Mississippi Reading First Application

Introduction:

The state of Mississippi has embarked upon a new challenge and has implemented a process that has extended the horizons of our children. The *Mississippi Reading Reform Model (MRRM)…Every Child a Reader,* guided by several goals and action steps, was researched and designed to "break the mold" of traditional reading instruction for this state. The *MRRM* was developed by Mississippi education practitioners to strategically address reading improvement in the state with the implementation of scientifically-based best practices. It is our intent that the educators of this state, in partnership with parents and families, will develop children who read well and independently by the end of each grade level.

The Mississippi Reading Reform Model's four scientifically-based reading research conclusions are the foundation for the goals of the *Mississippi Reading First Program*:

- Well-designed early literacy interventions to ensure reading readiness;
- Prescriptive direct instruction utilizing the essential elements of reading instruction and based upon the results of appropriate assessments;
- Extended instructional opportunities for children; and
- High quality professional development to improve reading instructional practices of Mississippi teachers, administrators, and support staff.

While there is certainly room for growth and improvement in reading achievement both nationally and in this state, Mississippi has made tremendous strides in reading performance. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 1994 Reading Report Card for the Nation and the States, Mississippi was one of only seven states evidencing a significant increase in the percentage of fourth-grade students scoring at or above the "Advanced" level of reading on NAEP since 1992. Mississippi was also the *only* state evidencing an increase in 4th grade students scoring at the "Proficient" level. In 1998, Mississippi was one of seven states in the Nation recognized by the National Education Goals Panel for raising reading achievement. Mississippi received "gold stars" from the panel for "greater than expected" gains in the percentage of students scoring at the proficient level between 1992 and 1998 on NAEP. In addition,

the state consistently reduced the percentage of fourth graders scoring below basic achievement from 1992 to 1998 (NAEP, 1998). The percentage reduction, from 59% to 52%, demonstrates significant progress as compared to the Southeastern region and the National average scores percentages, as indicated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Grade 4 NAEP Results

Grade 4 Reading		Average Scale Score	Percentages below basic student achievement
1992	Mississippi	199	59
	Southeast	211	45
	Nation	215	40
1994	Mississippi	202	55
	Southeast	208	47
	Nation	212	41
1998	Mississippi	204	52
	Southeast	210	46
	Nation	215	39

(Source: NAEP, 1998)

Nonetheless, Mississippi consistently performs poorly on cross-state comparisons of reading performance. Certainly, it is true that many influences beyond the control of educators have a profound impact on the educational achievement of Mississippi's children. These include the parents' educational attainment levels, number of parents and siblings in the home, poverty and socio-economic statuses. In Mississippi, for example, poverty status accounts for approximately 67% of the variance in reading ability (*Research to Action*, 1997). This correlation indicates that a relationship between poverty and reading exists, although it certainly does not describe the reasons and limits for the relationship. We can only be certain that poverty sets an upper limit on what can be done under the conditions in which this correlation was made, unless there is a substantial change in the manner and methods utilized in educating children. Schools that have fully implemented the scientifically-research based practices of the *MRRM* are succeeding in

"breaking the mold" by surpassing the typical expectations generated by poverty and background.

A. Current Reading Initiatives and Identified Gaps in Services

Historical Context of the Mississippi Reading Reform Model:

Based on current reading research and a commitment to provide high quality professional development, reading is the number one priority for the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). A long-term commitment to fundamental change in our approach to reading instruction was necessary at the state, district, school, and classroom level to achieve dramatic and substantial progress. The Mississippi State Board of Education's Reading Reform Model, *Every Child a Reader*, was designed to ensure grade level reading in grades K – 12.

The development of the *MRRM* began in July 1997 with a review of Mississippi's *Reaching New Heights* research (a 1995 study of reading instruction in Mississippi school districts). From that study, the 1998 *Research to Action* publication was written and disseminated throughout the state to create an awareness of and an urgency for the Reading Reform Model. In November 1997, Dr. Reid Lyon of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) joined state efforts by sharing recently completed NICHD research results with Mississippi's Early Childhood Task Force and by providing information for the development of resources and strategies for implementation of the statewide initiative. With Dr. Lyon's research and research presented in the 1998 National Research Council's (NRC) *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, the **Mississippi Reading Reform Model** was established.

To support the establishment of the *MRRM*, the Mississippi Legislature enacted a *Reading Sufficiency Law* during the 1998 Legislative Session. This law requires every school district to establish and implement a program for reading reform. In addition, funds appropriated by the state legislature were used to pilot the *MRRM* in six of Mississippi's low-performing school districts. The implementation of the *MRRM* yielded student reading gains in each year of a three-year longitudinal study. This study provided the evidence needed to begin building a statewide reform effort.

The following tables and graphs summarize the performance of students in the six Mississippi Reading Sufficiency pilot districts over a three school year period. The six pilot districts were Coahoma County, South Delta, Humphreys County, North Bolivar, Holly Springs, and Jefferson County. Four of these school districts are located in the Mississippi Delta, one of the most impoverished areas of this country. The Woods and Moe Analytical Reading Inventory, Sixth Edition (ARI) was used to measure student performance from 1998 until 2001 in word recognition, listening comprehension, and reading comprehension. The instrument was individually administered to students by MDE test administrators. Pretests and posttests were administered each year. Pretest and posttest scores for participating students were calculated using the ARI "frustration levels" in word recognition, listening comprehension, and reading comprehension. Pretest to posttest gains were calculated by subtracting each student's pretest level from his/her posttest level in each of these three areas. Since the recorded score for a student was a reading level on the ARI, a pretest to posttest "gain" was indicated only when a student moved from one level to another (i.e., frustration to instructional). Some students may have made gains in word recognition, listening comprehension, or reading comprehension that did not result in a change in performance level on the instrument.

Net gains on the ARI were calculated using two different methods (A) by adding the separate single year gains for the three school years and (B) by subtracting the average posttest score in spring 2001 from the average pretest score in fall 1998. The 3-year net gains were:

- Word Recognition   +3.30 (Method A);   +4.06 (Method B)
- Listening Comprehension   +3.44 (Method A);   +4.10 (Method B)
- Reading Comprehension   +3.26 (Method A);   +4.06 (Method B)

The tables and graphs that follow present the average pretest and posttest scores annually for each pilot district and for all pilot districts combined. The tables include the yearly gains in performance as well as the three-year net gains calculated using both methods. Annual gains are posted for each year within each of the pilot districts and for all pilot districts combined.

AVERAGE READING COMPREHENSION LEVEL

Group	1998-1999 Pretest Posttest Change	1999-2000 Pretest Posttest Change	2000-2001 Pretest Posttest Change	3-Year Net Change[1] A	B
All 6 Pilot Districts	0.11 0.93 +0.82 (N=805)	1.27 2.76 +1.49 (N=837)	3.22 4.17 +0.95 (N=775)	+3.26	+4.06
North Bolivar	0.07 1.19 +1.12 (N=90)	1.38 3.18 +1.80 (N=89)	3.05 3.96 +0.92 (N=83)	+3.84	+3.89
Coahoma	0.02 0.98 +0.96 (N=171)	1.35 2.61 +1.26 (N=190)	3.33 4.11 +0.78 (N=165)	+3.00	+4.09
Humphreys	0.08 0.47 +0.38 (N=201)	0.81 2.25 +1.44 (N=192)	2.49 3.41 +0.92 (N=166)	+2.74	+3.33
Jefferson	0.15 1.30 +1.50 (N=113)	1.43 3.05 +1.62 (N=120)	3.07 3.98 +0.91 (N=127)	+4.03	+3.83
Holly Springs	0.10 1.22 +1.11 (N=115)	1.71 3.34 +1.63 (N=126)	4.50 5.29 +0.78 (N=125)	+3.52	+5.19
South Delta	0.29 0.81 +0.52 (N=115)	1.67 2.60 +1.43 (N=120)	3.01 4.52 +1.51 (N=109)	+3.46	+4.23

[1]Net change was calculated as follows:
A=Sum of the annual pretest to posttest changes
B=2001 posttest level minus the 1998 pretest level

ARI AVERAGE LISTENING COMPREHENSION LEVEL

Group	1998-1999 Pretest Posttest Change	1999-2000 Pretest Posttest Change	2000-2001 Pretest Posttest Change	3-Year Net Change[1] A	B
All 6 Pilot Districts	1.35 2.25 +0.90 (N=805)	2.51 3.98 +1.47 (N=837)	4.37 5.45 +1.07 (N=775)	+3.44	+4.10
North Bolivar	1.21 2.69 +1.48 (N=90)	2.70 4.50 +1.80 (N=89)	4.17 5.29 +1.12 (N=83)	+4.40	+4.08
Coahoma	1.26 2.25 +0.98 (N=171)	2.49 3.83 +1.34 (N=190)	4.48 5.36 +0.88 (N=165)	+3.20	+4.10
Humphreys	1.32 1.81 +0.48 (N=201)	2.06 3.46 +1.40 (N=192)	3.64 4.64 +0.99 (N=166)	+2.87	+3.32
Jefferson	1.29 2.47 +1.18 (N=113)	2.73 4.23 +1.51 (N=120)	4.31 5.38 +1.06 (N=127)	+3.75	+4.09
Holly Springs	1.51 2.57 +1.05 (N=115)	3.01 4.48 +1.47 (N=126)	5.59 6.51 +0.92 (N=125)	+3.44	+5.00
South Delta	1.55 2.17 +0.63 (N=115)	2.39 3.92 +1.53 (N=120)	4.17 5.79 +1.62 (N=109)	+3.78	+4.24

[1]Net change was calculated as follows:
A=Sum of the annual pretest to posttest changes
B=2001 posttest level minus the 1998 pretest level

ARI AVERAGE WORD RECOGNITION LEVEL

Group	1998-1999 Pretest Posttest Change	1999-2000 Pretest Posttest Change	2000-2001 Pretest Posttest Change	3-Year Net Change[1] A	B
All 6 Pilot Districts	0.11 0.93 +0.82 (N=805)	1.27 2.76 +1.49 (N=837)	3.18 4.17 +0.99 (N=775)	+3.30	+4.06
North Bolivar	0.07 1.19 +1.12 (N=90)	1.38 3.18 +1.80 (N=89)	3.07 3.96 +0.89 (N=83)	+3.81	+3.89
Coahoma	0.02 0.98 +0.96 (N=171)	1.35 2.61 +1.26 (N=190)	3.33 4.11 +0.78 (N+165)	+3.00	+4.09
Humphreys	0.08 0.47 +0.38 (N=201)	0.81 2.25 +1.44 (N=192)	2.29 3.40 +1.11 (N=166)	+2.93	+3.32
Jefferson	0.15 1.30 +1.15 (N=113)	1.43 3.05 +1.62 (N=120)	3.07 3.98 +0.91 (N=127)	+3.68	+3.83
Holly Springs	0.10 1.22 +1.11 (N=115)	1.71 3.34 +1.63 (N=126)	4.50 5.29 +0.78 (N=125)	+3.52	+5.19
South Delta	0.30 0.81 +0.51 (N=115)	1.17 2.60 +1.43 (N=120)	3.01 4.52 +1.51 (N=109)	+3.45	+4.22

[1]Net change was calculated as follows:
A=Sum of the annual pretest to posttest changes
B=2001 posttest level minus the 1998 pretest level

The reading gains made in each of the six pilot school districts of the Mississippi Reading Sufficiency Program provided evidence that systemic reading reform in this state was critical in meeting the needs of struggling students. However, this was only a first step in directing the focus of the instructional leaders of the state. First and foremost, came the realization that guidance was needed in articulating the basic reading related competencies needed to attain student success, purposeful assessment techniques and specific instructional intervention strategies. The data and feedback garnered from these school districts also clearly indicated the need for sustained and meaningful professional development for primary grade teachers, administrators, and instructional support staff.
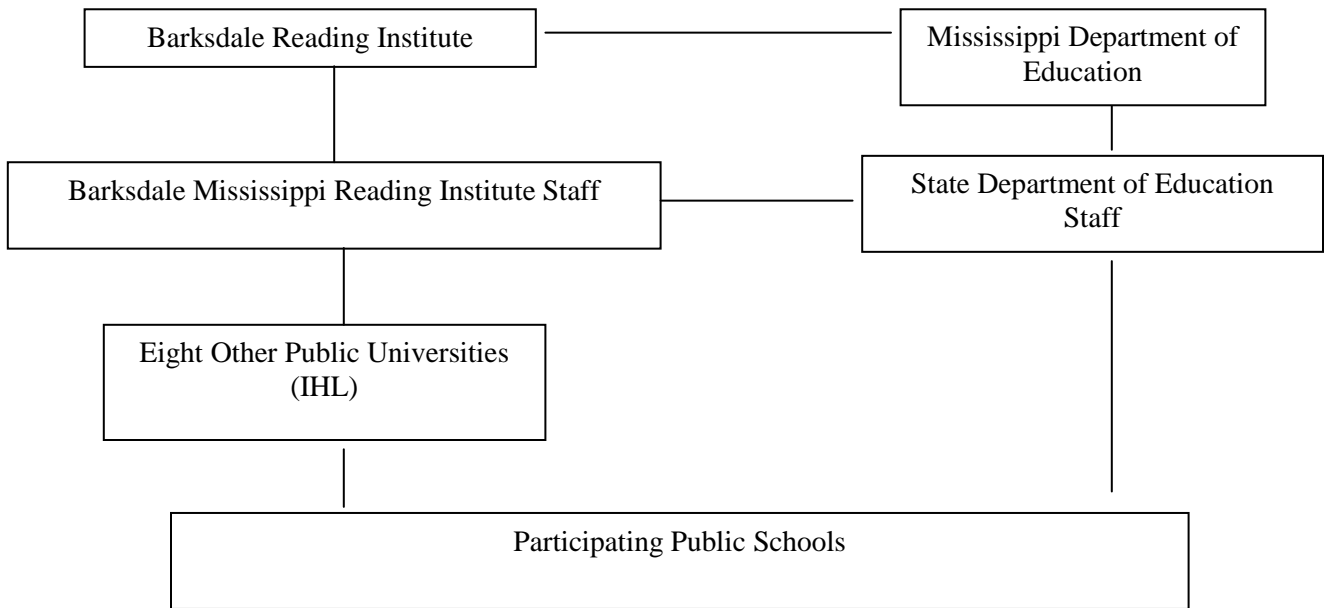
This professional development needed to be scaffolded to ensure that Mississippi teachers acquired the knowledge and skills required to provide effective instruction.

Finally, this data precluded the premise that students should be labeled according to their socio-economic background. Rather the data clearly indicated that in six of the poorest and lowest performing school districts, students were capable of not only reaching grade level expectations, but students were capable of surpassing them.   Even more importantly, the data proved that quality reading instruction in the K-3 years can prevent many reading difficulties from developing. Also, as the number of special education referrals decreased in the pilot school districts, came the knowledge that appropriate classroom instruction and support could prevent reading deficits. This point is evident in the National Reading Panel's report which states, "excellent teaching is even more, not less, important for youngsters who are at risk in reading–and with this kind of teaching the majority of at-risk children can be successful." In sum, the Mississippi Reading Sufficiency Program served as the foundation for the *MRRM*'s infrastructure.

The Mississippi Reading Sufficiency Program was initially funded at $1.5 million dollars and only supported intensive technical assistance in six low-performing school districts. The need to further implement the *MRRM* in unsuccessful schools was one that led to a private donation of $100 million dollars to the University of Mississippi by Jim and Sally Barksdale. This gift established the Barksdale Reading Institute, which seeks to further replicate the *MRRM* in 73 low performing schools.

The Barksdale Reading Institute provides technical assistance by utilizing thirteen Reading Coordinators to implement the *MRRM*. The Institute staff at each of the State's eight public universities expands college-reading courses and incorporates the systemic reading reform model into existing elementary teacher preparation programs.   The collaborative efforts of these partners will dramatically improve the reading skills of Mississippi's students by providing highly qualified teachers in primary classrooms.

Barksdale Reading Institute Partnership Structure

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┌─────────────────────────────┐           ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Barksdale Reading Institute │───────────│ Mississippi Department  │
└─────────────────────────────┘           │    of Education         │
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│ Barksdale Mississippi Reading   │───────│ State Department of      │
│ Institute Staff                 │       │ Education Staff          │
└─────────────────────────────────┘       └─────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────┐                        │
│ Eight Other Public          │                        │
│ Universities (IHL)          │                        │
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│              Participating Public Schools                          │
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The infrastructure for reading reform was also strengthened by the expansion of the Mississippi Department of Education's reading/early childhood/language arts program staff from one (during the developmental stages of the *MRRM*) to the current nineteen staff members. The Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts provides intensive support to the Mississippi Reading Sufficiency School Districts and grant funding and technical assistance to other schools implementing the *MRRM*. In addition, this Office is also responsible for the development and dissemination of the *MRRM*'s intervention resource documents and the development and delivery of statewide professional development modules including follow-up technical assistance.

Mississippi was the benefactor of a Reading Excellence Act Grant (MS-REA) in 2000. The MS-REA grant also strengthened the infrastructure of the systemic, reform efforts of the *MRRM*. MS-REA replicated the research based best practices of the *MRRM* in an additional fifty-three (53) K-3 schools. Also, five additional staff personnel (Regional Reading Coordinators) were hired to provide intensive support to the selected schools.

The REA grant also supports a full-time Literacy Coach at the school level, who monitors the grant's implementation, provides technical assistance to instructional staff, assesses the instructional needs of students and staff, and is charged with designing professional development to meet assessed needs.

