



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

Jesse H. Ruiz
Chairman

Rod Blagojevich
Governor

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

February 2008

TO: Eligible Applicants

FROM: Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): Reading Interventions Professional Development to Support Response to Intervention

General Information

Eligible Applicants: School districts, charter schools, and public university laboratory schools approved by the Illinois State Board of Education that serve kindergarten through sixth grade are eligible to apply if they have a reading improvement program(s) currently in place and employ staff who hold the endorsement for either reading specialist or reading teacher or are qualified under State Board of Education rules to serve as either a reading specialist or reading teacher.

Grant Award: Approximately \$900,000 will be available for grants in FY 2008. It is anticipated that nine grants will be awarded. Each successful applicant will receive up to \$100,000, depending on the proposed number of participants and costs associated with attending the professional development.

Priority consideration for funding will be given to applicants with the highest percentage of below-level readers or those that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress in reading for school year 2006-07.

Grant Period: The grant period will begin no sooner than **April 15, 2008**, and will extend from the execution date of the grant until June 30, 2008. Funding may also be available for two additional years. Funding in the subsequent years will be contingent upon a sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress in the preceding grant period.

Letter of Intent. Eligible applicants are encouraged to submit a non-binding letter of intent to participate electronically to smccuske@isbe.net by March 12, 2008. This letter must include district contact information and requested grant amount, and indicate whether professional

development will focus on the “Anna Plan” or another site-based reading intervention program similar to the “Anna Plan”. **Failure to submit a letter of intent will not disqualify an otherwise eligible applicant from consideration.**

Application Deadline: Proposals will be received, by mail or in person, in the Curriculum and Instruction Division of the Illinois State Board of Education until 4:00 p.m., **April 3, 2008**. No late proposals or FAX proposals will be accepted. Four copies of the proposal should be sent to the following address: Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001.

Proposals also may 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

Contact Person: For more information on this RFP, contact Sarah McCusker, Curriculum and Instruction Division, 217/557-7323, or by email at smccuske@isbe.net. All questions regarding the background and scope should be put in writing. Questions will be accepted up to three business days prior to the due date of the proposal.

Background and Program Specifications

Section 2-3.51(a) of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.51(a)] authorizes the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to use up to 2 percent of money received for the Reading Improvement Block Grant Program to provide teacher training and re-training in the teaching of reading. As part of its efforts to encourage school districts to incorporate a Response to Intervention (RtI) approach to teaching reading, the ISBE would like to provide training to teachers in the implementation of the “Anna Plan.”

The purpose of this RFP is to provide grants to enable teachers in schools that have a high percentage of below-level readers and teachers who are willing to learn an intervention model of differentiated instruction to participate in structured and ongoing professional development related to the “Anna Plan”, which is described in further detail below. All school districts in the state will be asked to reconsider reading practices to include small group interventions for all students in accordance with RtI, so ISBE needs to provide support and opportunities for school districts to learn these new processes. One model, the “Anna Plan,” would enable school districts to provide teachers the needed professional development so they will be able to differentiate instruction based on students’ reading levels and implement RtI.

Participants would attend a week-long training session at the Anna Professional Development Center housed in Lincoln Elementary School in Anna, which is located in southern Illinois. Three reading specialists at Lincoln Elementary School would conduct the training. Throughout the week-long training, the reading specialists will emphasize the structural model of the plan and provide training in the teaching practices which will enhance teachers’ content knowledge in the area of reading.

In the second and third years of funding, the reading specialists each quarter will model teaching practices for teachers who received training and hold meetings to answer their questions. Through training and observations, training participants would then be able to implement the model in their districts. Participants would be required to observe teachers and others engaged in the “Anna Model”, which would involve travel to Anna or other locations where the model is being implemented.

The goals of the professional development will be to:

1. increase the number of students who will receive direct, differentiated reading instruction in small group settings of three to seven students;
2. increase the quality of instruction by teachers after receiving training about small group instructional reading programs; and
3. increase collaboration between individual teachers and among administrators and teachers in planning and designing reading instruction.

Funds will not be provided for successful applicants to implement the “Anna Model” or another RtI model; however, applicants must make a commitment to use other funds to implement the “Anna Model” or a co-teaching design or site-based model that provides an RtI approach. To this end, the entirety of the certified staff in the district must have an adequate understanding of the principles of commonly recognized reading programs. The teachers also must have easy access to an existing guided reading library. The administration as well as certified staff must have a collaborative mind-set to ensure ownership by teachers in decision-making and to ensure quality within the eventual planning and implementation stages.

