joy	SEDOL 18160 Gages Lake Rd Gages Lake, IL 60630-1819	847-548-8470 847-548-9726 (TTY)	847-548-8472	jbux@sedol.k12.il.us	SEDOL
Cuba, Priscilla	SEDOL 18160 Gages Lake Rd Gages Lake, IL 60630-1819	847-548-8470 847-548-9726 (TTY)	847-548-8472	pcuba@sedol.k12.il.us	SEDOL
Funk, Ronda	523A Vine St., Box 1357 Vienna, IL 62995	618-658-2059	618-658-2720	iffcmh@msn.com (not working currently)	JAMP
Handville, Seton	30W281 Small Tree Court Warrenville, IL 60555	630-730-5155	630-836-9240	shandville@comcast.net shandvil@cusd200.org	SEA 200
Hans, Sue	NSSED 760 Red Oak Lane Highland Park, IL 60035-3899	847-831-5100 Ext. 228	847-831-5108 847 498 3151	shans@nssed.org	NSSSED
Hartwell, Marilyn	523A Vine St., Box 1357 Vienna, IL 62995	618-658-2059	618-658-2720	iffcmh@msn.com (not working currently)	JAMP
McNeely, Delane	740 Maple Ave. Rushville, IL 62681	217-322-2263	217-322-6648	dmcneely@scud1.com	Schuyler
Mollohan, Geri	812 Lincoln Ave. Lincoln, IL 62656	217-732-2316	217-75-2711	gmollohan@adi.org	Logan
Mueller, Peggy	400 Meadowlark Belleville, IL 62220	618-520-1380	618-233-4639	pmuel@peaknet.net	Belleville
O'Connor, Kathleen	SEDOL 18160 Gages Lake Road Gages Lake, IL 60030-1819	847-548-8470 Ext. 896	847-548-8472	koconnor@sedol.k12.il.us	SEDOL
Szczelaszczyk, Beth	5227 North Lind Chicago, IL 60630	773-553-3421		zeesfour@aol.com	CPS
Thekdi, Devila	705 E. 15th St. Sterling, IL 61081	815-625-1689		devila_62@hotmail.com	IFF North
Yeager, Shelly	633 East St. Mt.Carroll, IL. 61053	815-541-1518		iff_syeager@yahoo.com	IFF North

Appendix C

Name	Address	Phone	Fax	Email	Area Served
Parent Training and Information Centers					
Donald Moore or Elliott Marks	Designs for Change 29 East Madison, Suite 950 Chicago, IL 60602	312-236-7252 312-857-1013 (TTY)	312-236-7927	markse@designsforchange.org	Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties
Charlotte Des Jardins	Family Resource Center on Disabilities 20 E. Jackson Blvd., Rm. 300 Chicago, IL 0604	312-939-3513 312-939-3519 (TTY & TDY)	312-939-7297 FAX	frcdptiil@ameritech.net	Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will Counties
Deb Einhorn	Family Matters 2502 South Veterans Drive Effingham, IL 62401	217-347-5428	217-347-5119	info@fmptic.org <u>or</u> deinhorn@arc-css.org	All other Illinois counties

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001
Title IX—General Provisions, Part A—Definitions

Section 9101. Definitions.

(34) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: The term “professional development:”

A. Includes activities that:

- i. Improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified;
- ii. Are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans;
- iii. Give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards;
- iv. Improve classroom management skills;
- v. Are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom and are not 1-day or short-term workshops or conferences;
- vi. Support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through State and local alternative routes to certification;
- vii. Advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are:
 - (I) Based on scientifically based research (except that this subclause shall not apply to activities carried out under Part D of Title II); and
 - (II) Strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; and
- viii. Are aligned with and directly related to:
 - (I) State academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessments; and
 - (II) The curricula and programs tied to the standards described in subclause (a) [except that this subclause shall not apply to activities described in clauses (ii) and (iii) of section 2123(3)(B)];

Appendix D

- ix. Are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators of schools to be served under this Act;
 - x. Are designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments;
 - xi. To the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers and principals in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and core academic subjects in which the teachers teach;
 - xii. As a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development;
 - xiii. Provide instruction in methods of teaching children with special needs;
 - xiv. Include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice; and
 - xv. Include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents; and
- B. May include activities that:
- i. Involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish school-based teacher training programs that provide prospective teachers and beginning teachers with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers and college faculty;
 - ii. Create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under Part A of Title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers; and
 - iii. Provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in subparagraph (A) or another clause of this subparagraph that is designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom.

Note: The full text of NCLB is available at <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/>.

**NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (NSDC)
STANDARDS FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT***
(Revised, 2001)

Context Standards

Staff development that improves the learning of all students:

- Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district. (Learning Communities)
- Requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement. (Leadership)
- Requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration. (Resources)

Process Standards

Staff development that improves the learning of all students:

- Uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement. (Data-Driven)
- Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact. (Evaluation)
- Prepares educators to apply research to decision-making. (Research-Based)
- Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal. (Design)
- Applies knowledge about human learning and change. (Learning)
- Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate. (Collaboration)

Content Standards

Staff development that improves the learning of all students:

- Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement. (Equity)
- Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately. (Quality Teaching)
- Provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately. (Family Involvement)

*Additional information related to these standards is available on the NSDC website at <http://www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm>.