Preliminary evaluative results of the MS-REA program indicate that the proposed activities for the grant have been fully implemented during the first year of the grant period. MDE planned and delivered professional development activities for the schools' staffs and delivered on-site technical assistance. Every school committed to the fundamentals of the *MRRM* by establishing Peer Coaching Study Teams, participating in professional development, selecting reading programs and assessments based on an established criteria (see *Evaluation of Instructional Materials*, Appendix A), establishing Parent/Family Centers, and offering Extended Day/Year and transitional programming services. As the first full year of the MS-REA grant concludes, the grant's evaluators are in the process of compiling baseline data to assess the grant's effectiveness from four levels:

- K-3 student reading performance
- Teacher perception and increases in instructional capacities
- Administrator perception and increases in leadership focus
- Parental perception and increased parental involvement

A momentum of progress has clearly begun, yet there are still over 80 low-performing K-3 schools in Mississippi who have as yet received no comprehensive assistance. *The Reading First grant will help Mississippi fortify its long-term commitment to fundamental changes in the reading instructional process implemented at the classroom level by* providing dramatic and substantial support to 25 eligible LEAs. *Most importantly, Reading First will support the* offering of consistent, statewide technical assistance and professional development thereby, increasing the connection between research, professional development, and instructional practice. *Mississippi expects for Reading First to provide a blueprint for all stakeholders with an interest in ensuring that every*

child is taught by highly qualified teachers utilizing scientifically-based assessments and programs of instruction.

B. Mississippi Outline and Rationale for Using Scientifically-Based Reading Research

Reading has been one of the most intensively researched content areas of the past several decades. Unlike other content areas, reading has an evidenced-based core body of knowledge that clearly delineates the critical areas that must be addressed in order for children to learn to read successfully. These critical areas have been translated into the reading research conclusions that are the foundation of *Mississippi's Reading First Program.*

<u>**Scientifically-Based Reading Research Conclusion #1**</u>*: Well-designed early literacy interventions to ensure reading readiness*

Goal One of the *Mississippi Reading First Program***:** *Children will exit Kindergarten with appropriate reading readiness skills.*

ACTION STEPS for GOAL ONE:
- Continue collaborating with other agencies and literacy groups to develop early childhood literacy programs and an early literacy awareness campaign.
- Develop additional resources that discuss the reading/readiness needs of children for distribution to parents, grandparents, and other careproviders.
- Offer professional development designed for **Reading First** school districts to help children make successful transitions from home to kindergarten to first grade.
- Establish the Mississippi Reading Academies beginning with the Kindergarten Academy in 2002-2003 school year.
- Provide guidance and approval in the selection of early reading comprehensive, supplemental and extensive remediation programs.
- Provide guidance in the selection and implementation of valid and reliable SBRR assessments to measure phonemic awareness, phonics and vocabulary with kindergarten students.

According to the National Research Council (1998), early readiness preparation and Pre-K programs have resulted in fewer referrals to special education programs and other compensatory services for young children. In a review of the literature examining Pre-K and early intervention programs for disadvantaged and handicapped children, the Early Intervention Research Institute found these programs resulted in overall positive effects

in school readiness. Although few studies have provided longitudinal tracking of these students, Schweinhart, Barners, and Weikart (1993) tracked significant differences in achievement test scores through age 19. This study also indicated a cost benefit of $7.00 in future expenses saved for each $1.00 spent on Pre-K intervention programs.

The wide variation in program approach and quality presents a challenge when considering the research. Programs described as "Pre-K" can vary from little more than part-time childcare facilities to multifaceted full day programs based on National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) readiness guidelines; using highly trained staff and having significant parental education components. Program effectiveness correspondingly varies. Ramey and Ramey (1992) state that six factors characterize the most successful programs:

1. Timing – programs that begin earliest and last longest,
2. Intensity – programs with higher hours per day and days per week,
3. Directness – programs providing daily cognitive learning experiences (vs. health or parent education services only),
4. Breadth – programs providing multiple routes to developmental and readiness enhancement,
5. Individual Differences – programs designed to adjust to individual learning styles and risk factors, and
6. Environment – programs encouraging supportive changes in home, school, and community environment.

Increasing the availability of such programs presents yet another challenge. In a review of early childhood reform efforts, the United States Department of Education (USDE) characterizes current state and federal programs as a "union of insufficiencies" in which successful programs can serve only a fraction of eligible clients (Schultz and Lopez, 1996). This is certainly true for Mississippi; there are many at-risk children who do not have the opportunity to be served by a high quality Pre-K readiness program.

Early interventions and early experiences for both child and parental development are critical to maximizing and sustaining positive outcomes for children (Ramey & Ramey, 1998). These intervention programs must utilize a framework that emphasizes the social, emotional, and cognitive growth of children and has as its foundation the biological, social, development, and contextual factors as referenced in recent brain research.

Research is clear that "prime times" for learning depend on the interaction between nature and nurture (Shore, 1997).

PLAN OF ACTION:

Due to the fact that so many of Mississippi's children enter kindergarten without the necessary readiness skills, there is increasing emphasis on kindergarten instruction. *Reading First* will provide the instructional support and funding to create model kindergarten classrooms. Teachers in these classrooms will be trained in scientifically-based reading research offered through the Mississippi Department of Education's Reading Academies. During the summer of 2003, the first year of the Academies, the MDE intends to train every Kindergarten teacher in the state of Mississippi in the research based methods and practices of how to adapt instruction to meet the large variance of instructional needs, experiences, and competencies they will encounter. The Mississippi Reading Academy: Kindergarten will be built on scientifically-based components that include use of explicit and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, and comprehension. Kindergarten teachers will be instructed in the use of valid and reliable SBRR assessments in screening all students upon entry to kindergarten, diagnosis of pre-reading difficulties in students that are having difficulty in meeting benchmarks and monitoring the progress of all kindergarten children to ensure that they leave kindergarten with the skills necessary for success in grade one. Academy training will highlight linking assessment results with instructional strategies, principles of effective grouping, monitoring student progress to inform instruction, and providing interventions for struggling readers.

Kindergarten instruction in *Reading First* classrooms will focus on the assessed strengths and weaknesses of individual students. Instruction will be tailored to show measurable growth in literacy development for every child; however, meeting the instructional needs of a wide range of children will require teachers to have a comprehensive repertoire of instructional assessments, techniques and interventions and an extensive knowledge base about the reading acquisition process. More importantly, these primary grade teachers must be knowledgeable about the nature of early reading problems and

prevention/intervention strategies available in these areas. ***Reading First*** will stress ongoing, diagnostic assessments as being the key to designing the instructional intervention process for struggling students.

At the kindergarten level, a variety of instructional assessments, strategies, and materials will be utilized in emphasizing readiness, as well as direct instruction in reading. Research provides support for beginning reading instruction in kindergarten and concludes that kindergartners receiving such instruction sustain academic achievement advantages over those who do not. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) reached similar conclusions after coordinating a ten-year research effort in early learning (Grossen, 1997). Most studies released in opposition to direct early instruction focus on teacher perceptions rather than long-term achievement.

One study that tracked achievement scores through high school reported that students enrolled in early formal reading instruction programs fared better than students in the same districts who did not receive similar instruction (Hanson and Farrell, 1995). In kindergarten and through high school, the former group reported higher reading achievement scores, better grades and attendance, more positive attitudes toward reading, and less need for remediation. These results remained consistent across ethnic, gender, and social class groups. Perhaps the most astounding finding was that students provided with formal reading instruction in kindergarten were, as a group, from *lower* socioeconomic backgrounds than students who did not receive the services. Yet, these students scored *higher* on all indicators of high school achievement than their higher socio-economic peers.

NICHD makes a compelling argument that the focus of early reading instruction should be in the development of phonological processing, particularly phonemic awareness instruction (Grossen, 1997). This research indicates that at least 20%, and in some states 50-60%, of children have difficulty reading at basic levels. More importantly, this difficulty is related to a fundamental deficit in phonological processing for most poor readers. These problems are not developmental, do not diminish over time, and without

appropriate interventions, will persist into adulthood. The NICHD research program has actually demonstrated physiological correlates in brain functioning associated with phonological processing in poor readers.

NICHD does not state that all children will require explicit instruction in phonological processing, but rather that many will. Many others will develop phonological processing skills on their own or through other instructional approaches. Regardless of how these skills are developed, however, they are a necessary basis for reading progression. The three types of phonological processing skills, as defined by the National Reading Panel are:

- phonemic awareness—the ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes in spoken words,
- phonics—the understanding of letter-sound correspondences and their use in reading and spelling,
- fluency—the ability to make these connections in a rapid and automatic fashion.

NICHD states that deficits in phonological processing are the most reliable indicators of early reading difficulty. In addition, the best way to measure early progress is to measure the child's phonological processing ability relative to his peers. *"The best predictor in K or 1st grade of a future reading difficulty in grade 3 is performance on a combination of measures of phonemic awareness, rapid naming of letters, numbers and objects, and print awareness."* Of these, NICHD reports that phonemic awareness is the most important and may in fact be the "core deficit in reading difficulties."

Although phonological processing does not come naturally for those children most likely to become poor readers, about 90-95% of these children will benefit substantially from appropriately designed explicit instruction in phonological processing. This instruction will not dominate the school day in **Reading First** classrooms; rather, it will be combined with complementary readiness curricula. NICHD and the National Reading Panel's research will provide the specific conditions for such instruction to be most successful.

Reading First schools will improve kindergarten instruction by addressing the scientifically-based reading research professional development needs of teachers and by implementing SBRR programs and valid and reliable SBRR assessments that emphasize:

- Direct instruction in phonemic awareness that is blended into the instructional delivery process;
- Explicit teaching of sound-spelling correspondence;
- Systematic teaching of frequent, highly regular sound-spelling relationships;
- Direct instruction in sounding out words;
- Utilization of connected, decodable text practice sound-spelling relationships;
- Utilization of interesting stories to develop language comprehension; and
- Grade appropriate presentation of literature and explicit phonics instruction.

The key findings of the National Reading Panel also illustrate the need for phonemic awareness instruction in kindergarten and first grade. The following principles will guide phonemic awareness instruction in *Reading First* classrooms:

- Phonemic awareness can be taught and learned.
- Phonemic awareness instruction helps children learn to read.
- Phonemic awareness instruction helps children learn to spell.
- Phonemic awareness instruction is most effective when children are taught to manipulate phonemes by using the letters of the alphabet.
- Phonemic awareness instruction is most effective when it focuses only on one or two types of phoneme manipulation rather than several types.

NICHD suggests many children will develop phonological decoding skills on their own regardless of the instructional approach used. *However, regardless of the overall instructional philosophy, a substantial number of students (including most of those likely to become poor readers) will require explicit instruction in phonological decoding at an early age to develop these skills.* The **Mississippi Reading First Program** will strategically address the needs of kindergarten students by addressing their assessed needs with research based programs and strategies, increasing the instructional capacity of teachers and support staff, and assisting parents in acquiring and enhancing skills necessary to nurture emerging reading. The resources and professional development modules described in the following charts will be required elements of implementation for all **Reading First LEAs**. As LEAs progress through the **Reading First** program, instructional leaders and teachers will grow in their ability to define their unique instructional needs and begin to develop a sustained focus of evaluating and refining instruction based on the assessed needs of students and staff.

Figure 2
Resource Publications – Readiness Interventions

Publication	Audience	Purpose	Development Collaborations
Every Child A Reader: Getting Ready for Kindergarten (Booklet, video, and audio tapes)	Every parent registering a 4 year-old in public, private, and Head Start programs statewide	Provide parents with ideas of things to do with children – before they start school in the areas: • How Children Learn • What You Should know About 4-year olds (Getting Along, Good Health and Physical Well Being, Math, Talking and listening)	Reid Lyon (NICHD) MS Dept. of Ed. (MDE) SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education (SERVE) Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) MS Early Childhood Ass. MS Public & Private School Teachers & Administrators MS Library Commission Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Educational Television (ETV) Hinds Community College Head Start Private Care Providers John Manning (Univ. of MN)
Parent/Family Center Guide (Booklets, Resource Manuals, and video tape)	Administrators, Parent coordinators/ liaisons and Head Start programs statewide	Provide local school districts and Head Start agencies with the tools to establish effective family literacy centers – the components are: • Why a Parent/Family Center? • What is a Parent/Family Center? • What is Parent Involvement? • What is Parent Education? • Seven Steps to Developing a Parent/Family Center • Barriers and Strategies • Community Needs Assessment • Parent Information Request • Community Resources	Phi Hardin Foundation Public Education Forum Dr. Craig Ramey (UAB Civitan International Research) MDE IHL MS Public & Private Schools Teachers & Administrators Even Start HeadStart MS Forum on Children and Families MS Early Childhood Ass.
Instructional Videos • *Peer Coaching Study Teams* • *Mississippi Reading Reform Model* • *Reading Tutorial Partnerships* • *Readiness Intervention*	K-3 regular and special education teachers, assistant teachers, and administrators	Provide local school districts with the research and tools to effectively implement the Mississippi Reading Reform Model.	MDE
Mississippi Language Arts Framework (K)	K-12 regular and special education teachers, assistant teachers, and administrators	Provides a description of what students should know and be able to do in English, language arts, and reading classrooms.	MDE IHL MS Public & Private Schools Teachers & Administrators

Reading Instructional Intervention Process Guide (K)	K-3 regular and special education teachers, assistant teachers, and administrators	Developed as a companion resource to the Mississippi Language Arts Framework. Guides teachers in providing instructional interventions for students having difficulties with reading.	MDE IHL MS Public & Private Schools Teachers & Administrators
Writing Instructional Intervention Process Guide (K)	K-3 regular and special education teachers, assistant teachers, and administrators	Developed as a companion resource to the Mississippi Language Arts Framework. Guides teachers in providing instructional interventions for students having difficulties with writing.	MDE IHL MS Public & Private Schools Teachers & Administrators
Reading Tips: A Guide for Parents	K-3 parents	This booklet and its companion poster offer guidance to parents in assessing the quality of their child's early reading program. It includes suggestions and strategies for working with children at home.	MDE

Figure 3
Professional Development – Readiness Interventions

Professional Dev.	Audience	Purpose	Development Collaborations
RAISE K-3 *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	K – 3rd Grade Teachers, Special Education Teachers, and Administrators	The development of this two-day training resulted from the efforts of the Reading Sufficiency Collaborative and incorporates the current research. The sessions will include: • Utilizing the Mississippi Language Arts Framework, Reading Instructional Intervention K – 3rd Grade benchmarks, informal assessments, and intervention strategies, (including arts integration strategies), to implement a reading prevention/ intervention process; • Using outcome, screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring data to make informed instructional decisions to improve student performance in reading and to maintain high standards; • Diagnosing and prescribing reading intervention; and • Utilizing peer coaching study teams for strategy implementation and professional development follow-up.	MDE NICHD National Reading Summit (NRC) Regional Service Centers MS Public Schools GALEF Institute SECAC (Reading Success Network)
Parent/Family Center Training *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	Administrators, parent coordinators/ Liaisons	Two-day family literacy training based on the publications, *Every Child A Reader: Getting Ready for Kindergarten* & the *Parent/Family Center Guide* is designed to demonstrate how to develop educational partnerships for parents and local communities focusing on: • School Age Services • Toy Lending/Resource Library • Resources & Referrals	MDE MS Public Schools Even Start MS Forum on Children & Families Parent as Teachers Superintendent's Ass.
Peer Coaching & Data Analysis *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	K-12 regular and special education teachers and administrators	This one-day training is designed to provide effective planning for designing peer coaching study teams and finding the time for them to collaborate. This module will also demonstrate how to use Outcome, Screening, Diagnostic and Progress Monitoring assessments to impact instruction. The participants will receive research supporting Peer Coaching and on how Data Analysis provides the foundation for Intervention.	MDE MS Public Schools SECAC (Reading Success Network)

Mississippi Reading Academies: Kindergarten (for year 2003-2004 will train every Kindergarten teacher in the state) *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	Kindergarten teachers, special education teachers, and elementary administrators	This four-day training is designed to provide participants with a thorough knowledge base of the five essential components of reading and their importance in the reading acquisition process. Participants will become familiar with the conclusions derived from current research that support the essential components and will be provided with a resource of teaching strategies and their correlation to the benchmarks. Teachers will receive training in the implementation of valid and reliable SBRR assessments for phonemic awareness, phonics and vocabulary.	University of Texas MDE
Integrating Learning Centers *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	Regular and special education Kindergarten teachers	This two-day training is designed for use with kindergarten teachers with the goal being that early childhood teachers would implement learning centers in the classroom as a means to actively involve children in thinking and learning through relevant encounters with the environment.	MDE
Essential Components of Reading Instruction *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	K-3 regular and special education teachers and administrators	This five-day training is designed to provide participants with a thorough knowledge base of the five essential components of reading and their importance in the reading acquisition process. Participants will become familiar with the conclusions derived from current research that supports the essential components and will be provided with a resource of teaching strategies and their correlation to the benchmarks, assessment, and intervention strategies.	MDE
Identifying Research-Based Instructional Programs and Assessments *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	K-3 regular and special education teachers and administrators	This one-day training provides educators with recommendations and procedures for analyzing instructional programs and assessments. Administrators and teachers will learn to utilize the MDE's publication "Evaluation of Instructional Materials" and the IDEA's <u>A Consumer's Guide to Selecting a Core Program: Critical Analysis</u> as a means of assessing the degree in which critical skills and strategies for reading identified by scientific evidence are included in a reading program. Participants will also learn to utilize the guidelines established by the ***Reading First*** Reading Assessment Committee in selecting and implementing SBRR assessments.	MDE

Utilizing the Mississippi Language Arts Framework (K-3) *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and	K-3 regular and special education teachers and administrators	This training provides a description of what students should know and be able to do in English, language arts, and reading classrooms, kindergarten through third grade. The training addresses the interrelatedness of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.	MDE
Right from Birth ***Video offered upon demand and through regularly scheduled ETV broadcasts**	Parents and caregivers	Right from Birth is a video parenting series designed to teach parents and caregivers how to provide children with the necessary skills and foundation for future learning and success in school.	MS ETV Drs. Craig and Sharon Ramey

In addition, all ***Reading First*** schools will receive training on the ***Evaluation of Instructional Materials*** (see Appendix A) which will be utilized during the process of selecting comprehensive, supplemental, and extensive remediation reading programs.

