

TITLE 23: EDUCATION AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
SUBTITLE A: EDUCATION
CHAPTER I: STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUBCHAPTER g: SPECIAL COURSES OF STUDY

PART 260
READING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

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AUTHORITY: Implementing and authorized by Section 2-3.51 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.51].

SOURCE: Emergency rules adopted at 9 Ill. Reg. 15967, effective October 2, 1985, for a maximum of 150 days; adopted at 10 Ill. Reg. 7757, effective April 29, 1986; amended at 14 Ill. Reg. 20714, effective December 14, 1990; amended at 16 Ill. Reg. 14196, effective September 8, 1992; amended at 22 Ill. Reg. 19763, effective October 30, 1998; amended at 23 Ill. Reg. 7083, effective June 2, 1999; amended at 26 Ill. Reg. 8104, effective May 20, 2002; emergency amendment at 29 Ill. Reg. 9508, effective June 20, 2005, for a maximum of 150 days; emergency expired November 16, 2005; amended at 29 Ill. Reg. 20417, effective November 29, 2005; amended at 33 Ill. Reg. 4031, effective February 23, 2009; amended at 40 Ill. Reg. 3091, effective January 27, 2016.

SUBPART A: READING IMPROVEMENT BLOCK GRANT

Section 260.10 Definitions (Repealed)

(Source: Repealed at 22 Ill. Reg. 19763, effective October 30, 1998)

Section 260.20 Purpose

This Part establishes the procedure and criteria for submission and approval of applications for reading improvement block grant funds pursuant to Section 2-3.51 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.51].

(Source: Amended at 22 Ill. Reg. 19763, effective October 30, 1998)

Section 260.30 Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are public school districts, charter schools, and public university laboratory schools providing instruction in grades K-6. Commencing with Fiscal Year 2002, eligible applicants shall be only those that have made performance progress as required by Section 2-3.51 of the School Code (see Section 260.55 of this Part).

(Source: Amended at 26 Ill. Reg. 8104, effective May 20, 2002)

Section 260.40 Allowable Expenditures

Allowable expenditures consist of expenditures attributable to the purposes enumerated in subsection (a-5) of Section 2-3.51 of the School Code.

(Source: Amended at 22 Ill. Reg. 19763, effective October 30, 1998)

Section 260.50 Procedure and Criteria for Approval of Applications

- a) The State Board of Education shall provide the electronic application format for this program and shall notify each eligible applicant of the maximum amount of its entitlement pursuant to Section 2-3.51 of the School Code. Each applicant shall provide:
- 1) a total grant request equal to or less than the amount for which the applicant is eligible;
 - 2) assurance that the applicant will comply with the provisions of Section 2-3.51 of the School Code and this Part;
 - 3) information identifying the purposes for which the applicant plans to use the funds provided pursuant to this Part;
 - 4) a description of the program or initiative to which the planned expenditures pertain, including evidence that the program or initiative is derived from scientifically based reading research as defined in Section 2-3.51 of the School Code and complies with the applicable requirements of subsection (a-5) of that Section; and
 - 5) the information called for in Section 260.55(a) through (c) of this Part.
- b) Applications must be submitted to the State Board of Education by May 1 for the subsequent school year, or by 30 days after the application becomes available, whichever is later. This date will be determined so that all eligible applicants will have at least 30 days to complete and submit the application.
- c) Information provided in the application will be reviewed by State Board of Education staff to determine that the information demonstrates compliance with Section 2-3.51 of the School Code and this Part.
- d) State Board staff shall notify applicants of any requested information that is missing from the application and of the latest date on which that information can be accepted. An application shall not be approved for funding until it is complete.
- e) An applicant that fails to apply or to furnish requested information within the timeframe established shall forfeit any grant funds to which it would otherwise be eligible for the affected school year pursuant to this Part, due to the necessity for

the State Superintendent to identify eligible entities, calculate grant allocations, and notify the eligible entities of their allocation amounts.

(Source: Amended at 29 Ill. Reg. 20417, effective November 29, 2005)

Section 260.55 Eligibility for Continued Funding

Section 2-3.51 of the School Code provides that *districts not demonstrating performance progress using an approved assessment method shall not be eligible for funding in the third or subsequent years until such progress is established*. Each application for funding under the Reading Improvement Block Grant program *shall include a proposed assessment method or methods for measuring the reading growth of students who receive direct instruction as a result of the funding and the impact of staff development activities on student growth in reading*.