SPD Project Evaluation Plan

External evaluators will implement the proposed evaluation plan (see Table 1 on the next page) annually for each Regional Professional Development Center (RPDC) and the participating districts/schools to use in strategic planning. Student, school (building), and district data will be collected by regional evaluators who will be hired in each RPDC before full project implementation. Data from these local/regional evaluations will be summarized and analyzed across all participating regions/districts by the statewide evaluation coordinator.

The statewide evaluation coordinator will coordinate and assume responsibility for all project evaluation components, and specifically will be required to:

- Develop all evaluation instruments (see Table 1 on the next page).
- Develop effective and efficient data-reporting mechanisms to be used by each RPDC, aligned with and, where appropriate, using existing ISBE data collection systems.
- Publish a standardized school district evaluation plan that matches the activities for use by each regional evaluator.
- Provide data-collection and reporting technical assistance to RPDCs and local districts/schools.
- Summarize and analyze all data obtained from the four RPDCs.
- Complete annual reports to be reviewed by ISBE and the SPD Project Advisory Committee.
- Serve as a member of the SPD Project Advisory Committee.

The regional evaluators will be required to:

- Participate in a training overview before regional implementation of training.
- Collaborate with the statewide evaluation coordinator to establish the regional data collection system.
- Collaborate with demonstration site participants to implement the regional data collection system.
- Provide technical assistance to demonstration sites on the data collection system.
- Coordinate data collection efforts in the demonstration and selected nonparticipating schools in their region.
- Keep the statewide evaluator informed of any challenges to the data-collection efforts so that technical assistance can be provided.
- Submit data at least quarterly in an agreed-upon format to the statewide evaluator.

Evaluation goals include:

- Provide RPDCs and participating school districts with well-conceived annual analyses of their progress in order to guide data-based strategic planning at the RPDC, district, and school building levels.
- Provide the SPD Project Advisory Committee and ISBE with ongoing and timely information about project implementation.
- Assess the degree to which RPDCs have implemented project goals and activities.
- Assess the degree to which participating districts/schools have accurately implemented the training components so that improved student outcomes will be realized.

- Directly assess project effects on academic and behavioral outcomes for participating students, particularly at-risk students and students with disabilities.
- Assess the degree to which Illinois develops the capacity at the regional level to support training and provide technical assistance in the future expansion of this approach.

Table 1. Evaluation Plan to Assess Project Outcomes
Project Goal: Establish and implement a coordinated, regionalized system of personnel development that will increase the capacity of school systems to provide early intervening services, aligned with the general education curriculum, to at-risk students and students with disabilities, as measured by improved student progress and performance.
<i>Objective 1: To deliver research-based professional development and technical assistance, based on an established training framework developed by Flex and SAC, through development of regional plans that follow a common format and criteria established at the state level and prepared in partnership with LEAs, IHEs, regional providers, and parents.</i>
<p><u>Evaluation Questions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what degree are the RPDCs delivering the technical assistance as proposed in the project? • To what degree are strategies/methods taught as part of the project actually implemented at the student/classroom/building levels? • Do increased knowledge and skills lead to improved school performance, as measured by state assessment results in reading and math and by curriculum-based measurement results in reading? • Do increased knowledge and skills lead to improved school performance, as measured by increasing attendance and decreased grade retention and suspension/expulsion rates? • Do increased knowledge and skills lead to an increasing percentage of students with disabilities enrolled in an LRE? • Do increased knowledge and skills reduce the disproportionality of racial/ethnic minorities and students who receive free and reduced lunch in special education referral and placement rates? • Do increased knowledge and skills lead to an increased percentage of students exiting special education?
<p><u>Data Sources:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Training and Technical Assistance Logs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Each RPDC will keep a log of the number of training sessions given and the number and type of participants. Participants will complete a conference evaluation form for each training session attended, including an assessment of the degree of alignment with state teaching standards. b. Each technical assistant in each RPDC will keep a log of the number and types of technical assistance and/or consultations provided to local schools. School staff receiving this technical assistance will complete satisfaction surveys, including an assessment of the degree of alignment with state teaching standards. 2) Based on observations by the regional evaluator (or local district designee) and self-reports of building-level personnel, a critical components checklist will be completed for each set of strategies taught as part of the project. Critical components checklists monitor treatment integrity during coaching/training and verify accuracy of implementation. Such checklists reflect observable critical components that will be developed for all aspects of the critical skills/methods taught as part of the project. 3) Student Performance and Progress <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. All standardized accountability assessments in reading and math (ISAT, PSAE, and IAA) given by Illinois school districts will be used as student outcome measures at grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 for 2006. Beginning in 2007, student ISAT outcome measures will be available in

grades 3 through 8 and on the PSAE at grade 11. The percentages of students meeting reading and math Illinois Learning Standards, as measured by ISAT, PSAE, and IAA, will be used to determine project impact at the district, regional, and statewide levels.