Scientifically-Based Reading Research Conclusion #2: *Direct, systematic reading instruction encompassing the essential elements of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and listening comprehension based upon results of valid and reliable SBRR assessments.*

Goal 2 of the Mississippi Reading First Program: All students will exit each grade reading at grade level.

ACTION STEPS for GOAL TWO:

- Effectively implement the **Mississippi Language Arts Framework 2000** in grades K-3. This document includes a process guide for reading instructional interventions that is inclusive of research-based benchmarks, informal assessments, and a variety of teaching strategies to aid children in the development of language and literacy skills including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension.
- Provide valid and reliable SBRR outcome, screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments that give a clear picture of students' instructional strengths and deficits.
- Provide a vehicle for implementing a prescriptive reading instructional intervention process addressing students' reading deficits through the effective implementation of Peer Coaching Study Teams.
- Provide quality professional development to school leaders in defining the instructional focus of K-3 reading in their schools through the Reading Leadership Institutes.

- Provide quality professional development on the essential elements of reading instruction including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- Provide guidance and approval in the selection of comprehensive, supplemental, and extensive remediation reading programs and print materials from the State's endorsed list.
- Provide on-site technical assistance and grant monitoring through the MDE Regional Reading Coordinators.
- Provide a full-time Literacy Coach at each *Reading First* school to provide modeling in effective scientifically-based reading best practices, assessment measures, and facilitate professional development based on the instructional needs of staff.

Learning to read is not a natural nor an easy process for most children, rather it is a complex task involving many cognitive processes. Research clearly indicates that there are three areas (phonemic awareness, the alphabetic principle, and phonics) that students must master to learn to read. Teachers must provide direct instruction in helping students understand that our spoken language is made up of individual words and that words have individual sounds. Students must receive instruction in segmenting and blending the spoken word before they can be expected to perform these actions with printed words. In the area of alphabetic principle development, children must receive direct instruction in understanding that letters of the alphabet can represent individual speech sounds. This direct instruction principle must also be evident at the phonics level when children are taught to decode written symbols into speech sounds (Ruetzel and Cooter, 1996).

PLAN OF ACTION:

Goal Two's instructional action steps are based on a review of scientific reading research and research conducted in Mississippi schools which has evolved into a statewide collaboration to provide Mississippi's students with a systematic, balanced approach to reading instruction. Based on the research base of the *MRRM* and the National Reading Panel's conclusions, instruction in *Reading First* classrooms will be based on what researchers have discovered about the essential elements that are needed to successfully teach children to read (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension). LEAs will select valid and reliable SBRR assessments to provide screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring data for students in *Reading First* classrooms. LEAs will utilize data obtained from these assessments to evaluate and

modify instructional interventions, strategies, and programs for students. Timelines, validity and reliability requirements and rationales for use of assessments are outlined in the section on instructional assessments (page 46).

Phonemic Awareness Instruction:

There is an overwhelming research base to support the value of phonemic awareness instruction in the K-2 classrooms. When coupled with the knowledge that a substantial number of children lack this awareness, it is clear that direct daily instruction included in the instructional domain is imperative, and research has proven that phonemic awareness can be effectively "***taught and learned***." The *Reading First* research base emphasizes phonemic awareness instruction should be "fun" and not "drill" in nature, the specific behaviors expected from students should be modeled by teachers, and instruction should be appropriate for students' level of literacy development. The following principles will guide phonemic awareness instruction in ***Reading First*** classrooms:

- Phonemic awareness can be taught and learned.
- Phonemic awareness instruction helps children learn to read.
- Phonemic awareness instruction helps children learn to spell.
- Phonemic awareness instruction is most effective when children are taught to manipulate phonemes by using the letters of the alphabet.
- Phonemic awareness instruction is most effective when it focuses only on one or two types of phoneme manipulation rather than several types.

Every K-3 teacher, K-12 special education teacher, and administrator will receive training in research based principles, instructional techniques, and appropriate research based assessments through Mississippi Reading Academies: Kindergarten and First Grade, Reading Leadership Institutes, and the Essential Components of Reading Instruction: Phonemic Awareness training module. An integral part of each training module is the focus on utilizing student assessment to make critical instructional decisions regarding interventions and classroom instruction.

Phonics Instruction:

The goal of phonics instruction in ***Reading First*** classrooms will be to provide students with key knowledge and skills and to ensure that they know how to apply that knowledge

in their reading practices. Systematic, explicit phonics instruction will be utilized to increase accuracy in decoding and word recognition skills, which will in turn facilitate comprehension. This instruction will be designed to help students understand that there is a relationship between letters and sounds, that written words are composed of letter patterns that in turn represent sounds, and that the ability to recognize words quickly and effortlessly improves the way readers comprehend the meaning of the text.

The professional development modules and resource documents related to phonics instruction were designed to assist teachers with developing an awareness of the various types of phonic instructional approaches. However, as professional development designers, the MDE understands that teachers cannot teach the relationships between speech and print systematically, explicitly, and skillfully unless they themselves understand how spelling represents sounds, syllables, and meaningful parts of words. With this information in mind, the professional development modules of *Reading First* will acknowledge that this phonics instruction is a means to an end. Thereby, teachers will receive intensive modeling and precise directions for the teaching of this skill. General research based guidelines for phonics instruction assert that effective phonics instruction programs help teachers explicitly and systematically instruct students in how to relate letters and sounds, how to break spoken words into sounds, and how to blend sounds to form words. These programs help students understand why they are learning the relationships between letters and sounds; help students apply their knowledge of phonics as they read words, sentences, and text; help students apply what they learn about sounds and letters to their own writing; and can be adapted to the needs of individual students, based on valid and reliable screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments. Technical assistance in the use of assessment results to make critical decisions regarding classroom instruction will also be provided. Finally effective phonics instructional programs include alphabetic knowledge, phonemic awareness, vocabulary development, and the reading of text as well as systematic phonics instruction.

Vocabulary Instruction:

Vocabulary acquisition results from engaging in meaningful speaking, reading, and writing activities where word meaning is actively constructed and the printed symbol connected to an object or idea already known in a student's world. The scientific research on vocabulary instruction reveals that (1) most vocabulary is learned indirectly, and (2) some vocabulary must be taught directly (*Putting Reading First,* 2001). The research base of *Reading First* emphasizes that systematic vocabulary instruction can result in an increase in word knowledge and reading comprehension, specifically for students from language and literacy poor backgrounds.

Professional development modules and Mississippi Reading Academies will provide teachers with the knowledge base for implementing vocabulary programs that are research based. Guidance in the selection and administration of valid and reliable screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments will be provided including information regarding the use of data to make critical instructional decisions regarding vocabulary instruction. Vocabulary instruction in ***Reading First*** classrooms will provide students with the most effective instructional methods, which include:

- Information about word meanings,
- Presenting vocabulary in a variety of contexts sensitive to the cultural background of students,
- Multiple exposures to new words,
- Explicit instruction on the strategic use of context for understanding word meanings,
- Explicit instruction in the effective utilization of reference materials and the provision of adequate classroom reference materials,
- Adult-student shared book readings that includes extension of the text through questioning, and
- Repeated readings of familiar books and passages (i.e., fairy tales, songs, poetry) and the provision of adequate classroom reading materials.

Fluency Instruction:

Fluency is an important component of reading instruction because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension (*Putting Reading First*, 2001). Though this essential element of reading instruction has been defined as being critical to

comprehension, for many years it has been the most neglected instructional focus. When Mississippi teachers in REA schools were recently surveyed concerning their self-perceptions of instructional needs, fluency instruction was rated as the component of reading instruction that needed the most professional development attention. This instructional deficit is the direct result of teachers perceiving fluency as being a natural outcome of word recognition instruction. As a result, the MDE has developed an entire professional development module on fluency in the **Essential Components of Reading Instruction** training series.

Fluency instruction in *Reading First* classrooms will be based on the Guided Repeated/ Shared Reading instructional approach. This approach was found by the National Reading Panel to have the greatest impact on word recognition, fluency, and comprehension when conducted by teachers, peers, and/or parents. In a presentation to the Reading Leadership Teams through the Secretary's Reading Leadership Academies, Sharon Vaughan of the University of Texas echoed the importance of repeated readings in the development of fluency for young readers stating that children should read all materials three to five times. The *Reading First Program* will emphasize that fluency develops when a child has numerous opportunities to practice reading with a high degree of success. Technical assistance in the selection and administration of valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments for fluency will be provided. Technical assistance will also detail how to use assessment information in the critical decision-making process.

Comprehension Instruction:

The goal of comprehension in *Reading First* classrooms will be to provide students with the skills necessary to construct meaning from text. This action requires that students make connections between the text and their background knowledge. Struggling readers are often unaware that they should be thinking while they are reading and many lack the basic background knowledge to understand the books and instructional materials they are expected to decode. A lack of background knowledge, including topically-related vocabulary, is one of the major obstacles of the reading comprehension process. Of the

203 studies meeting the National Reading Panel criteria for inclusion as scientific studies on comprehension only 14 addressed the importance of prior knowledge. These studies presented evidence that readers may not have relevant knowledge during reading but that direct instructional strategies could improve memory and comprehension of text. Scientific research has suggested that text comprehension can be improved by instruction that helps readers use specific comprehension strategies. Specifically six strategies have been identified as helpful in teaching students to become purposeful, active readers. These strategies include comprehension monitoring, using graphic and semantic organizers, answering questions, generating questions, recognizing story structures and summarizing. Comprehension strategies will be explicitly taught using direct explanation, modeling, guided practice, and application.

Comprehension instruction in **Reading First** classrooms will be sensitive to the impoverished backgrounds of many of our students that have resulted in limited world experience. This will be achieved by equipping classrooms with an array of engaging, leveled texts and providing comprehension strategies, that are explicitly taught and modeled, as a part of the total school curriculum (in the reading and content area classes). In addition, the **Reading First** classrooms will adopt the practices of reading _to students_, _reading with students, and reading by students_ combined with modeling "thinking aloud" and discussion of materials read in order to help struggling readers monitor their comprehension and assist in remedying assessed comprehension problems.

Comprehension instruction will be based on the following principles:

- Instructing students in the process of self-monitoring during the reading of text,
- Making valid predictions based on the student's prior knowledge,
- Assessing the story elements of a text in order to better summarize text,
- Visualizing the events of the text in order to understand and recall a sequence of events.
- Utilizing valid and reliable screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring comprehension assessments to make critical instructional decisions regarding instructional interventions and classroom instruction.

The resources and professional development opportunities described in the following charts will be required elements of implementation for all *Reading First Schools*. As the schools progress through the *Reading First* program, the instructional leaders and teachers will increase their capacity to define the school's needs and begin to develop a sustained focus of evaluating and refining instruction based on students' assessed needs.

Figure 4

Action – Resource Publications – Direct Reading Instruction

Publication	Audience	Purpose	Development Collaborations
Reading Instructional Intervention Process Guide	Kindergarten – third grade teachers, assistant teachers, administrators, and tutors *Provided to all K-3 regular and special education teachers	This document provides the intervention process for classroom instruction and assists students in meeting the Read and Respond competency of the MLAF. The process guide's components are: • Benchmarks of what children must know and do according to research • Informal and observational assessment to assist in classroom decision-making correlated to the benchmarks • Instructional intervention strategies designed to assist students in meeting benchmarks	Reid Lyon (NICHD) MS Dept. of Ed. (MDE) National Reading Summit (National Research Council - NRC) Southeast Comprehensive Assistance Center – SECAC (Reading Success Network) MS Public & Private School Teachers & Administrators Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Educational Television (ETV) John Manning (Univ. of MN) America Reads MS (AmeriCorp) MS Library Commission
Writing Instructional Intervention Process Guide	Kindergarten – third grade teachers, assistant teachers, administrators, and tutors *Provided to all K-3 regular and special education teachers	This document provides the intervention process for classroom instruction and assists students in meeting the Written communication competency of the MLAF. The process guide's components are: • Benchmarks of what children must know and do according to research • Informal and observational assessment to assist in classroom decision-making correlated to the benchmarks • Instructional intervention strategies designed to assist students in meeting benchmarks	MDE MS teachers and Administrators

Student Expectation Booklets	K-12 Regular and Special Education teachers & Parents	This document provides a snapshot of the curriculum in each content area for grades K-12.	MDE
ELL Instructional Intervention Process Guide	Teachers & administrators of English Language Learner Students	This guide is to be utilized in providing guidance for classroom decision-making for students in the pre-production, beginning, and intermediate stages of language development. The component include: • Benchmarks of what children must know and do according to research • Informal and observational assessment to assist in classroom decision-making correlated to the benchmarks • Instructional intervention strategies designed to assist students in meeting benchmarks	MDE MS teachers of ESL SECAC (Reading Success Network) National Reading Summit (NRC)
Every Child A Reader: Getting Ready for Kindergarten (Booklet, video, and audio tapes)	Every parent registering a 4 year-old in public, private, and Head Start programs statewide	Provide parents with age appropriate activities for their children – before they start school in the areas of: • How Children Learn • What You Should know About 4-year olds (Getting Along,. Good Health and Physical Well Being, Math, Talking and Listening)	Reid Lyon (NICHD) MS Dept. of Ed. (MDE) SERVE SECA MS Early Childhood Ass. MS Public School Teachers & Administrators (MPS) Private School Teachers Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) Educational Television (ETV) Hinds Community College Head Start Private Care
Parent/Family Center Guide (Booklets, Resource Manuals, and video tape)	Administrators and parent coordinators or parent liaisons in all MS public school districts	Provide local school districts with the tools to establish effective family literacy centers – the components are: • Why a Parent/Family Center? • What is a Parent/Family Center? • What is Parent Involvement? • What is Parent Education? • Seven Steps to Developing a Parent/Family Center • Barriers and Strategies • Community Needs Assessment • Parent Information Request • Community Resources	Phi Hardin Foundation Public Education Forum Dr. Craig Ramey (Civitan International Research) MDE IHL MPS Even Start Head Start MS Forum on Children and Families MS Early Childhood Ass.

Figure 5
Action – Professional Development – Direct Reading Instruction

Session	Audience	Purpose	Development Collaboration
Improving Mississippi Schools Conference ****Hosted annually and attended by over 3,500 educators***	K-12th grade teachers, administrators, parents, careproviders, preservice teacher, university staff, Head Start and community-based organizations	The purpose of this annual three-day conference is to connect research, practice, technology, and performance for the future. The strands for FY 2003 are: • Reading (K-12) • Mathematics (K-12) • Student Achievement • Accountability • Special Education	MDE Regional Service Centers MS Public & Private Teachers & Administrators Private Careproviders Head Start Institutions of Higher Learning Professional Organizations for Teachers & Adm. (i.e. MASSP, MASS, MASA, MAESP, etc.)
RAISE K-3 *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	K – 3rd Grade regular and special education teachers and administrators	The development of this two-day training resulted from the efforts of the Reading Sufficiency Collaborative and incorporates the current research. The sessions will include: • Utilizing the Mississippi Language Arts Framework, Reading Instructional Intervention K – 3rd Grade benchmarks, informal assessments, and intervention strategies, (including arts integration strategies), to implement a reading prevention/ intervention process; • Using diagnostic and outcome data to make informed instructional decisions to improve student performance in reading and to maintain high standards; • Conducting on-going assessments to monitor readiness progress; • Diagnosing and prescribing reading intervention; and • Utilizing peer coaching study teams for strategy implementation and professional development follow-up.	MDE NICHD National Reading Summit (NRC) Regional Service Centers MS Public Schools GALEF Institute SECAC (Reading Success Network)

Peer Coaching & Data Analysis *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	Regular and special education teachers and administrators	This one-day training is designed to provide effective planning for designing peer coaching study teams and finding the time for them to collaborate. This module will also demonstrate how to use Outcome, Demographic and Process Data to impact instruction. The participants will receive research supporting Peer Coaching and on how Data Analysis provides the foundation for Intervention.	MDE MS Public Schools SECAC (Reading Success Network)
Mississippi Reading Academies-Kindergarten-Third *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	K-3 teachers, special education teachers, and elementary administrators	This four-day training is designed to provide participants with a thorough knowledge base of the five essential components of reading and their importance in the reading acquisition process. Participants will become familiar with the conclusions derived from current research that support the essential components and will be provided with a resource of teaching strategies and their correlation to the benchmarks. Teachers will receive training in the implementation of valid and reliable SBRR assessments for phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.	University of Texas MDE
Mississippi Reading Leadership Institute	K-3 elementary administrators	This two-day training is designed to provide participants with a thorough knowledge base of the five essential components of reading and their importance in the reading acquisition process. In addition, the Institute will focus on the importance of Assessment and Accountability and how it relates to reading instruction.	MDE
Integrating Learning Centers *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	Kindergarten teachers	This two-day training is designed for use with and kindergarten teachers with the goal being that early childhood teachers would implement learning centers in the classroom as a means to actively involve children in thinking and learning through relevant encounters with the environment.	MDE

Essential Components of Reading Instruction *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	K-3 regular and special education teachers and administrators	This five-day training is designed to provide participants with a thorough knowledge base of the five essential components of reading and their importance in the reading acquisition process. Participants will become familiar with the conclusions derived from current research that supports the essential components and will be provided with a resource of teaching strategies and their correlation to the benchmarks, assessment, and intervention strategies.	MDE
Identifying Research-Based Instructional Programs and Assessments *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	K-3 regular and special education teachers and administrators	This one-day training provides educators with recommendations and procedures for analyzing instructional programs and assessments. Administrators and teachers will learn to utilize the MDE's publication "Evaluation of Instructional Materials" and the IDEA's A Consumer's Guide to Selecting a Core Program: Critical Analysis as a means of assessing the degree in which critical skills and strategies for reading identified by scientific evidence are included in a reading program. Participants will also learn to utilize the guidelines established by the *Reading First* Reading Assessment Committee in selecting and implementing SBRR assessments.	MDE
U*tilizing the Mississippi Language Arts Framework (K-3)* *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	K-3 regular and special education teachers and administrators	This training provides a description of what students should know and be able to do in English, language arts, and reading classrooms, kindergarten through third grade. The training addresses the interrelatedness of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.	MDE

Scientifically-Based Reading Research Conclusion #3: *Extend instructional intervention opportunities for students in need of intervention.*

Goal 3 of the Mississippi Reading First Program: All students in need of extensive instructional interventions will be offered those interventions through in-school interventions, extended year programs, and transitional services.