- a) Each application shall list or describe the method or methods the applicant proposes to use to measure students' reading skills for purposes of this Part, provided that an applicant shall use no more than one method for each grade level in which students are served by initiatives supported by funding under this Part. *Such methods may include the English language arts portion of the assessments required under Section 2-3.64a-5 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.64a-5] (Section 2-3.51 of the School Code).*
 - 1) If a proposed assessment instrument is a standardized or commercially available criterion-referenced test, the applicant shall assure the State Superintendent that the instrument meets the generally accepted standards of validity and reliability set forth in "Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing" (2014) published by the American Educational Research Association, 1430 K St., N.W., Suite 1200, Washington, D.C. 20005. (No later amendments to or editions of these standards are incorporated.)
 - 2) If a proposed assessment instrument is locally developed or chosen, the applicant shall:
 - A) indicate the acceptable standard of performance by students on that measure (e.g., acceptable grade-level equivalent, score, or percent correct);
 - B) describe the means by which the applicant's staff determined that the proposed measure is aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards in the area of English language arts; and
 - C) certify to the State Superintendent that the instrument measures what it is intended to measure and can be expected to yield consistent results, including a description of the methods by which the applicant's staff arrived at the conclusion that this is the case.

- 3) Results of the proposed methods must be expressed in quantifiable terms, such as the percentage of students meeting an established standard.
- b) Each application shall assure the State Superintendent that the applicant will take any measures as may be necessary to prevent inappropriate disclosure of test questions or other materials that form part of the proposed assessment methods.
- c) The State Superintendent of Education shall approve the method or methods proposed if the application complies with subsections (a) and (b).
- d) No later than 60 days after the due date established for applications, the State Superintendent shall notify each applicant whether its proposed method of measuring students' reading skills is approved. Failure to apply in a timely manner may delay an applicant's receipt of this response. In the case of a disapproval, the applicant shall be notified of the reason for the disapproval and of any modifications that would bring its proposed method into compliance with the requirements of this Section.
- e) Each applicant shall annually report to the State Superintendent of Education its reading results for the previous school year, expressed in terms of students' performance on the assessment measures approved pursuant to this Section. The due date for the performance report shall be June 15 for applicants not relying on scores from the State assessment in English language arts and 30 days after the district's receipt of State assessment scores for those relying on State assessment scores.
- f) "Performance progress" must be demonstrated with regard to the students who received direct instruction and those whose reading instructors engaged in professional development as a result of this grant and, with respect to that group of students, means any of the following:
 - 1) A higher percentage of students scored at or above the locally established standard on the approved measures of reading performance (e.g., achieved grade-level equivalents, criterion reference points, or local benchmarks) than in the preceding testing cycle.
 - 2) The average score achieved by students on the approved measures rose in comparison to the average for the preceding testing cycle.

- 3) A higher percentage of students scored in the top two quartiles on the approved measures than in the preceding testing cycle, or a lower percentage of students scored in the bottom quartile.
 - 4) An applicant with 90% or more of scores at or above the established standard maintained its performance in comparison to the preceding testing cycle.
- g) The State Superintendent shall notify any applicant whose results on its approved measures of reading performance contradict its State assessment scores in English language arts for the students involved.
- 1) If a district's report under subsection (e) does not demonstrate performance progress, the State Superintendent shall cause the district's relevant State assessment scores to be reviewed. If these scores demonstrate that performance progress has been made, data from the State assessment will be accepted in lieu of data from the locally identified assessment measure as the basis for the district's continued eligibility for funds under this Part.
 - 2) If a district's report under subsection (e) does show performance progress but its relevant State assessment scores do not bear this out, the State Superintendent shall notify the district to this effect. No later than 30 days after receipt of this notification, the applicant shall provide to the State Superintendent an analysis of this discrepancy and the applicant's rationale for concluding that it has nevertheless made performance progress.
- h) An applicant may appeal either disapproval of its proposed assessment methods or a determination that it has failed to make performance progress. In the latter case, the applicant may appeal either on the grounds that it has made performance progress or on the grounds that the factors that led to the failure were beyond the applicant's control (e.g., the low number of students served creates a statistical problem with calculating progress). Prior to a formal appeal, however, the applicant may submit additional written information. If the information presented demonstrates that either of these conditions exists, the State Superintendent shall notify the district that it has made performance progress and no further follow-up is needed.
- 1) The superintendent or chief administrator of an eligible applicant may request a conference at which representatives of the applicant will have an opportunity to discuss the issues involved with representatives of the State Board of Education.

- 2) If a conference is held and the areas of concern are not resolved, the school board may submit an appeal by adopted board resolution. The appeal must identify the ways in which the proposed method meets the requirements of Section 2-3.51 of the School Code and this Section, the way in which the information submitted demonstrates that performance progress has been made, or the external factors that led to its inability to make performance progress, as applicable.
- 3) Consistent with the State Board's rules for Contested Cases and Other Formal Hearings (23 Ill. Adm. Code 475), the applicant will be given an opportunity to present information relevant to the issues appealed. The State Superintendent of Education will consider the appeal and make a recommendation to the State Board of Education; the State Board will issue a final written determination.
- 4) An applicant's eligibility for funding shall not be interrupted for failure to make performance progress if the State Superintendent determines that failure to make progress was beyond the applicant's control and that the applicant plans to take specific steps in the immediate future to enable it to resume making performance progress.