“Anna Plan”

The “Anna Plan” is a whole class, differentiated reading instruction model. Three reading specialists, or three individuals representing a combination of reading specialists, reading teachers or reading paraprofessionals, work within one classroom known as the “Reading Room”. Within the Reading Room, four learning areas are created by the use of cubicle dividers, bookshelves, carpets and the like. Each teacher’s area has a kidney-shaped table with three to seven children’s chairs. Each session is approximately 30 minutes long: A classroom teacher will walk into the Reading Room with her class and sit at a teacher’s station. She will teach a small group of students, while the three other reading personnel will instruct other small groups of students. At the end of the session, the group leaves and another classroom teacher enters the classroom with her class and repeats the process.

The five-day lesson plan consists of introducing a new book the first day, which involves reading the book, making predictions, and identifying unfamiliar words. The teacher then models a strategy and incorporates guided reading. The book is re-read during the session on the second day, and the teacher discusses the book as well as presents comprehension strategies. In addition, she or he spends time monitoring the progress of individual students. The following day the teacher focuses on word attack skills. The fourth day the teacher teaches a mini, writing lesson that presents exactly what a child should do when writing. The fifth day of the week is set aside for planning. During the planning day each week, the classroom teacher meets with two of the reading teachers while the third reading teacher gives a lesson for the entire class.

Another salient piece to the “Anna Model” is the cohesion among the staff members in training, planning and implementing instruction. After attending several professional development sessions centered on learning commonly recognized, scientifically-based reading interventions, teachers then synthesize the information to implement instructional practices within the structural framework of the “Anna Plan”. As noted above, classroom teachers meet weekly with reading specialists to make decisions about book choices, individual progress, the focus of lessons, and grouping.

Anna’s Lincoln Elementary School uses the “Anna Model” for kindergarten and first and second grades. However, this plan is applicable to kindergarten through sixth grade.

Options other than the “Anna Plan”

Applicants that are interested in receiving training in RtI for reading instruction but are unable to send their staff to Anna may propose to have their staff trained using a site-based, existing reading intervention program that is similar to the “Anna Plan”. Applicants choosing this approach will be required to describe the qualities of the program in relation to the “Anna Model”. The site-based model chosen must include a system that serves an entire grade level or levels ensuring that all students have access to direct reading instruction provided in a small group by a professional. A team of three professionals in addition to the classroom teacher must simultaneously teach one classroom of students in four small groups for 30 minutes a day with a focus on guided reading, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and phonemic awareness (kindergarten through second grade). The frequency of the lessons must be three to four times per week with approximately three to seven students in each group.

Some commonly recognized reading programs that would meet the requirements listed above may include, but not be limited to, Pat Cunningham and Dorothy Hall’s Four Blocks®, Marie Clay’s Reading Recovery Program, Michael Heggerty’s Phonemic Awareness Program, and Fountas and Pinnell’s guided reading practices. Applicants selecting to use the grant for professional development about programs other than the “Anna Model” must present specific dates and durations for the professional development to be provided and an explanation of how the professional development will lead to implementation of an RtI model for reading instruction.

Fiscal Information

The amount of money available for each Reading Improvement professional development grant is \$100,000. Grant funds may be used for:

- Registration fees and other charges for professional development to be provided;
- Materials, guided reading books, supplies, assessment tools, and any other materials necessary for training purposes (except for ordinary supplies like paper and pencils);
- Costs associated with hiring substitute teachers for staff involved in the training, should it occur during the school year;
- Stipends for staff attending the training during the summer for employees not on 12-month contracts or stipends for additional time beyond the contractual day; and

- Travel costs (mileage, per diem, hotel), which will be reimbursed according to State of Illinois travel guidelines.

Grant funds may not be used for any costs associated with the implementation of the “Anna Model” or other RtI reading approach, including the cost of books, supplies, materials, or salaries and benefits.

Proposal Format

Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please use the following as a checklist in assembling your completed proposal.

- ___ **1. Cover Page (Attachment 1):** Must be signed by the school district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal, in the case of an entity other than a school district.
- ___ **2. Proposal Abstract:** Briefly describe in 250 words or less the need for and benefits of participating in training about the “Anna Plan” or other RtI approach to reading instruction.
- ___ **3. Proposal Narrative:** Respond to each of the following in the order provided below.