ACTION STEPS for GOAL THREE
- Establish procedures for providing interventions for children not making sufficient progress toward reading benchmarks during the school day.

- Provide resources for developing effective in-school intervention and extended instructional programming.
- Provide in-school intervention and extended school day/year services for students reading below grade level utilizing appropriate individualized intervention strategies.
- Provide the Intervention/Extended Instructional Opportunities training and additional professional development needed for implementation.
- Implement SBRR supplemental and/or intervention programs of reading instruction in in-school intervention and extended instructional programming.
- Establish reading tutorial partnerships with community/business volunteers.
- Establish Peer Coaching Study Teams to communicate students' instructional needs to the extended day/year staff.
- Implement appropriate progress monitoring assessments to determine the intensity and duration of services.

Research continues to reveal that an essential component of successful reading programs is extended time in reading-related activities or instruction. The data garnered from the *MRRM* has provided evidence that this supplementary instruction must be time-limited, focused, and connected to the child's daily reading instruction. The objective of the intervention component of the ***Reading First Program*** will be to incorporate research-based best practices into a comprehensive and balanced reading program with quality instruction. Research has revealed that American children have far less instruction in core academic subjects than their counterparts in other industrialized countries such as Japan, France, and Germany. The National Education Commission on Time and Learning (1994) called for extending the school day in most American schools while also recommending that at least one school in each district operate an extended year program. In a review of successful extended learning time programs, including extended-year programs, the USDE (1995) recommended several key features, including:

- Careful planning and design,
- Links between the extended time and regular academic program,
- A clear focus on using extended time efficiently,
- A strong professional community,
- A continuous search for creative funding, and
- Parental and community involvement.

A review of literature emphasizes that scheduling and proper organization are critical influences on student outcomes (Clark & Associates, 1999). Research supports programmatic decisions in areas of impoverishment should include tutorial assistance,

learning and play activities that support classroom learning, parent/family support, development of instructional intervention plans with school personnel, and incentives.

Research has also noted positive impacts on student achievement for extended-year academic programs, although the tracking of these gains has not been well-documented (Bradford, 1990; Gandara and Fish, 1994; Walker and Villela-Vilex, 1992). These advantages may be at least partially explained by the decrease in learning losses over the summer; also, economically disadvantaged students may benefit more than their non-disadvantaged peers. Although the quality of instruction should continue to improve, greater volume should also lead to better results.

The following resource publications and companion professional development modules were developed to assist in the establishment of effective intervention programs.

Figure 6
Action – Resource Publications and Professional Development Module
Extended Instructional Intervention

Publication	Audience	Purpose	Development Collaboration
Extended School Day/Year: A Reading Planning Guide	Regular and special education teachers and administrators	To effectively plan and implement additional instructional time for students with an identified need; provide intervention before school, during school, after school, and during summer. The plan incorporates the diagnostic prescriptive instructional intervention process of the Mississippi Language Arts Framework (2000).	MDE U. S. Department of America Reads Challenge National Reading Summit (NRC) SECAC (Reading Success Network) MS Volunteer Services America Reads MS (AmeriCorp) IHL - Campus Link IHL – Mentor Institute Bell South Pioneers
Reading Tutorial Partnerships	Volunteer tutors (parents, business persons, older/college students, grandparents, assistant teachers, AmeriCorp)	Provides tutorial strategies that: • Promote oral and written communication • Provide opportunities for reading various texts (Genres) • Model fluent reading • Assist in word recognition • Guided questions and responses to text	MDE MS Library Commission U. S. Department of America Reads Challenge National Reading Summit (NRC) SECAC (Reading Success Network) MS Volunteer Services America Reads MS

			(AmeriCorp) IHL - Campus Link IHL – Mentor Institute Bell South Pioneers
Extended Instructional Opportunities	Regular and special education teachers, administrators and volunteer staff	This training is designed to provide effective planning for extended instructional time. This module guides participants in the establishment of effective community based partnerships and incorporate the Reading Prevention/Intervention Process. The emphasis is on reading fluency strategies that volunteer tutors can incorporate into the tutorial process. Emphasis is also placed on effective tutorial strategies and the communication of students' needs from the school day instructional staff to the extended instructional staff.	MDE MS Pubic Schools MS Reads Community-based Organizations U.S. Dept. of Ed. America Reads Project External Service Providers

Scientifically-Based Reading Research Conclusion #4: Professional Development is critical (as a means, but not as an end).

Goal 4 of the Mississippi Reading First Program: Teachers and staff will increase their instructional capacities to provide direct instruction in the reading process.

ACTION STEPS for GOAL 4

- Provide on-site and regional professional development in valid and reliable SBRR screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome instructional assessments for teachers, administrators, and local board members.
- Provide on-site and regional professional development in the selection and implementation of valid and reliable SBRR comprehensive, supplementary, and remedial programs of reading instruction.
- Review and revise university teacher preparation program's reading related courses and practicums.
- Provide *Reading First Schools* with intensive support in their reading program through the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts Regional Reading Coordinators.
- Train all *Reading First Literacy Coaches* in SBRR professional development and provide them with the resources to provide intensive on-site technical assistance and program monitoring.
- Include Special Education instructors and curriculum designers in all professional development opportunities offered in order to increase their capacity in planning and adapting instruction.
- Develop and provide resources and professional development based on the instructional needs of English Language Learner students.

- Establish Peer Coaching Study Teams as the vehicle of implementation for **Reading First** in all schools.

A study commissioned by the Council of Chief State School Officers focusing on economically disadvantaged students in exemplary schools found that a key element in successful approaches was the establishment of an ongoing in-service training program. The highest achieving schools showed particularly significant commitments to this training. Similarly, research and data from the schools that have implemented the MRRM indicate that schools that successfully increase the performance of economically disadvantaged students incorporated extensive in-service training in scientifically-based reading research theory and instructional practices.

A review of the research literature indicates the following recommendations will be critical to the **Mississippi Reading First Program** (Woods and Thompson, 1993):

- *The principal is the key in any professional development program.* Principals are the gatekeepers of school improvement, and their leadership is necessary for change to be possible. The best principals collaborate with faculty in setting professional development goals.
- *Effective professional development requires investment of time and fiscal resources.* Substantive changes typically require detailed planning and monitoring, as well as the commitment of time and dollars and take 4-5 years.
- *Professional development should be closely linked to instructional supervision, teacher evaluation, curriculum implementation, and student outcomes.* Evaluation of professional development must be linked to the accomplishment of training objectives.
- *Effective professional development requires long term support to implement and sustain changes.* Classroom demonstration and coaching, long-term monitoring, and frequent follow-up with feedback are essential to ensure successful changes.

According to Joyce and Showers (1996), Peer Coaching Study Teams enhance professional development efforts and offer support and sustainability for teachers implementing new strategies. The utilization of Peer Coaching Study Teams provides a mechanism for professional development follow-up and sustained classroom implementation. Scheduling time for teachers and administrators to work collaboratively has been identified as a primary barrier by Mississippi teachers as they work to incorporate new instructional practices and to reinforce new principles. *Reading First* LEAs must assure the MDE that two hours will be scheduled weekly for the purpose of

conducting Peer Coaching Study Teams which will be dedicated to diagnosis and designing of instructional interventions for students exhibiting reading deficits.

According to research and surveys conducted in MS-REA schools, teachers incorporate new practices in classrooms only after multiple exposures to the new strategies. Therefore, teachers will work in weekly Peer Coaching Study Teams as follow-up to on-site and regional professional development sessions and as a focused setting for planning and adapting the instructional intervention process. Effective professional development may be viewed as the vehicle for implementation for all other action steps in the ***Reading First Program.*** Due to the focus on statewide student outcomes, the professional development opportunities of this state provide highly focused, consistent training in the best practices according to the most current research. The Mississippi Department of Education, in a collaborative effort with other established and effective professional development providers will fund, design, and implement training for every K-3 regular and special education teacher, administrator, tutor, and care provider (as applicable) in statewide forums featuring:

- Diagnostic, prescriptive teaching to implement the process of reading intervention,
- Identification of valid and reliable scientifically-based reading programs and valid and reliable grade appropriate SBRR screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcome assessments,
- Family literacy efforts,
- In-school interventions and extended school instructional programming, and
- Peer coaching study teams for professional development follow-up and implementation of new strategies.

Scientifically-Based Reading Research Conclusion #5: Successful schools set goals that emphasize high expectations for students, with accountability supported by regular assessment.

Goal 5 of the Mississippi Reading First Program: Instructional leaders will increase their capacities to direct the focus of their school's reading program.

ACTION STEPS for GOAL 5
- Implement student assessment model that supports teaching and learning through both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessments.

- Require schools to conduct continuous screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcome assessments of students' reading ability to determine the need for instructional intervention.
- Implement professional development designed specifically for administrators that focuses on supporting the components of effective reading instruction.

Research in the area of school leadership suggests that "the goals set by successful schools *always* emphasize high yet attainable standards for academic achievement" (Reisner and Haslam, 1992). These high standards are specific statements of the levels of mastery expected from students.

Effective goals must be clear and integrated with ongoing assessment (see Figure 8). "Establishing clear goals and building consensus around them… and assessing student performance in light of these (high) standards can form a framework for measuring schoolwide effectiveness… Student assessment should be clearly linked to instructional goals" (Reisner and Haslam, 1992). Curriculum-based assessment can make teaching much more effective (Fuchs, Deno and Mirkin, 1985; Shinn and Hubbard, 1992; White, 1986). Clear goals may enhance teacher autonomy since lack of clarity can leave teachers less confident of their decisions.

The Mississippi Legislature through Senate Bill 2156 charged the State Board of Education to propose a school by school accountability and accreditation system based on criterion- referenced assessments. The new system requires the state to identify the low performing schools within high performing districts. The new system adopted by the State Board of Education focuses on accountability for overall student achievement, with a specific school improvement process and high stakes consequences. Mississippi will continue to utilize norm-referenced assessments for national comparisons.

The presence of high expectations for student performance by teachers and principals at the **Reading First Schools** combined with the intense focus of *Reading First* on the connectivity of research based instruction and assessment will ensure student success. Evidence of a clear school mission focused on academics and frequent monitoring and assessment of student progress will also be nurtured in these schools. Clear goals

emphasizing high standards will generate an attitude about what can be accomplished, both in the ability of teachers to teach and students to learn.

Figure 7
Mississippi Assessment System

Grade Level	Assessment	Developer
K-3	Developmentally-appropriate screening, diagnostic, progress-monitoring and outcome assessments	Reading First Reading Assessment Committee's List of Assessments
2-8	Criterion-referenced tests in reading, mathematics, and language arts	CTB/McGraw-Hill
4 and 7	Writing assessments	CTB/McGraw-Hill
6	Norm-referenced survey batteries in reading, language arts, and mathematics	CTB/McGraw-Hill Terra Nova
Subject Area Testing Program (SATP)	English II, Algebra I, U.S. History, and Biology	Harcourt Educational Measurement

C. Mississippi Definition of Subgrant Eligibility

The Mississippi Department of Education has reviewed current Office of Management and Budget poverty line data and the most current (2002) statewide criterion-referenced (MS-CRT) reading test results in grades 2-4 to compile a listing of *Reading First* eligible LEAs. (See Appendix B for a complete listing.) LEAs were identified as being eligible based on the following criteria:

- *Highest percentage of students not reading at grade-level*

  All eligible LEAs listed have 20% or more of grades 2-4 students scoring in the minimal (lowest) category of the MCT for Reading. MCT is administered in the spring of each school year and results are received in mid-summer. Fourth grade results were included to give a comprehensive analysis of K-3 reading instruction.

- *The LEA has jurisdiction over at least one of the following:*

  i. A geographic area that includes an area designated as an empowerment zone or an enterprise community under part I of subchapter U of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

ii. A significant number or percentage of schools that are identified for school improvement under section 116(b); or

iii. The highest numbers of percentages of children who are counted under section 1125(c), in comparison to other local educational agencies in Mississippi.

Mississippi has 152 school districts. Three of these districts are agricultural high schools and serve students in grades 9-12 only. This brings the number of Mississippi school districts serving children in grades K-3 to 149. Thirty-four (34) districts or 22.8% of the LEAs in Mississippi are eligible to apply for *Reading First* funding. Nine (9) LEAs are identified as empowerment zones.

D. Selection Criteria for Awarding Subgrants

LEA's *Reading First* proposals will be evaluated by a Grant Award Committee authorized by the MDE and the Reading Leadership Team. Each proposal will be evaluated using the selection criteria as described in this section. The Grant Award Committee will recommend the proposals to be funded to the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Reading, Early Childhood and Language Arts, the State Superintendent of Education, the State Board of Education, and the Reading Leadership Team. Representatives of the Reading Leadership Team will nominate members to serve on the Grant Award Committee. LEAs must include, in their proposals, a description of the proposed procedures in order to ensure the successful implementation of high quality programs required by the *Reading First Program.*

The grants will be negotiated with the LEAs that have the highest points and are comprehensive and responsive as determined by the Grant Award Committee. Results of the evaluation and the recommendation of the evaluation team will be forwarded to the Reading Leadership Team and the State Board of Education for approval.

MDE reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to negotiate with the best offeror to address issues other than those described in the proposal, or not to make any award if the evaluation committee determines that this is in the best interest of MDE and the *Reading First Program*.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate LEAs' proposals. The maximum possible score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses for the criterion. (*A draft Request for Proposals is included in Appendix C.*)

Significance (10 points)

The MDE considers the significance of the proposed project. LEAs must indicate how they have or will develop the capacity to serve *Reading First* schools. Proposals will include the following information:

- Providing necessary leadership at the district and school levels;
- Establishing high expectations for student achievement;
- Providing a local infrastructure to support *Reading First* schools;
- Providing adequate resources to support planning, professional development, and implementation of SBRR programs, assessments and instructional practices;
- Modifying existing policies and procedures to be supportive of *Reading First* activities;
- Providing structures for administration of valid and reliable SBRR screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments, and
- Providing structures for collection, aggregation, disaggregation and reporting of SBRR data.

Quality of project design (35 points)

The MDE considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. LEA proposals must meet the following criteria:

- The proposed project design reflects up-to-date knowledge of scientifically-based reading research instructional practices, programs, and assessments.

- All staff members, including all K-3 teachers and all K-12 special education teachers, will participate in on-going professional development and follow-up based on the scientifically based reading research.

- The proposed project outlines an effective plan to change classroom instructional practices based on scientifically-based reading research.

- The proposed project is based upon a specific research design and the quality and appropriateness of that design, including the collection and use of quantitative and qualitative data from appropriate assessments designed for progress monitoring and for classroom instructional decision-making.

- The proposed project will implement classroom-monitoring, screening, outcome, and diagnostic assessments to measure the progress of students and the instructional effectiveness of K-3 regular and special education teachers.

- The proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and supports rigorous reading standards for students through the implementation of the *Reading First Program*.

- The proposed project provides supplementary intervention and extended remediation for students not reading at grade level.

- School and district level leadership of the proposed project exemplify a commitment to fully implementing the *Reading First Program*.

- The proposed project will implement scientifically-research based comprehensive, supplemental, and extensive remediation programs and discontinue the use of non-researched based programs.

Quality of project service (35 points)

The MDE considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. All proposals must demonstrate sufficient strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for all eligible project participants. In addition, LEA proposals must address the following criteria:

- Training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project, are based on scientific research, are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to

lead to improvements in instructional practices among the recipients of those services according to the *Reading First Program*;

- The LEA presents an initial plan and process for delivering the fundamental professional development modules based on scientifically based reading research to every K-3 teacher and K-12 special education teacher;

- The LEA commits to allocating time to effectively incorporate Peer Coaching Study Teams which research indicates increases the instructional staff's skill of using data to refine instruction. In order to be considered for funding, LEAs must obligate at least two hours per week to this method of professional development follow-up and support;

- The LEA commits to the selection and retention of a full-time Literacy Coach; and

- Services, to be provided by the proposed project, are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services.

MDE will also consider whether or not the following criteria are present:

- Technical assistance services to be provided by the proposed project involve the use of technology, as appropriate, and the leveraging of non-project resources;

Adequacy of resources (10 points)

The MDE considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the MDE considers the extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. As required by federal statute, the minimum funding allocation will be at least the same percentage of the State's total *Reading First* subgrant funds as the LEA received of the total Title I, Part A funds received by all LEAs in the State for the preceding fiscal year. The subgrants amount will also be of sufficient size and scope to enable the eligible LEA to fully implement programs to improve reading instruction.

Quality of the management plan (10 points)

The MDE considers the quality of the management plan personnel who will carry out the proposed LEA project. In determining the quality of the management plan, the MDE considers how the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as deemed appropriate. In addition, the MDE considers the commitment level of the school and district level leadership and the commitment of the district to hire and retain a qualified Literacy Coach.

Quality of project evaluation (10 points)

The MDE considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. At a minimum, the LEAs *__initial__* evaluation plan must discuss the connection between instructional decision making and evaluation outcomes. In addition, LEAs must address how the district will intervene with schools not making appropriate progress.

i.   Methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data for classroom instructional decision-making;

ii.   Methods of evaluation will provide on-going performance feedback through formal and observational periodic assessments of progress toward achieving intended outcomes, and

iii.   The LEA provides a plan to evaluate the five essential elements reading instruction as defined by *Reading First* and commit the resources of the district level office to the school's evaluative process. At a minimum, the LEA must commit to the selection and administration of valid and reliable screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring data for each of the five critical elements at each grade level. The LEA must provide a schedule for administration of assessments and a clear description of how assessment results will be linked to instructional interventions.