- b. Curriculum-based measurement (CBM) progress-monitoring data in reading (e.g., Dynamic Indicators of Early Learning, DIBELS, CBM oral reading probes) will be used to assess individual student reading outcomes. Reading was chosen for student outcomes tracked by individual student, as this is the focus of the proposed project. As part of the project, all demonstration sites will be expected to universally screen students using DIBELS or CBM reading probes at least three times per year. In addition, students with specified levels of low performance will be required to be monitored monthly or weekly, depending on the degree of deficit. All of these data will be extracted from district electronic files (using an Internet-based data management system, such as AIMSweb® or entered into evaluation databases by the regional evaluators or their district-level designees). A variety of outcome analyses are possible, including degree of discrepancy with grade-level peers, average words gained per week (or other DIBELS metric), percentage of students meeting expected year-end benchmarks compared with fall performance or performance in previous years; disaggregation of data by at-risk group and initial fall performance (using DIBELS/CBM). Comparisons will be made using national standards (Goods benchmarks for DIBELS or those provided by AIMSweb®), normative data for districts, and normative data across all participating districts.
- 4) School records for each demonstration site will be reviewed to determine individual (for students receiving interventions), building, district, regional, and statewide effects of the project based on attendance, suspension/expulsion, graduation/drop-out, and retention rates. These data are available in student files, in end-of-year reports submitted to ISBE by school districts, and through VIMEO, an existing data platform that will be modified to provide for school- and student-level data entry for this project. Regional evaluators will analyze these data annually for participating schools, and pre-/post-measures will be assessed for changes associated with project implementation. These data will also be disaggregated by at-risk groups, to the extent possible, and included as part of the evaluation.
- 5) Child count data for each demonstration site and data from LEA profiles at the district level will be aggregated within regions, and subsequently statewide, to determine the level of LRE for students with disabilities who are receiving special education services.
- 6) Data from school and district report cards will be reviewed to determine the race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender composition of the overall school district population of the demonstration sites, and building and district records will be reviewed to determine the race/ethnicity, disability category, gender, and socioeconomic status of students referred for, placed in, and exiting special education.

Timelines:

- 1) Data collection will be ongoing and summarized annually.
- 2) Regional and statewide evaluators and regional technical assistants will use the checklists in fall of Year 1 to determine the baseline status of all project components. In spring of each project year, implementation status will be determined for all project components by direct measurement by regional evaluators or their district-level designee using the approved classroom sampling strategy to directly assess the degree to which the project model components have been implemented to determine treatment integrity. Data collection will occur quarterly.
- 3) A baseline will be determined for reading and math levels for the state assessment (ISAT and PSAE) in Year 1 at appropriate grade levels and then will be collected and summarized annually. Ongoing CBM data in reading will be collected and summarized annually.
- 4) Attendance, suspension/expulsion, graduation/drop-out, and retention rates will be determined annually.

<p>5) A baseline for LRE placement will be determined during Year 1 and then collected and summarized annually.</p> <p>6) Baseline rates for various race/ethnic, socioeconomic status, gender, and disability categories will be collected for referral, placement, and exiting for special education. Data will then be collected and summarized.</p>
<p><i>Objective 2: Increase the participation of parents in decision-making across district sites.</i></p>
<p><u>Evaluation Question:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does the implementation of the skills and methods related to this project lead to increased parent participation in the decision making process?</i>
<p><u>Data Sources:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Parent participation in training sequences and completed evaluation forms. 2) A review of problem-solving meetings and IEPs/Annual Reviews at the building level to determine what percentage of parents are in attendance.
<p><u>Timelines:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Attendance at training will be assessed throughout the timeline of the training portion of the project. 2) During Year 1, a baseline of parent participation at problem-solving and IEP meetings for demonstration sites will be determined. Parent participation rates then will be collected and summarized annually.
<p><i>Objective 3: Incorporate professional development content into IHE general and special education preservice curricula.</i></p>
<p><u>Evaluation Question:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To what degree are higher education preservice training programs incorporating the skills/methods that are part of this project into their curricula?</i>
<p><u>Data Sources:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Each department chair/program coordinator of a preservice training program for teachers and related service personnel will complete a survey indicating the extent to which the skills/methods taught as part of the proposed project are integrated into their curricula. 2) A review of course syllabi addressing the knowledge and skills of the training project will be completed to determine integration of the training into preservice programs.
<p><u>Timeline:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Both of these evaluation activities will be completed biennially and at the end of the project.
<p><i>Objective 4: Evaluate the effectiveness of project activities.</i></p>
<p><u>Evaluation Question:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To what degree does a coordinated professional development program that is delivered regionally have an impact on the outcomes of students with disabilities?</i>
<p><u>Data Sources:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) All data sources from the first three objectives will inform the evaluation of this objective.
<p><u>Timeline:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reviews of evaluation data will occur quarterly (through the SPD Project Advisory Committee) and annually (through the annual project evaluation report), as well as at the end of the project.