(Source: Amended at 40 Ill. Reg. 3091, effective January 27, 2016)

Section 260.60 Allocation of Funds (Repealed)

(Source: Repealed at 22 Ill. Reg. 19763, effective October 30, 1998)

Section 260.70 Distribution of Grant Awards

Distribution of grant awards to eligible recipients shall be made on or before the dates specified in Section 2-3.51 of the School Code, provided that complete applications have been received by the State Board of Education by the date specified on the application form.

(Source: Amended at 23 Ill. Reg. 7083, effective June 2, 1999)

Section 260.80 Year-End Reporting

- a) In order to permit compliance with subsection (a-15) of Section 2-3.51 of the School Code, recipients of funds under this program shall annually report to the State Board of Education, on a form supplied by the State Board, regarding their uses of the funds provided and the results achieved in terms of improving the reading skills of students in grades kindergarten through six. Annual reports shall address at least the following areas, as applicable to the recipient's use of the funds:
- 1) the numbers of students who received direct instruction in each of the grades K through 6;
 - 2) summary information about the number and characteristics of students who have been referred for additional reading intervention or support;
 - 3) the number of staff members hired and their positions and grade levels;
 - 4) the number of staff members who received professional development; and
 - 5) the nature of staff development provided.
- b) At the end of each fiscal year, each grant recipient shall also be required to submit a financial report that reflects the actual expenditures charged to the Reading Improvement Program.

(Source: Amended at 26 Ill. Reg. 8104, effective May 20, 2002)

SUBPART B: READING IMPROVEMENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Section 260.100 Purpose and Implementation

- a) This Subpart B establishes the application procedure and criteria for selection by the State Board of Education of eligible applicants to receive funding for *teacher training and re-training in the teaching of reading* pursuant to Section 2-3.51(a) of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.51(a)]. For the purposes of this Subpart B, “professional development” shall be understood to mean any combination of training, re-training or other professional development activities.
- b) The State Superintendent of Education annually may allocate up to 2 percent of funds appropriated to the Reading Improvement Block Grant Program for professional development grants, as defined in subsection (a) of this Section.

(Source: Added at 33 Ill. Reg. 4031, effective February 23, 2009)

Section 260.110 Eligible Applicants

- a) An applicant's eligibility for a grant shall be determined by the purpose of the program being funded, i.e., receipt of professional development by the applicant's staff, as defined in Section 2-3.51(a-5)(6) of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.51(a-5)(6)], and employed in any of kindergarten through grade 6, or provision of professional development by the applicant.
 - 1) A public school district, charter school, or public university laboratory school approved by the Illinois State Board of Education providing instruction in kindergarten through grade 6 may apply for funding to pay the costs associated with its staff's receipt of professional development services and activities.
 - 2) In addition to the eligible applicants identified in subsection (a)(1) of this Section, a regional office of education, postsecondary institution, and other not-for-profit entity may apply for funding to conduct specific professional development programs, as may be identified in a given Request for Proposals (RFP) issued in accordance with Section 260.120 of this Part, designed to improve reading instruction and student achievement in reading (e.g., Reading Recovery, response to intervention).
- b) Each RFP shall state whether joint applications for funds may be submitted by any combination of eligible applicants, as described in subsection (a) of this Section, subject to the conditions stated in subsections (b)(1), (b)(2) and (b)(3) of this Section.
 - 1) If a joint application is submitted, then an administrative agent shall be designated.
 - 2) The superintendent from each of the participating school districts and the official authorized to submit a proposal on behalf of any other eligible entity as defined in subsection (a) of this Section shall sign the joint application.
 - 3) An eligible applicant shall only participate in one proposal for a specific program.

(Source: Added at 33 Ill. Reg. 4031, effective February 23, 2009)