The MDE is committed to preparing LEAs to constructively analyze data based on the four types of assessments identified in the research base of *Reading First* (i.e., screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcome). Through state-wide *Reading First* professional development modules the MDE will instruct LEAs in the process of

identifying research-based assessments that are reliable and valid, selecting and utilizing appropriate assessments, and analyzing data to make instructional decisions. **This professional development will be a requirement for *Reading First* LEAs and will be conducted regionally throughout the school year and summer months for non-*Reading First* LEAs**. MDE will work to ensure that teachers effectively use data to make appropriate instructional decisions for all students.

i.   Schools to be Served

Each LEA will complete a Request for Proposals (see Appendix C) to be considered for funding under the ***Reading First Grant***. This RFP requires that LEAs provide documentation supporting the rank and selection of applying schools and evidence of the LEA's capacity to guide and support the school in implementing the ***Reading First Program***.

Strategies to Identify Schools to Be Served

Eligible LEAs must indicate how the following eligibility criteria were used in the selection of schools to participate in the ***Reading First*** program:

- Percentage of 2nd grade students performing at the minimal level on the most current administration of the MCT in reading

- Percentage of 3rd grade students performing at the minimal level on the most current administration of the MCT in reading

- Percentage of 4th grade students performing at the minimal level on the most current administration of the MCT in reading (As the MCT is administered in the spring, this data will most accurately reflect previous 3rd grade student's gains/deficits.)

- Percentage of students (K-3) on free/reduced lunch

- Percentage of students' families (K-3) that are considered economically disadvantaged (Census 2000 data)

- Percentage of students' families (K-3) that are considered below the poverty line (In accordance with Section 9101(33) of ESEA, the poverty line refers to the official Office of Management and Budget definition, which is revised annually.)

- Percentage of students (K-3) from families in which one or more parent is unemployed

LEA's Capacity to Serve Proposed Reading First Schools

LEAs must indicate how they have or will develop the capacity to serve **Reading First** schools. Proposals will include the following information:

- Providing necessary leadership at the district and school levels;

- Establishing high expectations for student achievement;

- Providing a local infrastructure to support **Reading First** schools;

- Providing adequate resources to support planning, professional development, and implementation of SBRR programs, assessments and instructional practices;

- Modifying existing policies and procedures to be supportive of **Reading First** activities;

- Providing structures for administration of valid and reliable SBRR screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments, and

- Providing structures for collection, aggregation, disaggregation and reporting of SBRR data.

ii.   *Instructional Assessments*

Selection and Administration of Valid and Reliable Assessments

Reading First legislation clearly indicates the importance of utilizing four types of assessments: screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome. In order to receive funding through *Reading First,* LEAs must select valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments. These assessments must be aligned with the goals of *Reading First*. Selected assessments must measure student progress in each of the five critical components of reading instruction. Assessments must also provide for the early identification of students who are at-risk of achieving grade level benchmarks so that appropriate interventions may begin as soon as possible.

The MDE will offer technical assistance to LEAs in the selection and administration of valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments by providing the following technical assistance:

- LEAs will be provided professional development in selecting and administering screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments. A key component of this training will be linking assessments to critical decision-making in the classroom.

- LEAs will be provided a list of assessment instruments that meet state and federal standards for validity and reliability. This list will include suggestions for interpreting assessment data, suggestions for implementation for each grade level, and a suggested timeline for administration of assessments. This list will be based upon the *Reading First* Reading Assessments Committee's List of SBRR assessments. Any assessments selected for use not on the suggested list must meet the validity and reliability criteria outlined below.

- MDE reading specialists will be available to answer questions regarding scientifically-based reading assessments. Upon request, MDE will provide assistance in the assisting LEAs in the selection and implementation of scientifically-based reading assessments.

- MDE's external evaluation of *Reading First* will provide LEAs feedback regarding the effectiveness of instructional assessments. Suggestions for improving assessment plans will be made based upon this feedback.

LEAs making application for the *Reading First* grant must assure MDE of *the following:*

- ❑ All staff members, including all K-3 teachers and all K-12 special education teachers, will participate in the following professional development modules directly related to assessment, including at a minimum:
  - ▪ *Peer Coaching & Data Analysis*
  - ▪ *Identifying Scientifically-Based Reading Programs and Assessments*
  - ▪ *Essential Components of Reading Instruction (Each module contains a section dedicated to instructional assessments.)*
- ❑ The LEA will develop a clear schedule for administering screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments.

❑ The LEA will utilize the data collected to make instructional decisions for all K-3 students and to inform decisions about appropriate interventions and program continuation.

MDE will monitor the implementation of all LEA assessment plans.

Validity and Reliability of Assessment Criteria

LEAs must develop assessment plans demonstrating the selection of screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments that are aligned with selected SBRR instructional programs. LEAs must provide evidence that selected assessments are valid and reliable and that selected assessments are appropriate for the skills and goals of particular grades. LEAs must also provide information regarding how information obtained from these assessments will be used to make critical instructional decisions for K-3 students.

The Reading First Reading Assessment Committee reviewed and analyzed the technical information and materials for 29 reading assessment instruments designed for use in kindergarten through grade three. Twenty-four of the twenty-nine assessments were found to have sufficient evidence for use as screening, diagnosis, progress monitoring, and/or outcome instruments to assess one or more essential reading components at one or more grade levels K – 3. This list will be provided to Mississippi LEAs for use. Assessments selected for use in Mississippi *Reading First* classrooms must have reliabiltiy coefficients at least as high as the threshold set by the *Reading First* Reading Assessment Committee in their analysis of assessments. In addition, LEAs must demonstrate validity and reliability for each type of assessment:

• Screening assessments: Identifying children that may need additional instructional support in order to achieve benchmark goals at each grade level is of crucial importance. Therefore, LEAs must provide evidence that selected assessment instruments meet state standards for validity and reliability at each grade level. MDE will provide school districts with the *Reading First* Reading Assessment Committee's list of approved assessments. MDE will provide technical assistance in

the development of an action plan for implementing scientifically-based reading assessments for appropriate core content areas across grade levels.

- Diagnostic assessments: In-depth analysis of student's strengths and weaknesses is often needed in guiding instruction and instructional interventions. LEAs must demonstrate that selected assessments provide valid and reliable data in each of the core areas of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension and that data obtained from diagnostic assessments can be easily interpreted by teachers in order to plan specific instructional strategies to help students develop proficiency as readers.

- Progress-monitoring assessments: These assessments will be used to estimate the rates of reading improvement, identify children who are not demonstrating adequate progress and require additional or different forms of instruction, and to compare the efficacy of differing forms of instruction for struggling readers in order to design more effective instructional programs for at-risk students. LEAs must demonstrate that selected assessments provide valid and reliable data for each core component of reading instruction at each grade level. Assessments must provide at least three alternate forms for classroom use. LEAs must provide a schedule for administration of these assessments and demonstrate how data will be used in making instructional decisions for children.

Using Assessment Information to Make Critical Instructional Decisions

LEA *Reading First* proposals must detail how assessment results from screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments will be utilized in informing critical instructional decisions. *Reading First* applications should fully address the following:

- Screening assessments: Data will be utilized in making initial instructional plans for individual students, whole classes, and small groups.

- Diagnostic assessments: Data will be utilized in determining the specific strengths and weaknesses of children not making adequate progress. Data will help teachers make appropriate adjustments in instruction.

- Progress monitoring assessments: Data will be used to estimate the rates of reading improvement, identify children who are not demonstrating adequate progress and require additional or different forms of instruction, and to compare the efficacy of

differing forms of instruction for struggling readers in order to design more effective instructional programs for at-risk students.

<u>Timeline for Utilizing Appropriate Grade Level Assessments</u>

LEAs must outline a schedule for administration of screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments. At a minimum , LEAs must meet the following criteria:

- <u>Screening assessments</u>: At the beginning of the school year or upon admittance to the school.

- <u>Diagnostic assessments</u>: As necessary, once students have been identified as having special difficulties in learning to read.

- <u>Progress monitoring assessments</u>: These assessments are on-going but must be administered at least three times annually.

It is probable that LEAs will need to use a variety of assessments in order to fully meet *Reading First* requirements. LEAs must list the assessments that will be used for each of the five critical components of reading instruction, indicate the validity and reliability of each assessment, and provide a schedule for test administration. LEAs should provide explanation and justification for assessment schedules.

Instructional Strategies and Programs

LEAs making application for the *Reading First* grant must assure MDE of the following:

- ❑ All staff members, including all K-3 teachers and all K-12 special education teachers, will participate in on-going professional development including but not limited to:
  - ▪ *Essential Components of Reading Instruction*
  - ▪ *Peer Coaching & Data Analysis*
  - ▪ *Utilizing the Mississippi Language Arts Framework (K-3)*
  - ▪ *Identifying Research-Based Programs and Assessments*

This process will assure MDE that LEAs awarded a *Reading First* grant will begin within the first six months to build a knowledge base of scientifically-based reading research that is directly related to instruction in the five components of reading which teachers can begin implementing immediately in their classrooms. This research will be the foundation of instructional strategies and inform teachers' knowledge base for

program review, selection, implementation, and alignment to state standards. In addition, teachers and administrators will have the knowledge base to continually assess the program/strategies for effectiveness and continued use.

- ❑ LEAs must commit to the selection and retention of a full-time Literacy Coach. This person will work directly with the MDE Regional Reading Coordinators to conduct the aforementioned professional development. The Literacy Coach will facilitate Peer Coaching Study Teams, model effective research-based strategies, monitor implementation of instructional strategies, and provide in-class support.

- ❑ *Reading First LEAs* will assure the MDE of the selection of programs from an approved list and implement the most appropriate for their schools based on their school's needs assessment and the **Evaluation of Instructional Materials** (Appendix A). The MDE will convene a Reading Practitioner's Committee (RPC), comprised of educators who are highly knowledgeable of scientifically based reading instruction, in September of 2002, with the intent of issuing an endorsed list of comprehensive, supplemental, and extensive intervention programs. The criterion for the selection of programs will be based upon **A Consumer's Guide to Selecting a Core Program: Critical Analysis** (Appendix F). This ensures that programs selected for implementation have been thoroughly screened for a scientific research base and are appropriate for the school's individual needs.

- ❑ LEAs must assure the MDE that all professional development and follow-up for programs selected will be fully implemented.

- ❑ *LEAs must commit to discontinue the use of non-research based programs based on the results of quantitative and qualitative LEA student level data.*

iii.   Instructional Materials

During the process of selecting a scientifically-based comprehensive reading program LEAs must identify complementary supplemental and extensive remediation programs from the state's endorsed list and based on the school's **Evaluation of Instructional**

Materials. LEAs must assure the MDE that these programs will be implemented as intended and integrated and coordinated with the comprehensive reading program.

❑ The instructional materials selected must meet the following criteria:

1. Support the teaching of the five components of reading instruction

2. Include effective program elements (i.e., explicit instructional strategies, coordinated instructional sequence, and ample practice opportunities)

3. Align with the comprehensive reading programs

4. Align with the state's standards as outlined in the **Mississippi Language Arts Framework**

❑ LEAs must assure the MDE that all professional development and follow-up for programs selected will be fully implemented.

iv.   Instructional Leadership

The primary role of a school principal is to be the instructional leader of the school; therefore, *Reading First* principals will be interviewed during the final phase of the LEA grant application process. Interviews will be structured to ascertain the commitment level of principals and district administrators in providing continuity of the grant and will also inform them, before the grants are awarded, of the time commitment in professional development that is expected of them. This commitment is listed as a grant assurance in the RFP section of this proposal.

The *Reading First* grant will support the retainer of a full-time Literacy Coach for the awarded school. Literacy Coaches are currently employed in Mississippi Reading Excellence Schools and preliminary evaluations have indicated that this component brings not only continuity to the grant process but also on-site expertise in the reading instructional process. This component will be replicated in *Mississippi Reading First Programs*. The state level office and LEA will collaborate on the application and interview process for the positions and will provide adequate compensation to attract individuals with expertise in the following areas:

- Scientifically-Based Reading Research
- Reading Instructional Intervention Process
- Selection of Research-Based Programs and Assessments

- Utilization and Reporting of Evaluative Measures
- Focused and Sustain Professional Development (Trainer)
- Effective Facilitation of Peer Coaching Study Teams/Professional Development Follow-Up
- Classroom Monitoring and Modeling Support

The MDE is committed to providing high quality professional development for the instructional leadership of each school that is awarded a ***Reading First*** grant. As with the implementation of the Mississippi Reading Sufficiency Program and the Mississippi Reading Excellence Program all trainings for principals, Literacy Coaches, and LEA level administrators will be mandatory. Administrators for applying schools must assure MDE in the application process that they will participate in the following ***MRRM*** training modules:

- ***Reading Leadership Institute***

- ***Essential Components of Reading Instruction***

- ***Identifying Research-Based Instructional Programs and Assessments***

- ***Utilizing the Mississippi Language Arts Framework (K-3)***
  This training will specifically assist principals in aligning their school's reading curriculum with the state's mandated reading standards. It should be noted that LEAs will be required to assure the state-level office of the principal/literacy coaches flexibility to modify school's reading curriculum based on the evaluations of on-going progress monitoring.

- ***Mississippi Reading Academies (K-3)***

- ***Peer Coaching & Data Analysis***

- ***Administrator's Guide to RAISE***
  This training was written specifically for principals and LEA administrators that need intensive support in understanding scientifically based reading research. It details the National Reading Panel's conclusions and recommendations of the research that confirms the need for instructional intervention, a thorough presentation on the five essential elements of reading instruction, and the research confirming the need for data analysis and research based instruction.

The success of the **Reading First Program** relies heavily on the administrative support that the grant receives during the implementation process. The Mississippi Department of Education is committed to providing purposeful training to **Reading First** school's administrators. The state-level office will continually seek feedback and suggestions from the principals, Literacy Coaches, and LEA administrators in the form of Regional Forums, which will be conducted quarterly for the express purpose of reforming reading instruction in *Reading First* schools.

v. *District and School Based Professional Development*

The integrity of the **Mississippi Reading First Program** will be maintained in the implementation of the following required activities that must be addressed in the LEA's application to the MDE in order to be considered for funding:

- LEAs must present an initial plan and process for delivering professional development modules based on SBRR to every K-3 teacher and K-12 special education teacher. These training modules will be based on the essential elements of reading instruction, implementing and effectively utilizing scientifically-based reading programs and materials, identifying and effectively utilizing valid and reliable SBRR outcome, screening, diagnostic, and progress-monitoring assessments.

- LEAs and schools must present an initial plan and process for delivering professional development modules that extend from those of **Reading First**. This commitment should be evident in the plan's focus and sustainability. This plan to conduct training will be based upon the results of a professional development needs assessment and such assessment results shall be included in the LEAs application for funding. *In addition, the grant process will include a stipulation that 75% or more of the school's staff sign a letter of support in the school's application process which will ensure that they are knowledgeable of the process for which the school is making application and the professional development requirements that will result if a grant is awarded.*

- LEAs must commit to allocating time to effectively incorporate Peer Coaching Study Teams which research indicates increase the instructional staff's skill of using data to refine instruction. In order to be considered for funding, LEAs must obligate at least two hours per week to this method of professional development follow-up and support.

- LEAs must commit to the selection and retention of a full-time Literacy Coach. This position will be responsible for collaborating with the school's principal and LEA administrators to contract with professional development trainers, who are knowledgeable of scientifically based reading instruction and implementation. In addition, the Literacy Coach will be directly responsible for working one-on-one with teachers in need of intensive assistance in the form of modeling effective strategies, providing in-class support, and securing additional professional development.

vi.   *District Based Technical Assistance*

LEAs must commit to the implementation of **Reading First's** programmatic goals. This assurance will be in the form of a collaborative effort between MDE and the LEAs to provide intensive on-site technical assistance to schools awarded a grant in the following areas:

- LEAs will receive high quality technical assistance provided by the state-level Regional Reading Coordinators assigned to each **Reading First** school, school-based Literacy Coaches, and principals who commit to be extensively trained in scientifically-based reading research, assessing and meeting the professional development needs of the staff, and other contracted professional development providers knowledgeable of scientifically-based reading research and the selected school's instructional needs.

- LEAs will receive assistance with the budgetary process provided by the state-level office. Each LEA applying for grant funding must assure MDE that it will be fiscally responsible with **Reading First** funds. LEAs must provide quarterly budgetary expenditure reports and full disclosure of fiscal records

for auditing purposes, and send LEA business managers and grant administrators to MDE Fiscal Management Workshops.

- LEAs must provide a plan to evaluate the most essential elements of *Reading First* at the school level and must commit the resources of the district level office to the school's evaluative process.

vii.   *Evaluation Strategies*

A strong evaluation design must be included in the LEAs project narrative to the MDE. All grant recipients will be required to measure:

(a)   The extent to which K-3 students have improved their reading skills. Data should be reported for the district as a whole and for individual *Reading First* schools. This data must be disaggregated by low-income, major racial/ethnic groups, English Language Learner populations, and special education populations. Student performance data should include the Mississippi Curriculum Test (MCT). This assessment is used statewide to assess the achievement of all students relative to the benchmarks of the Mississippi Language Arts Framework 2000. In addition, LEAs will use other assessments of student performance as long as those assessments meet the requirements for validity, reliability and appropriateness as outlined by the *Reading First* Reading Assessment Committee's Report. LEA's must submit evaluation plans that clearly detail which assessments will be used to evaluate student performance including validity and reliability information, assessment schedules, and plans for how data will be used to make instructional decisions for children.

(b)   The effectiveness of professional development activities.