- a. **Need.** List the schools in the district that will be involved in the professional development program, the grade levels to be targeted, and the reason these grades were chosen.

Describe the reading achievement levels of the students in the schools to be involved (i.e., the percentage meeting or exceeding state standards on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test or testing at grade level on other standardized assessments). Indicate whether the school made Adequate Yearly Progress in reading for the preceding school year (school year 2006-07).

- b. **Participants.** Estimate the number of teachers from each grade level who will receive the training, how they were chosen, and of those to participate, the number who hold an endorsement for, or are otherwise qualified to serve as, either a reading specialist or reading teacher. If no reading specialists or reading teachers will receive training, then indicate the number of each employed at the participating school(s) and the reason none will be participating.

For each participant, describe any previous experience or training he or she has had specific to reading instruction, RtI and/or assessing or evaluating students’ reading skills and achievement.

- c. **Training.** Describe the reading intervention program(s) that are currently employed to improve the reading ability of students not performing at least at grade level.

Indicate whether staff will participate in training using the “Anna Model”. If so, then explain why the approach to reading used in the “Anna Model” is likely to address the difficulties experienced by low-performing students and how it will lead to improvement in these students’ reading abilities.

If the professional development program will be based on RtI model other than the “Anna Model”, then indicate:

- The model to be used and how it is similar to the “Anna Model”;
- The entity providing the training;
- The dates, locations, and duration of the training (both initial and any follow-up training); and
- How the approach meets the unique needs of the students in the school(s) and will lead to improvement in reading abilities.

d. **Commitment.** Provide evidence of the school administration’s and staff’s commitment to implementing the “Anna Model” or other similar model about which staff will be trained upon completion of the professional development program. Include sources of funding that will be used to plan for and implement the model.

e. **Dissemination.** Describe the strategies that will be used for teachers who received the training to share what they have learned with other teachers in the school.

___ **4. Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 2A):** Must be submitted by the superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal. The payment schedule should be based on the projected date of the expenditures. Salaries and 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 2B):** Must include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures correlated to the line items set forth on the Budget Summary. Must include subcontract information, if applicable.

___ **6. Certifications and Assurances (Attachments 3 and 4):** Each applicant is required to submit the certification forms attached (“Program-Specific Terms of the Grant” and “Certification and Assurances, and Standard Terms of the Grant”). These must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its contents.

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated in comparison with other proposals received, based upon the criteria below. Total possible points is 100. Final determination for selection will be made by the State Superintendent of Education and will be based upon recommendations resulting from the review process.

Among substantially similar proposals, priority for funding will be given to applicants with the highest percentage of students whose reading achievement is below grade level or to those that failed to achieve Annual Yearly Progress in reading in school year 2006-07.

1. The proposal presents a convincing rationale for the professional development based upon the students' reading progress and the school's continuing need for improvement. The number of teachers estimated to participate in the training and the grade levels to be served is appropriate based on this need and will strengthen the ability of the school to improve reading achievement in measurable ways. (25 points)
2. The proposal sets forth a clear understanding of why current reading intervention(s) are not successful with all students and knowledgeably articulates how intensive, ongoing professional development provided about the "Anna Model" or other proposed RtI approach will lead to improvements in reading achievement for those students. If another model is proposed, then the applicant has presented a strong argument for how that model will meet the unique needs of its students, and the sequence and duration of the initial and any follow-up training sessions appear to be of sufficient content and length to have a positive effect on teachers' classroom practices. (30 points)
4. Sufficient evidence is presented of the commitment of the school's administrators and teachers to implement the "Anna Model" or other RtI approach after the conclusion of the training. Identified sources of funding for planning and implementation are sufficient to successfully sustain the new approach to reading instruction. (15 points)
5. Participating staff's previous experience and training in reading instruction and assessment provide evidence of their commitment to improving reading instruction, as well as predict their success in embracing, understanding and eventually implementing the "Anna Plan" or other RtI model in their classrooms. (10 points)
6. The strategies proposed for participants to share the knowledge gained and lessons learned in the professional development program will allow for successful implementation of new teaching strategies throughout the school to improve reading instruction. (10 points)
7. The proposed budget is cost-effective based on the numbers to be served and the activities proposed. (10 points)