Section 260.120 Application Procedures and Content

- a) When an allocation for professional development grants is made available pursuant to Section 260.100(a) of this Part, the State Superintendent of Education shall issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) specifying the information that applicants shall include in their proposals, informing applicants of any bidders' conferences, and requiring that proposals be submitted no later than the date specified in the RFP. The RFP shall provide at least 45 calendar days in which to submit proposals.
- b) It is the intention of the State Board of Education to approve Reading Improvement Professional Development Grants for no more than a three-year period. Each RFP will indicate whether the grant will be funded for one, two or three years. Funding in each subsequent year is subject to a sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress of the grantee in the previous grant period. (See Section 260.140 of this Part.)
- c) Each RFP shall indicate the descriptive information that initial applicants will be required to provide about their proposed programs. For the purposes of this Subpart B, initial applicants are those that did not receive funding under this Subpart in the year previous to an application or that are completing the last year in a funding cycle. The proposal description shall include:
 - 1) evidence of the applicant's need for the professional development (e.g., reading achievement data, rationale for targeting specific grade levels or schools, current availability of and access to other professional development opportunities);
 - 2) the criteria for identifying participants to receive the professional development;
 - 3) a list of the activities and services to be provided and how those will improve reading instruction;
 - 4) evidence of commitment of the school staff in implementing or continuing the reading program that was the focus of the professional development;
 - 5) a description of the strategies to be employed for participating staff to share their knowledge with other staff in the school; and

- 6) the data to be collected and methods to be used to determine the success of the professional development program on improving reading instruction and student achievement in reading.
- d) The RFP shall require completion of a budget summary and payment schedule as well as a budget breakdown, i.e., a detailed explanation of each line item of expenditure.
- e) Each RFP shall identify any area or areas of high priority for the funding cycle.
- f) Each RFP shall include certifications, assurances and program-specific terms of the grant, as the State Board of Education may require, to be signed by the applicant that is a party to the application and submitted with the proposal.
- g) Applicants may be requested to clarify various aspects of their proposals. The contents of the approved proposal, containing the materials submitted under subsections (c), (d) and (f) of this Section, shall be incorporated into a grant agreement to be signed by the State Superintendent or designee and the superintendent of the school district or, in the case of other eligible applicants, by the authorized official.

(Source: Added at 33 Ill. Reg. 4031, effective February 23, 2009)

Section 260.130 Proposal Review, Approval and Grant Award

- a) Proposals submitted for funding to establish a professional development program shall be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria.
 - 1) The proposal presents a convincing rationale about the need for the professional development based upon the students' reading progress and the school's continuing need for improvements, as indicated by testing data or other relevant information. The number of staff estimated to participate in the professional development and the grade levels to be served are 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 instruction is not successful with all students and knowledgeably articulates how intensive, ongoing professional development will lead to improvements in reading achievement for those students. (25 points)
 - 3) The content, sequence and duration of the initial and any follow-up professional development appears to be of sufficient quality and length to have a positive effect on instructional practices. (15 points)
 - 4) Sufficient evidence is presented of the commitment of the school's administrators and teachers to implement or continue the targeted reading improvement strategies and methods after the conclusion of the professional development. Identified sources of funding for the planning and implementation are sufficient to successfully sustain the approach to reading instruction that was the focus of the professional development. (15 points)
 - 5) Appropriate strategies are proposed for participants to share the knowledge gained and lessons learned in the professional development with others in the school, and these strategies will allow for successful implementation of the reading program throughout the school. (10 points)
 - 6) The proposed budget is cost-effective based on the number of teachers to be trained and the activities proposed. (10 points)

- b) The selection of proposals for funding may be based in part on geographic distribution and/or the need to provide resources to school districts and communities with varying demographic characteristics.
- c) Priority consideration may be given to proposals with specific areas of emphasis, as identified by the State Superintendent of Education in a particular RFP.
- d) The State Superintendent of Education shall determine the amount of individual grant awards. The final award amounts shall be based upon:
 - 1) the total amount of funds available for Reading Improvement Professional Development Grants; and
 - 2) the resources requested in the top-ranked proposals, as identified pursuant to subsections (a), (b) and (c) of this Section.

(Source: Added at 33 Ill. Reg. 4031, effective February 23, 2009)

Section 260.140 Application Content and Approval for Continuation Programs

The requirements of this Section shall apply to those applicants seeking funding to continue professional development programs beyond the initial grant period.

- a) In order to continue to operate a Reading Improvement Professional Development program, a grantee each year shall submit an application for continuation. The application shall include at least the following:
 - 1) an overview of the program to date (e.g., training provided, number of participants, topics addressed);
 - 2) a description of the activities and services proposed for the renewal period;
 - 3) budget information for the year in which the application is being made; and
 - 4) the certifications, assurances and program-specific terms of the grant referred to in Section 260.120(f) of this Part that are applicable to the renewal period.
- b) A professional development program shall be approved for continuation provided that:
 - 1) a need continues to exist for the program, as evidenced by reading achievement data and the proposed numbers of teachers to be served;
 - 2) the activities and services proposed will be effective in improving instruction and student achievement in reading;
 - 3) the proposed budget is cost-effective, as evidenced by the cost of proposed services in relation to the numbers to be served and the services to be provided; and
 - 4) in the year previous to the continuation application, the applicant complied with the terms and conditions of any grant it received pursuant to this Subpart B.

(Source: Added at 33 Ill. Reg. 4031, effective February 23, 2009)