(c)   The effectiveness of the programs implemented through the *Reading First* grant.

Disaggregating Evaluation Data

Each LEA must submit a plan for evaluation including how data will be disaggregated by low-income, major racial/ethnic groups, English Language Learner populations, and special education populations.

Making Changes Based Upon Evaluation Outcomes

In addition, the MDE has included the following Continuum of Evidence of Effectiveness in the RFP:

All activities funded through the *Mississippi Reading First Program* must be limited to those designed to meet the overall goals of *Reading First*. Moreover, continued funding will be based on continual, satisfactory progress toward the established objectives and activities and timely submission of all required reporting and documentation. MDE will intervene with LEAs not making significant progress to review evaluative data and make decisions regarding plans for improvement and/or continuation of funding. Specifically, LEAs must be willing to make changes in curriculum, program materials, instructional assessments, and/or professional development in order to improve program implementation. In addition, all applicants must submit and sustain the requested assurances that accompany this RFP. Failure to comply with any assurances will remove any LEA from consideration for a continued funding.

viii. *Access to Print Materials*

Schools making application for the *Reading First* grant must assure MDE of the following:

❑ LEAs will participate in the Mississippi Department of Education's Reading Is Fundamental Program (RIF) and other statewide motivational reading activities (i.e., Mississippi Reading Fair, Read Across America Day).

❑ LEAs will formalize a plan to provide all K-3 regular and special education classrooms with access to a wide array of engaging reading materials including both expository and narrative texts.

ix.   *Competitive Priorities*

Due to the overwhelming need in this state for additional funds to implement schoolwide reading reform, the MDE will issue the following competitive priorities:

- ❑ Schools that do not currently receive funding to implement research based reading reform efforts (5 additional points)
- ❑ LEAs in which at least 15 percent or at least 6,500 students served are from families with incomes below the poverty line (5 additional points)
- ❑ Proposals that exemplify exceptional coordination of existing resources with *Reading First* funds to maximize overall effects (5 additional points)
- ❑ LEAs that have successfully secured an Early *Reading First* Grant (5 additional points)

E. Process for Awarding Subgrants

Overview

The estimated **Reading First** funding allocation for fiscal year 2002 is $11,105,435. Mississippi will retain twenty percent ($2,221,087) of this amount for statewide technical assistance, professional development and administration of the **Reading First** program. The remaining amount ($8,884,348) will be delivered in the form of subgrants to eligible LEAs. In issuing subgrants to eligible LEAs, MDE will ensure that each LEA receives, at a minimum, an amount that bears the same relation to the funds made available under subsection (b)(4) of **Reading First** as the amount that the eligible LEA received under Title I, Part A for the preceding fiscal year bears to the amount all the local educational agencies in the state received under part A for the preceding fiscal year. Specifically, if an eligible LEA received 5% of all Title I, Part A money during the previous fiscal year, the eligible LEAs **Reading First** subgrant will be, at a minimum, 5% of the available **Reading First** statewide allocation. In addition, funding for extended year activities will be limited to 15% of the LEAs' yearly allocation.

MDE will fund successful applications during the first three years of **Reading First**. It is anticipated that 25 LEAs will receive funding in the first three years of **Reading First**. Forty (40) schools within these eligible districts will receive an average of $200,000 in **Reading First** Funds for each of the first two years with a decrease in funding for year 3

of $125,000 resulting in subgrant awards of $75,000 for year 3. Additional funding for years four, five, and six will depend upon whether or not schools have met adequate yearly progress goals and upon whether or not a need for additional capacity building and program maintenance exists. LEAs will be required to complete the reapplication process during year three for funding during year four.

Twenty (20) new schools will be added as additional funding becomes available to the state through the decrease in funding to first round **Reading First** schools during year three. Approximately ten (10) more schools will be added in Year five and will follow the same funding pattern. For funding rounds two and three, all eligible LEAs will complete the application process as outlined for initial subgrantees. ***Reading First funds are available to eligible LEAs only. Discussion of funding by schools has been done in order to calculate estimated expenditures only.*** In all cases, the minimum subgrant requirement will be met.

Funding Levels	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
$200,000	40	40	20	20	10	10
$75,000			40	±40	±60	±60

Notification of Eligible LEAs

The Mississippi Department of Education will mail RFPs to the district superintendents of all eligible LEAs in the state. (Appendix A) The RFP and a listing of eligible LEAs will be posted on the MDE website under Requests for Proposals. MDE anticipates funding 25 eligible LEAs representative of both urban and rural areas, as well as those located in Enterprise Zones and Empowerment Communities. A two-day pre-application workshop will be held in Jackson for all eligible LEAs. The workshop will focus on SBRR, the essential components of reading instruction, identifying SBRR comprehensive, supplemental and remediation programs, utilizing valid and reliable SBRR screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments, making interventions, and characteristics of SBRR reading classrooms. Regional workshops

will provide technical assistance in describing ***Reading First*** application requirements. Technical experience with the grant writing process will also be provided upon request by eligible LEAs.

Figure 8

TIMELINE FOR SUBGRANT PROCESS

Key activity	Timeline	Staff
Mail Request for Proposal (RFP) to eligible LEAs	January 3, 2003 Contingent on federal award to MDE	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Pre-Application Workshops	January 6 and 7, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Regional Technical Assistance Workshops	January 13-24, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Proposals Due	March 7, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Training for Proposal Reviewers	March 12, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Proposals Reviewed	March 13-20, 2003	Proposal Review Committees Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Principal/District Administrator Interviews of finalists (to assess school leadership/district level commitment)	March 27-28, 2003	Reading Leadership Team Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Reading Leadership Team recommends final set of grant applicants to Mississippi State Board of Education for approval.	April 4, 2003	Reading Leadership Team Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Notification of Award (Contingent on availability of federal funds and State Board of Education Approval)	April 11, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Grant Recipient's Regional Meetings/Negotiations	April 17-18, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Disbursement of Funds(For those who have met special conditions of grant)	May 9, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts

Qualifications of Grant Reviewers

Grant reviewers will be selected from an established pool of grant reviewers with instructional and research backgrounds in scientifically-based reading research. Reviewers will consist of members of the institution of higher education community, practicing and recently retired administrators, teachers and noted theorists in effective reading instruction and assessment. Selected reviewers will participate in an intensive two-day training session on the established selection criteria and materials disseminated through the *Secretary's Reading Leadership Academies* on the content and features of effective SBRR reading instruction (5 elements of reading), valid and reliable SBRR assessments, making appropriate interventions for students reading below expected levels of achievement, and characteristics of SBRR classrooms. Groups of five reviewers will review each proposal for responsiveness utilizing the RFP's scoring rubric (see Appendix C).

F. State Professional Development Plan

Based on the results of a recent statewide professional development needs assessment conducted by MDE, the following professional development modules were deemed to be needed and will be scheduled statewide throughout the year. These trainings will be primarily funded through *Reading First* state-level funding and presented by a cadre of highly knowledgeable and experienced professional development providers that have been trained in each specific module by the Office of Reading, Early Childhood and Language Arts to ensure training integrity, coherence, and quality.

All professional development modules initiated through the *Reading First* Program will be made available to *every K-3 regular* and *every K-12 special education* teacher in the state. These modules will be offered in regional settings, repeatedly throughout the school year and during the summer months in order to increase accessibility. Special attention will be given in every training module to the scientific research base of *Reading First* and the implementation of the research in classroom based assessments and instruction. In addition, training on the effective use of outcome, screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments will be made available to *all K-3 regular* and

special education teachers. Figure 9 details information on current trainings, conferences, and institutes that support the implementation of research-based reading instruction. Future professional development modules will be designed through the *Reading First* Program and will be offered to **all K-3 regular** and **special education teachers.**

Figure 9
State Professional Development Plan

Session	Audience	Purpose	Development Collaboration
Improving MS Schools Conference	K-12 teachers and administrators	Connect research, practice, technology and performance for the future	MDE MS Public Schools

Peer Coaching & Data Analysis
*Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months
	Regular education and special education teachers and administrators	This one-day training is designed to provide effective planning for designing peer coaching study teams and finding the time for them to collaborate. This module will also demonstrate how to use Outcome, Demographic and Process Data to impact instruction. The participants will receive research supporting Peer Coaching and on how Data Analysis provides the foundation for Intervention.	MDE
			MS Public Schools
			SECAC
			   (Reading Success
			   Network)

Mississippi Reading Academies-K-3 ****To promote the dissemination of SBRR, members of teacher preparation programs will be invited to attend and participate as trainers in future academies***	K-3 regular and special education teachers, elementary administrators, institutions of higher learning professors and students	This four-day training is designed to provide participants with a thorough knowledge base of the five essential components of reading and their importance in the reading acquisition process. Participants will become familiar with the conclusions derived from current research that support the essential components and will be provided with a resource of teaching strategies and their correlation to the benchmarks. Teachers will receive training in the implementation of valid and reliable SBRR assessments for phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.	University of Texas MDE
Integrating Learning Centers *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	Kindergarten regular and special education teachers	This two-day training is designed for use with and kindergarten teachers with the goal being that early childhood teachers would implement learning centers in the classroom as a means to actively involve children in thinking and learning through relevant encounters with the environment.	MDE

Essential Components of Reading Instruction *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	K-3 regular and special education teachers and administrators	This five-day training is designed to provide participants with a thorough knowledge base of the five essential components of reading and their importance in the reading acquisition process. Participants will become familiar with the conclusions derived from current research that supports the essential components and will be provided with a resource of teaching strategies and their correlation to the benchmarks, assessment, and intervention strategies.	MDE
Identifying Research-Based Instructional Programs and Assessments *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	K-3 regular and special education teachers and administrators	This one-day training provides educators with recommendations and procedures for analyzing instructional programs and assessments. Administrators and teachers will learn to utilize the MDE's publication "Evaluation of Instructional Materials" and the IDEA's A Consumer's Guide to Selecting a Core Program: Critical Analysis as a means of assessing the degree in which critical skills and strategies for reading identified by scientific evidence are included in a reading program. Participants will also learn to utilize the guidelines established by the *Reading First* Reading Assessment Committee in selecting and implementing SBRR assessments.	MDE
Utilizing the Mississippi Language Arts Framework (K-3) *Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months	K-3 regular and special education teachers and administrators	This training provides a description of what students should know and be able to do in English, language arts, and reading classrooms, kindergarten through third grade. The training addresses the interrelatedness of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.	MDE

RAISE K-3	K – 3rd Grade regular and special education teachers and administrators	The development of this two-day training resulted from the efforts of the Reading Sufficiency Collaborative and incorporates the current research. The sessions will include:	MDE
*Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months			NICHD
			National Reading
			Summit (NRC)
			Regional Service
			Centers
			MS Public Schools
			GALEF Institute
			SECAC
			(Reading Success
			Network)

RAISE K-3

*Provided in regional settings & repeated throughout the school year and summer months

K – 3rd Grade regular and special education teachers and administrators

The development of this two-day training resulted from the efforts of the Reading Sufficiency Collaborative and incorporates the current research. The sessions will include:

- Utilizing the Mississippi Language Arts Framework, Reading Instructional Intervention K – 3rd Grade benchmarks, informal assessments, and intervention strategies, (including arts integration strategies), to implement a reading prevention/ intervention process;
- Using diagnostic and outcome data to make informed instructional decisions to improve student performance in reading and to maintain high standards;
- Conducting on-going assessments to monitor readiness progress;
- Diagnosing and prescribing reading intervention; and
- Utilizing peer coaching study teams for strategy implementation and professional development follow-up.

MDE
NICHD
National Reading Summit (NRC)
Regional Service Centers
MS Public Schools
GALEF Institute
SECAC (Reading Success Network)

The state currently collaborates with the Barksdale Reading Institute's college-level staff to strengthen existing teacher preparation programs specific to reading instruction. To further enhance teacher preparation at the existing public and private institutions of higher learning, the MDE will survey each institution's current reading related course offerings and utilize the Higher Education Reading Council to strategically review, address programmatic content, and report out to the state's Reading Leadership Team. The Council will have several goals including:

- Identify scientifically-based reading research related to teacher preparation
- Assess current reading teacher educational practices and outcomes
- Provide support and guidance for program design and redesign
- Conduct research and provide findings on effective practices based on scientifically-based reading research
- Promote research endeavors
- Promote and generate findings regarding excellence in reading teacher preparation that will guide and inform program improvement efforts in institutions of higher education in the state

G. Integration of Proposed *Reading First* Activities with Reading Excellence Activities

The Mississippi Reading Excellence Program began in 2000 with the replication of the *MRRM* in 53 K-3 schools. Every school established Peer Coaching Study Teams, participated in all MRRM professional development modules, selected reading programs and assessments, established Parent/Family Centers, selected full-time school based Literacy Coaches and offered Extended Day/Year and transitional programming services. As the first full year of implementation for the MS-REA grant concludes, evaluators have compiled the following baseline grant implementation and student performance data to assess the grant's effectiveness. Examination of this data will contribute the determination of continued funding for Reading Excellence schools. Information will also be useful in guiding the implementation of *Reading First*.

Administrative Support and Teacher Knowledge of Scientifically-Based Reading Research

Principals' Perceptions of Teachers' Level of Use of Scientifically-Based Reading Research (Based on Level of Implementation with little effort)	
Grade Level	**Percentage**
Kindergarten	5%
First grade	3%
Second grade	3%
Third grade	8%

This data reflects administrative perceptions of instructional implementation of scientifically based reading research with little effort given to support that implementation. Clearly administrators in REA schools see the great need for intensive professional development and technical assistance in the effective implementation of research based instructional programs. Administrators' perceptions of teachers' knowledge of research based reading instruction indicates the need for the direct correlation between research and practice as provided by *Reading First*.

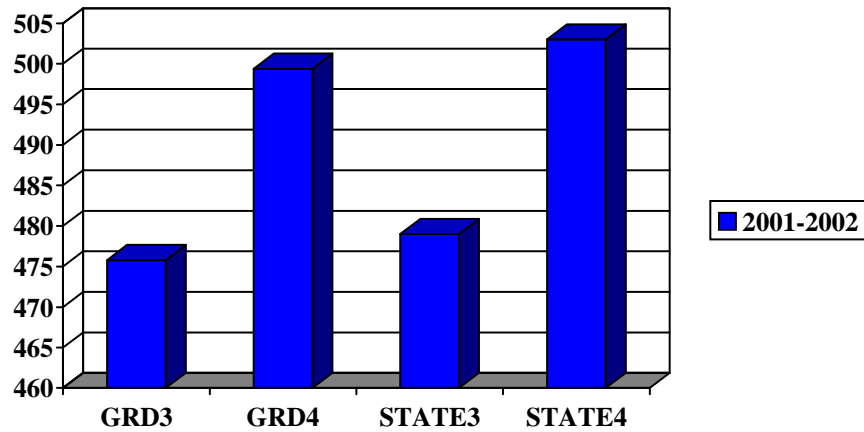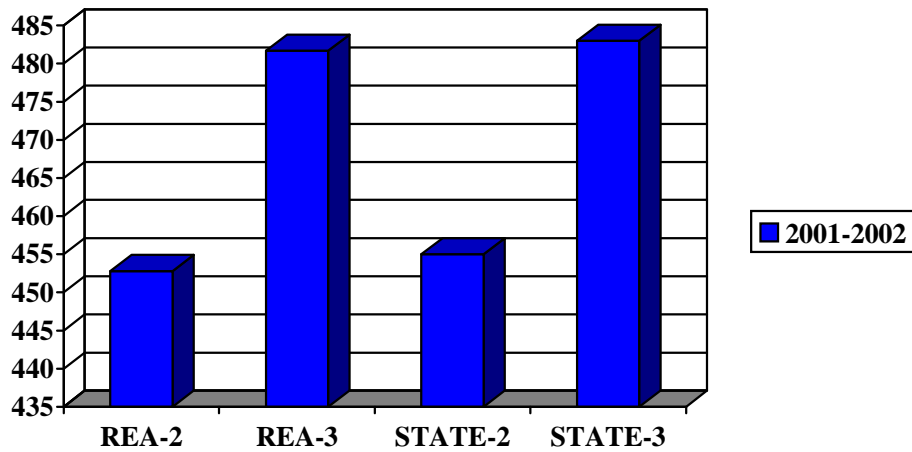| Teachers' Perceptions of Principal's Leadership/Support	
Little or no leadership/support	**5%**
Adequate leadership/support	31%
Great deal of leadership/support	60%

Data collected from Reading Excellence has indicated the importance of administrative support to the reading instructional process. The tenets of *Reading First* emphasize the importance of instructional leadership in the implementation of reading reform. Based on the experiences with Reading Excellence schools, the MDE has added district level/principal interviews as a part of the LEA application process. In addition principals will be required to participate in the statewide Reading Leadership Institutes and other mandated professional development modules. These measures are being taken to ensure

that the LEAs instructional infrastructure is built upon scientific research and data driven decision making.

Principals' Perceptions of Reading Excellence Components Contributions to School's Overall Reading Progress			
Reading Excellence Grant Component	**Major**	**Minor**	**None**
Professional Development	**80%**	**17%**	**02%**
Extended Day/Year Activities	52%	35%	13%
Family Literacy Centers	20%	40%	40%
Peer Coaching Team Collaboration	38%	40%	22%
Application of Scientifically Based Reading Research	**27%**	**63%**	**10%**
Use of Reading Assessment Results	**55%**	**40%**	**05%**
K-1 Transition Programs	20%	38%	42%
Tutorial Programs	35%	38%	27%
Collaboration w/Head Start and other Early Childhood Care Providers	30%	53%	17%

Additional data collected from administrators illustrates the need for research that is presented in connection with effective instructional practice. Reading Excellence administrators perceived professional development as a major contributor to reading success. These same administrators did not see the importance of applying scientifically based reading research or the use of reading assessment results to instructional planning. The connection between professional development offered and instructional practices based on reading research and assessment has not been fully realized in Reading Excellence Schools. *Reading First* will scaffold the instructional planning design on research and will provide the intensity and duration needed to make this connection between research and practice.

The following compilation of data represents student performance levels for current Reading Excellence schools as measured by the Mississippi Curriculum Test.
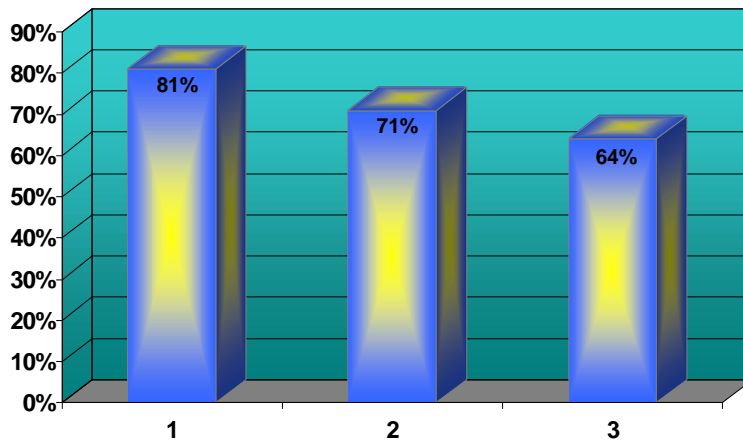
Schools selected to receive Reading Excellence funds were among the lowest performing schools in the state. Data indicates that Reading Excellence schools demonstrated growth equivalent to students in non-Reading Excellence schools. Clearly, the instructional practices implemented by Reading Excellence were effective in improving student performance. Reading Excellence measured success in reading as students achieved "basic" levels of performance in reading. **Reading First** will raise the bar for students and teachers as it shifts the level of success from "basic" to "proficient."

Reading Excellence programs lack the intense focus on research-based reading programs and the close correlation between reading assessment and reading instruction. In order for eligible Reading Excellence schools to receive funding through *Reading First*, these

schools must commit to adopting the intense focus of *Reading First*. This will include the implementation of research-based programs and assessments, participation in *Reading First* professional development and continued monitoring of grant implementation.

An analysis of Reading Excellence and statewide MCT data raises a pertinent question for Mississippi educators. Student performance in reading begins to decline after first grade. Data is not yet available to indicate if this drop in performance is directly related to the differences in performance between grade levels of children, or if this drop is related to some other factor. The MDE will continue to examine student data as it becomes available in order to determine factors that are presently contributing to this decrease in student achievement as children progress through elementary school. *Reading First's* intense focus on student achievement in combination with the funding over a sustained period of time will enable the state to conduct such analysis of student performance. *Reading First* will provide the impetus for in-depth analysis of student performance as it requires an analysis of subgroup data in addition to traditional analysis of mean performance.

Reading Comprehension -% On or Above Grade Level

An evaluation of Reading Excellence schools is being conducted by the University of Alabama and entails the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. This baseline data will be disaggregated and used as the determining factor in modifying the school's instructional plans for the final year (2002-2003) of MS-REA grant implementation. Final evaluation results of each participating school in the MS-REA

program will determine whether eligible schools will receive *Reading First* funding to continue their efforts. Additional analysis will be conducted in schools exhibiting high levels of effectiveness to ascertain which components of the MRRM resulted in increased instructional capacities and high levels of student achievement. Schools that are identified as failing to make adequate progress will not receive continued funding under the *Reading First* grant.

(ii)   State Leadership and Management

A. State Technical Assistance Plan

The administration of the *Mississippi Reading First Program* will be integrated within the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Reading, Early Childhood and Language Arts. The placement of the project within this bureau will assure the integration of *Reading First's* efforts with other literacy efforts throughout the MDE to provide a consistent effort in ensuring that *No Child Is Left Behind*. In addition, the Reading Leadership Team will also facilitate the coordination and management of grant activities to further the statewide emphasis of the grant. This shared focus will benefit the state's *Reading First Program* by receiving the administrative expertise of MDE in ensuring fiscal accountability and the systemic program monitoring by various entities. These comprehensive evaluative procedures of all federal programs operating within the state ensures that implementation of planned grant activities are fulfilled in accordance with the federal requirements and statewide efforts.

The MDE will convene a *Reading Practitioner's Committee (RPC),* comprised of educators who are highly knowledgeable of scientifically based reading instruction, in September of 2002 with the intent of issuing an endorsed list of comprehensive, supplemental, and extensive intervention programs. The criterion for the selection of programs will be based upon **A Consumer's Guide to Selecting a Core Program: Critical Analysis** (Appendix E). Utilizing valid and reliable SBRR screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcome assessments is key to the implementation of *Reading First*. LEAs will receive training in the selection of valid, reliable, grade-level appropriate SBRR assessments and will make selections from the *Reading First* Reading Assessment Committee's list of

twenty-four (24) assessments. In order for *Reading First Schools* to select programs and assessments from the approved lists and to implement the most appropriate for their schools; schools will be required to wait six months upon grant approval to fully assess the instructional needs of both staff and students. In addition, during this six-month grace period the MDE Regional Reading Coordinators and the school's Literacy Coaches will be required to conduct the following professional development modules in preparation of selecting programs and assessments:

- **Essential Components of Reading Instruction**
- **Identifying Research-Based Instructional Programs and Assessments**
- **Peer Coaching & Data Analysis**
- **Utilizing the Mississippi Language Arts Framework (K-3)**

In order to maintain training continuity, all *Reading First* training modules will be delivered by the school's Literacy Coach and the designated Regional Reading Coordinator.   In addition, the MDE has developed a pool of professional development providers who have been trained in each of the modules of the MRRM. The pools ensure that the all trainings are delivered consistently and utilize methods that are sensitive to adult learners. The pool of service providers are updated on a quarterly and as-need basis. However, trainers must provide evidence of training delivery effectiveness and must participate in the MDE's Training of Trainers sessions.

To assure a timely dissemination of grant funding and effective monitoring of the *Reading First Program*, the MDE submits the following tentative timeline for technical assistance:

Figure 10

State Technical Assistance Plan Timeline

Key activity	Timeline	Staff
Publish list of SBRR comprehensive, supplemental and extensive remediation programs	December 15, 2002	Reading Practitioner's Committee Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Mail Request for Proposal (RFP) to eligible LEAs	January 3, 2003 Contingent on federal award to MDE	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts

Pre-Application Workshops	January 6 and 7, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Regional Technical Assistance Workshops	January 13-24, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Proposals Due	March 7, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Training for Proposal Reviewers	March 12, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Proposals Reviewed	March 13-20, 2003	Proposal Review Committees Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Principal/District Administrator Interviews of finalists (to assess school leadership/district level commitment)	March 27-28, 2003	Reading Leadership Team Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Reading Leadership Team recommends final set of grant applicants to Mississippi State Board of Education for approval.	April 4, 2003	Reading Leadership Team Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Notification of Award (Contingent on availability of federal funds and State Board of Education Approval)	April 11, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Grant Recipient's Regional Meetings/Negotiations	April 17-18, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Disbursement of Funds(For those who have met special conditions of grant)	May 9, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts

Grant Monitoring and Technical Assistance

The MDE Regional Reading Coordinators will conduct weekly site visits to *Reading First* schools.   Site visits will focus on implementation of Peer Coaching Study Teams and the classroom observation of effective research-based strategy implementation.   *Reading First* Literacy Coaches will monitor classroom instruction on a daily basis and administrators will be required to make weekly observations.   LEA central office administration will provide support in relieving administrators of duties which preclude these weekly observations. In order to sustain and support the established goals of the *Reading First Program* the focus of

technical assistance will be based on evolving needs of individual schools as programs and assessments are selected, implemented and evaluated for effectiveness.

B. Building Statewide Infrastructure

Reading First will enhance the offering of consistent, statewide technical assistance and professional development; thereby, increasing the connection between research, professional development, and instructional practice. Mississippi expects for *Reading First* to provide a blueprint for all stakeholders with an interest in ensuring that every child is taught by highly qualified teachers utilizing scientifically-based assessments and programs of instruction. The *Mississippi Reading Academies*, funded through *Reading First* will strengthen the connection between research and practice by providing training to EVERY regular K-3 teacher and every K-12 special education teacher. *This training is the MDE's statewide effort to equip all regular and special education teachers with a comprehensive research-based framework of knowledge to teach reading.*

The state-level office of the *Reading First Program* will be located in MDE's Bureau of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts. This Bureau is administered by Dr. Bonita Coleman-Potter, Bureau Director, and Robin L. Miles, Division Director, who both have expertise in scientifically-based reading instruction, professional development, and the administration of state-level programs. In addition, the Reading Leadership Team will support the *Reading First* program by providing the following actions:

- Convene to review/finalize/recommend to the State Superintendent of Education the subgrant RFP and selection criteria upon notification of federal funds
- Designate members of the team to participate in designing pre-application workshops
- Designate members of the team in developing an evaluation design in collaboration with an appropriate entity to conduct evaluation procedures
- Designate members of the team to solicit nominations for the subgrant application review and forward recommendations to the Mississippi Department of Education
- Convene the team to review subgrant awards and forward recommendations to the State Superintendent of Education and the Mississippi Department of Education

- Convene the team, at least twice annually, to receive updates on progress of subgrant recipients and effectiveness of implementation of the ***Mississippi Reading First*** program; and

- Convene the team to review the final evaluation report on the program and forward the evaluation to Mississippi Department of Education and the United States Department of Education.

Due to the volume of Mississippi's school districts that will be eligible to apply under the *Reading First* grant, the Chief State School Officer will create a Division for *Reading First* within the Office of Academic Education in Bureau of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts. This division will be responsible for providing technical assistance on the LEA application process, administering, and evaluating LEA subgrants.

The *Reading First* Office will employ a Bureau Director (50%), a Division Director (100%), 5 regional reading coordinators (100%), and a Special Project Officer II (100%). The Bureau Director and Division Director will be centrally located in the state by having an office in the MDE. However, the regional reading coordinators will be required to reside within the congressional district (5) that they serve and provide comprehensive technical assistance to subgrant awardees and monitor the grant's implementation process for compliance with the tenets of the *Reading First* grant.

Bureau Director (1) Duties:
- Notify school districts of availability of subgrant funds and ensure that each district receives timely and appropriate technical assistance on the grant writing process.
- Oversee flow-through of funds.
- Collaborate with the Office of Research and Statistics to evaluate the Project.
- Provide the Reading Leadership Team, MDE, LEAs, and the U. S. Department of Education with yearly updates and final evaluative reports on the Project.
- Coordinate with all the offices of the MDE to blend services with *Reading First.*
- Communicate with the State Board of Education, MDE offices, the Legislature, and the public on reading research, content, and the *Reading First* program.
- Coordinate the efforts of the Higher Education Reading Council.
- Direct Mississippi Reading Sufficiency Program.
- Direct Mississippi Reading Excellence Program.

- Direct Mississippi Reading is Fundamental Program.
- Provide leadership for Head Start Collaboration Office.
- Collaborate with Barksdale Reading Institute in state administration of MS Reading Reform Model

Division Director (1) Duties:
- Develop and distribute final LEA Request for Proposals.
- Oversee flow-through of funds.
- Collaborate with the Office of Research and Statistics to evaluate the Project.
- Serve as the MDE liaison for the Project.
- Manage the professional and support staff**.**
- Coordinate the development of professional development opportunities made possible by the *Reading First* grant (i.e., Reading Academies)
- Manage the subgrant selection, award, and notification process.
- Provide general informational technical assistance for LEAs.
- Coordinate the efforts of the *MS Reading First* Program.
- Oversee the review process of the MS Reading Practitioner's Committee to publish a list of scientifically based programs and assessments.

Regional Reading Coordinators (5) Duties:
- Provide technical assistance to school districts applying for funds.
- Provide technical assistance to LEAs on the grant implementation and evaluation.
- Provide professional development.
- Monitor expenditure of funds.
- Monitor project.
- Assist in the collection of data for *Reading First* evaluative purposes and instructional decision-making.
- Train the Literacy Coaches in scientifically-based reading research and the implications for instruction and assessment.
- Coordinate the development of professional development opportunities made possible by the *Reading First* grant (i.e., Reading Academies)

Support Staff (1) Duties:
- Provide general office clerical assistance for oral and written communication purposes for the Project.
- Assist in the management of Contracts.
- Assist in the management of Project budgets.
- Order supplies and printing for Project.
- Attend to telephone answering duties for Project personnel.
- Provide office with itinerary of Project personnel.

Please refer to *Appendix D* for the Governor's Letter of Commitment, state-level personnel vitas and a listing of the **Reading Leadership** Team members.

C. State Management Plan

The state-level office of the **Reading First Program** will be housed in MDE's Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Art administered by Dr. Bonita Coleman-Potter, Bureau Director.   In addition, a Division Director will be hired to provide direct administration of the *Reading First* Program.   The MDE assures the U.S. Department of Education that the candidate that is chosen will have expertise in scientifically-based reading instruction, professional development, and the administration of state-level programs. In addition, five Regional Reading Coordinators who are located geographically throughout the state will monitor the program, provide professional development and assist schools in maintaining the tenets of *Reading First*.   Presently, the MDE employs five coordinators who have the experience (former REA Regional Reading Coordinators) and knowledge base of scientifically-based reading instruction needed to effect change at the school level. The Literacy Coaches that are selected and retained at each *Reading First* school will also strengthen the support provided to selected schools during the implementation and life of the grant.

The following timeline of activities includes the benchmarks and goals necessary for successful *Reading First* Program implementation.

Figure 11

Timeline of Activities

Key activity	Timeline	Staff
Mail Request for Proposal (RFP) to eligible LEAs	January 3, 2003 Contingent on federal award to MDE	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Pre-Application Workshops	January 6 and 7, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Regional Technical Assistance Workshops	January 13-24, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Proposals Due	March 7, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Training for Proposal Reviewers	March 12, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts

Proposals Reviewed	March 13-20, 2003	Proposal Review Committees Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Principal/District Administrator Interviews of finalists (to assess school leadership/district level commitment)	March 27-28, 2003	Reading Leadership Team Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
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Grant Recipient's Regional Meetings/Negotiations	April 17-18, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Disbursement of Funds(For those who have met special conditions of grant)	May 9, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
SEA Evaluator RFP disseminated	February 1, 2003	Reading Leadership Team Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Scientifically based Reading Research Training for *Reading First* Literacy Coaches	January- March 2003	Regional Reading Coordinators -Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Begin delivery of on-site *MRRM* professional development modules	January 2003	Regional Reading Coordinators /Literacy Coaches
LEA selection of SBRR programs and assessments	March 15, 2003	Reading Practitioner's Committee
Complete implementation of all *Reading First* Grant components	August 2003	*Reading First* Schools
Mississippi Reading Academies (required participation)	June 1, 2003	All kindergarten instructors in the state

Continual monitoring of progress and implementation	Ongoing	Regional Reading Coordinators /Literacy Coaches

The Mississippi Department of Education is committed to the effective planning and use of all Federal, State and local resources. To that end, the *Mississippi Reading First Program* will ensure that funds allocated for program operation are effectively supportive of and coordinated with all funding sources associated with reading.

The Mississippi Department of Education will use funds reserved for use by SEA to support professional development and technical assistance to Reading First LEAs, as to administer the program at the state level. The following table details the projected state-level expenditures for *Mississippi Reading First*.

State-Level Reading First Expenditures

($2,221,087.00)

Activity	Purpose	Funding
Project Management ($222,108.70)	Personnel Costs:	
	• Bureau Director (50%)	$42,740.61
	• Travel	$10,000.00
	• Materials	$8,921.72
	• Telephone/Copying	$5,000.00
	• Evaluation Contract:	$127,828.65
	(Pre & posttest analysis, student performance reports, effectiveness of professional development, AYP of subgroups, and schools making the most academic progress.)	
	• Indirect Costs	$27,617.72

Professional Development ($1,443,706.55)	Regional Service Center Contract to facilitate state-wide reading professional development sessions	$555,793.60
	• Reading First Professional Development Coordinator	$54,206.40
	• Reading Academies customization and production, training of trainer sessions, trainer travel expenses, facility expenses, trainer and participant materials, and trainer team meeting expenses)	$520,484.83
	• Reading Leadership Institutes	$133,706.55
	• Indirect Cost	$179,515.17
Technical Assistance ($555,271.75)	• 5 Regional Reading Coordinators	$234,792.99
	• Regional Reading Coordinator's and Professional Development Coordinator's travel	$55,000.00
	• Special Projects Officer II	$20,000.00
	• 3 regional grant writing workshops	$10,000.00
	• Technical Assistance Workshop (2 days)	$12,000.00
	• Grant Implementation Meetings	$7,000.00
	• Reading Literacy Coach Meetings	$14,846.37
	• Consultant time and travel	$90,000.00
	• Materials	$32,588.10

	• Telephone/Copying	$10,000.00
	• Indirect Cost	$69,044.29

The *Reading First Program* will provide the vehicle that Mississippi has desperately needed to effectively implement scientifically-based research reading practices in schools. In addition, the program will offer local schools the opportunity to accelerate their efforts in ensuring reading success and preventing reading difficulties. With the resources of *Reading First*, Mississippi could financially commit to dramatically increasing its efforts, in the area of primary reading instruction, by providing increased access and funding.

In addition, the *Mississippi Reading First Program* will:

- Focus on all possible funding sources of literacy activities,
- Ensure that all Federal, State and Local funding provides for professional development activities that are complimentary of the *Reading First* priorities.
- Combine funds from the *Reading First Program* in schools operating a Title I schoolwide program with other schoolwide funds to upgrade the entire instructional programs of the school.
- Complement any local Even Start or *Early Reading First Program* with *Reading First* funds to expand family literacy services to more families of young children.

The *Mississippi Reading First Program* will serve an estimated 25 eligible LEAs during the first three years of *Reading First*. An estimated forty (40) schools within these eligible districts will receive an average of $200,000 in *Reading First* Funds for each of the first two years with a decrease in funding for year 3 of $125,000 resulting in subgrant awards of $75,000 for year 3. Additional funding for years four, five, and six will depend upon whether or not schools have met adequate yearly progress goals and upon whether or not a need for additional capacity building and program maintenance exists. Twenty (20) new schools will be added as additional funding becomes available to the state through the decrease in funding to first round *Reading First* schools during year three. Approximately ten (10) more schools will be added in Year five and will follow the same funding pattern. For funding rounds two and three, all eligible LEAs will complete the application process as outlined for initial subgrantees. ***Reading First funds are available to eligible LEAs only. Discussion of funding by schools has been done in order to***

calculate estimated expenditures only.   In all cases, the funding expectations for each LEA exceeds the minimum funding amount established by the LEAs Title I funding allotment.

III.   State Reporting and Evaluation

The MDE will contract with an entity that conducts scientifically-based reading research to evaluate the success of the project. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be utilized on a periodic and routine basis to allow evaluation of progress and impact of the initiative at the local and state levels. Evaluation results will be reported to MDE and to the USDE annually, within 60 days of the end of year three and at the conclusion of the grant period.

A. Evaluation Strategies

Student performance in *Reading First* schools will be the primary indicator of progress participating LEAs are making in improving student achievement.   Data regarding students' reading performance will be collected regarding each of the five critical elements. LEAs will be required to develop and implement a plan for assessing student performance that includes valid and reliable SBRR screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments for kindergarten through third grade.   Student data is to be submitted to the outside evaluator in October, January and March of each grant year. Data obtained from the initial local assessment in October will be used to establish a baseline of student performance and to identify trends of student performance that have implications for instruction, professional development and technical assistance needed locally. LEAs will compare spring and fall assessment results, evaluate the performance of students as indicated in spring assessments and plan for the next year regarding instruction, professional development and technical assistance needed.

In addition to this assessment data, all subgrant LEAs will administer a set of common valid and reliable SBRR outcome assessments measuring appropriate critical components of reading.   The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments will be used to measure student performance in initial sounds fluency,

phoneme segmentation fluency, letter naming fluency and nonsense word fluency for children grades K-1. Oral reading fluency will be measured with DIBELS for grades 1-3. Vocabulary and reading comprehension will be measured using the Woodcock-Johnson III Reading Vocabulary and Passage Comprehension subtests for grades one through three. DIBELS and Woodcock-Johnson have been listed as having sufficient evidence for use as SBRR screening and outcome instruments by the *Reading First* Reading Assessment Committee. These tests will be administered annually each May in order to provide consistent data for statewide examination. Data will be summarized for each school, LEA and for the state as a whole. For all analyses, data will be disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, income status, LEP status, special education status, and grade level.

In addition to these assessments, the evaluation will measure student growth in reading as indicated by the Mississippi Curriculum Test for grades 2 and 3. The MCT is a *Criterion Referenced Test* developed to measure what students know and can do on the content and concepts in the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks. There are separate tests in reading, language arts, and mathematics at each grade level 2-8. There are three forms of each of the tests. The forms have been statistically equated so that results are directly comparable across forms within any content area and grade level. Test development teams made up of Mississippi teachers guided the development of the MCT by delineating the curriculum to be assessed at each grade level in each content area. A separate committee of Mississippi educators also reviewed all test items for bias. Content validity for the MCT was established through the close alignment of curriculum objectives and test items. Backup items for the analysis of MCT's content validity are on file in the MDE Office of Research and Statistics. Results derived from the MCT include scale scores and proficiency levels. The MCT scale score is vertically equated within each content area in order to track performance of individual students from year to year within a content area. Proficiency levels were set by Mississippi educators defining four levels of performance on each test. The MDE has the capacity for combining MCT proficiency results across content areas and/or grade levels to make this data comparable. Reliability studies for the MCT were conducted by CTB/McGraw Hill. Results of these studies are listed in the following table.

Test Raw Score Descriptive Statistics – Reading

Grade Level	Test Form	Max Point	Test Statistics				
			Mean Raw Score	Raw Score SD	Mean p-value	Reliability	SEM
12	A	51	39.06	8.06	.77	.89	2.62
	B	53	40.53	8.49	.76	.90	2.71
	C	52	38.05	8.98	.73	.90	2.79
13	A	54	37.41	8.69	.69	.88	2.98
	B	53	36.07	9.25	.68	.90	2.92
	C	53	34.77	8.62	.66	.88	2.96
14	A	53	35.63	8.60	.67	.88	2.99
	B	56	38.70	9.21	.69	.89	3.06
	C	55	37.95	9.04	.69	.89	3.04
15	A	52	37.18	8.81	.71	.89	2.91
	B	53	36.24	9.83	.68	.90	3.09
	C	53	34.81	9.61	.61	.90	3.06
16	A	53	36.24	9.31	.68	.89	3.06
	B	54	36.87	10.26	.68	.90	3.17
	C	53	32.47	10.16	.61	.90	3.15
17	A	53	35.58	8.80	.67	.89	2.97
	B	54	36.13	10.14	.67	.90	3.22
	C	55	36.58	9.83	.67	.89	3.29
18	A	53	35.43	8.83	.67	.89	2.93
	B	53	37.00	9.13	.70	.89	2.97
	C	53	36.23	8.39	.68	.88	2.85

The MCT was submitted to the USDE for peer review in 2000 and received approval for use in March 2001.

During the winter of 2001-2002, *The Princeton Review* conducted its first Annual Ranking of State Accountability Systems. Data was collected on twenty-five relevant indicators from each state and the District of Columbia. Each indicator was assigned to one of four major criteria and states received a score of zero, one, or two points depending upon program performance. The criteria were:

1. *Academic Alignment*: High-stakes tests are aligned to academic content knowledge and skills as specified by the states' curriculum standards.
2. *Test Quality*: The tests are capable of determining that those curriculum standards have been met.

3. *Sunshine*: The policies and procedures surrounding the tests are open, and open to ongoing improvement.

4. *Policy*: Accountability systems affect education in a way that is consistent with the goals of the state.

These criteria were weighted at 20%, 20%, 30%, and 30% respectively, and the raw scores scaled accordingly to give each state and the District of Columbia a ranking from one to fifty-one (the highest possible scaled score was 200). Each state was also assigned letter grades on the A-F scale for each separate criterion. Mississippi's accountability system was ranked sixth in the nation with a scaled score of 154.5. Test quality and alignment were areas receiving the highest letter grade indicating that the state's testing program is closely aligned to curriculum standards and that the tests are capable of determining that content standards have been met.

Rank	State	Scaled Score	Alignment	Test Quality	Sunshine	Policy
6	MS	154.5	B+	A-	C-	B

The relative effectiveness of **Reading First** in Mississippi will be studied through a longitudinal comparison of reading achievement data from students in *Reading First* classrooms with comparable students who are not in *Reading First* classrooms. In addition to product measures, the project evaluation will include but not be limited to:

- The extent of implementation and effectiveness of comprehensive, supplemental and extensive remediation programs,
- The extent of implementation and impact on classroom instructional design of appropriate assessments,
- The extent and effectiveness of student participation in extended instruction, and
- The effectiveness and replication of professional development modules.

B. State Reporting

Each year the Reading Leadership Team will receive and review the evaluation report on the progress of the *Mississippi Reading First Program* administered through the Office of

Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts. The MDE will contract with an entity that conducts scientifically-based reading research to evaluate the success of the project. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be utilized on a periodic and routine basis to allow evaluation of progress and impact of the initiative at the local and state levels. Evaluation results will be reported to MDE and to the USDE annually, within 60 days of the end of year three and at the conclusion of the grant period. The contents of this report are outlined in the following sections.

Progress in Implementing *Reading First* Program

The contracting evaluating entity will utilize valid and reliable teacher and administrator surveys to determine the extent to which the five essential components of reading instruction are present in *Reading First* classrooms. Classroom observations, interviews, and technical assistance logs will also be used to document levels of implementation. Surveys will be administered regarding classroom applications of professional development. Satisfaction with technical assistance activities will also be included. This report will provide findings on factors influencing successful implementation and recommendations for adjusting implementation strategies at the state, district, and school levels.

Reducing the Number of Students Reading Below Grade Level, On Grade Level or Higher

Data obtained through mandated screening, progress monitoring and outcome assessments will be used in the formation of this report. The number of students reading on grade level at grades 1, 2 and 3 will be identified.   A non-equivalent comparison design will be used to compare the performance of *Reading First* and non-*Reading First* schools. Annual progress for each LEA and school in increasing the percentage of students reading at grade level or higher in grades 1, 2 and 3 will also be reported.

Schools Making the Largest Gains in Reading Achievement

Based upon data obtained through mandated outcome assessments, a rank ordering of gains in reading achievement for *Reading First* LEAs and schools will be reported annually.

Schools Failing to Make Adequate Yearly Progress

Data obtained through mandated screening, progress monitoring and outcome assessments will be used to report the number of LEAs and schools not making adequate yearly progress. Factors affecting progress will be noted and steps for improvement will be outlined. The report will specify any LEAs or schools whose funding has been discontinued and provide reasons for discontinuation.

C. Participation in National Evaluation

The Mississippi Department of Education assures the U. S. Department of Education that it will participate in any and all evaluative initiatives of the **Reading First Program**. In addition, the administering office will participate in the identification of comparison LEAs and schools for use in the national evaluation of *Reading First*.

IV. Classroom Level Impact

A. Key Reading First Classroom Characteristics

The ultimate goal of the **Reading First Program** is to create dramatic change in classroom instruction resulting in high performance for every child. Specifically, the goal of *Reading First* is for all children to be ***proficient not basic*** readers. LEAs will commit to the establishment of structures at the district level to ensure that *Reading First* classrooms are dramatically different from typical reading classrooms.

Protected, Dedicated Block of Time for Reading Instruction

Reading First schools will begin their efforts by establishing a block of time for reading instruction that is a minimum of 90 minutes in length. This daily block of time will be dedicated to reading instruction and will be protected from any and all interruptions. Although the establishment of a protected block of time for reading instruction would appear to be a matter of sound academic practice, experience in low performing Mississippi schools has shown that time is not always designated and/or protected by school districts.

Implementation of SBRR Program Based on the Five Core Components

Reading instruction within the designated reading instruction period will be based upon scientific reading research. Reading instruction will be intensive, focused, and consistent. The content of reading instruction will systematically and explicitly cover the essential components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. LEAs will commit to the selection and implementation of comprehensive research based programs of instruction in all classrooms. LEAs will further commit to the discontinuation of all programs of reading instruction (including reading instructional programs utilized by Title I and special education) that do not meet established criteria for selection as research based programs. The MDE will publish a list of approved comprehensive, supplementary or extended remediation programs from which LEAs may make such programmatic decisions. All *Reading First* schools will utilize a comprehensive reading program. This core program will provide the basis of instruction for all students. The comprehensive reading program will be aligned with student materials utilized as a part of the program and with supplementary materials as well. The comprehensive reading program will provide ample opportunities for students to practice newly learned skills and strategies.

Characteristics of SBRR Reading Instructional Design

Reading First Classrooms will be characterized by four essential characteristics: explicit instructional strategies, coordinated instructional sequences, ample practice opportunities and aligned student materials. *Reading First* classrooms will have an abundance of high quality student materials aligned to the five critical components of reading instruction. Teachers will work within a protected block of instructional time that shall be a minimum of ninety (90) minutes per day. Instruction will take place as a whole class or in small groups of children placed together based upon similarities in instructional strengths and/or weaknesses. Teachers will provide students with ample opportunities for practice of critical skills. Assessment will be an integrated part of the instructional program and instruction will be based upon assessment results. Students will be actively engaged in a variety of reading activities directly correlated to the five critical components: phonemice awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Use of SBRR Assessments to Inform Instructional Decisions

The use of outcome, screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring assessments is a key characteristic of *Reading First* classrooms. LEAs will select valid and reliable screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments for use at each grade level. Screening assessments will be utilized in determining which students will receive additional diagnostic assessment and additional instructional support. Diagnostic assessments will inform classroom instruction and remediation efforts. Progress monitoring assessments will provide information necessary to estimate the rates of reading improvement, identify children who are not demonstrating adequate progress and require additional or different forms of instruction and to compare the efficacy of differing forms of instruction for struggling readers in order to design more effective instructional programs for at-risk students. LEAs will develop a regular and adequate schedule for administering assessments in each core area at each specific grade level. The following matrix indicates suggested assessments for each critical element at each grade level.

Schedule for Implementation of SBRR Assessments

	Grade K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Screening				
PA				
Phonics	Winter/Spring		Fall Only	
Vocabulary				
Fluency				
Comprehension		Spring Only		
Progress Monitoring				
PA				
Phonics	Winter/Spring		Fall Only	
Vocabulary				
Fluency				
Comprehension				
Diagnostic				
PA			NA	NA

Phonics	Winter/Spring		Fall Only	NA
Vocabulary				
Fluency				
Comprehension		Spring Only		
Outcome—Fall/Spring (unless noted)				
PA				
Phonics	Winter/Spring		Fall Only	
Vocabulary				
Fluency				
Comprehension		Spring Only		

<u>Intervention Strategies for Students Not Making Sufficient Progress</u>

Screening assessments will be conducted early in the school year in *Reading First* schools in order to determine which children may experience difficulty in reading based upon valid and reliable instruments that have been identified as predictive of student performance on state outcome assessments. Students identified as needing additional assistance will receive appropriate classroom instructional interventions. *Reading First* teachers will utilize data obtained through the three types of assessments to diagnose reading deficiencies. Teachers will then select appropriate SBRR materials and strategies for use with these children in order to bring them to grade level . Progress monitoring assessments will ensure that students continue moving toward grade level benchmarks and that movement toward benchmarks will take place at a rate that allows students to become proficient readers by the end of third grade.

Supplementary programs will be utilized with students requiring some intervention in order to be successful in meeting state standards. These programs are carefully aligned to the comprehensive reading program. They address one or more of the essential reading components. Students are grouped in small groups of three to five for instruction. These groups focus on particular areas of reading instruction providing many opportunities for additional practice. Groups are flexible with membership changing based upon assessed student needs.

Substantial intervention programs are provided for students requiring intensive remediation in order to be successful in meeting state standards. These programs may take place during the school day, after school or during the summer break. They are based on scientific reading research and are closely aligned with the comprehensive reading program. Additional progress monitoring assessments are conducted regularly in order to determine whether or not interventions are being successful. Modifications to the instructional program are made on the basis of these assessments.

Classrooms will be language rich and students will have access to many texts, both expository and narrative, through classroom and school libraries. (The recommended size of classroom libraries is approximately 20 books per student.) Family centers will provide additional resources for students and families to take home extending educational opportunities.

<u>Faculty Expectations</u>

Faculty in *Reading First* schools will have high expectations for students' reading achievemnt. These expectations will be clearly articulated based upon principles of scientifically-based reading research and the competencies and benchmarks of the *Mississippi Language Arts Framework 2000*. *Reading First* teachers will provide instruction that addresses all appropriate critical core components of reading. Instruction will be based upon assessment data. Instruction will be highly visible and children will know exactly what is expected of them in the process of teaching and learning. Assessment will be clear in purpose, appropriately scheduled and results-driven. Instructional strategies and materials will be clearly linked to assessment results. **Reading First** teachers will have a large repertoire of SBRR instructional intervention strategies aligned with classroom instruction to use in bringing students not making sufficient progress up to speed.

<u>Student Engagement in **Reading First** Activities</u>

Instructional strategies and materials used in **Reading First** classrooms will be designed to foster student engagement. Students will be purposefully engaged in a variety of meaningful activities that encourage students to monitor their own progress when

reading, utilize specific strategies to improve their reading comprehension and work independently or cooperatively with others in large and small groups.

B. Coherence

The focus of **Reading First** classrooms is success for all children in learning to read. This intense focus is demonstrated in the careful selection of programs and assessments for teaching and learning. Intensive professional development provides the background information necessary for careful implementation of scientifically-based reading research instructional strategies focusing on phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Instructional strategies are complemented with scientifically-based assessments and programs of instruction. Assessment and instruction based upon the results of assessment are inextricably linked and occur naturally throughout the school year. Students having difficulty in learning to read are matched appropriately with scientifically-based classroom instruction, appropriate interventions and/or appropriate remediation programs. All programs fit together in an integrated, seamless fashion resulting in all students exiting third grade as proficient readers.

Specifically, **Reading First** will impact classroom reading instruction in the following ways:

1. By meeting the stated needs of targeted LEAs and schools;
2. By integrating scientifically-based reading research into all activities in a coherent and seamless fashion;
3. By having the capacity to expand to all schools thereby impacting reading instruction statewide;
4. By incorporating SBRR into Title I and other reading activities;
5. By aligning pre-school and K-3 literacy strategies.

Meeting the Needs of Targeted LEAs and Schools

Reading First LEAs and schools will be closely linked with the MDE throughout the grant period. LEAs will complete an annual needs assessment. This assessment will solicit input regarding a variety of school needs. Particular attention will be placed on the needs for professional development and technical assistance in the implementation of SBRR programs and assessments. The MDE will provide specific, on-site professional development for all selected LEAs in the implementation of SBRR. This professional

development will be enhanced through follow-up activities conducted by the regional *Reading First* coordinator, the on-site reading coach in whole faculty and peer coaching study group settings. Specific one-on-one coaching and modeling will be provided for teachers needing assistance in the implementation of SBRR practices in their classrooms by regional coordinators and on-site reading coaches. Regional coordinators and on-site coaches will maintain technical assistance logs to document ways they have worked with LEAs and schools in addressing specific needs.

Integrating SBRR into all Activities in a Coherent and Seamless Fashion

In order to assure that research based programs and assessments are implemented in a manner that is consistent with research and the goals of *Reading First*, LEAs must commit to providing intensive professional development activities throughout the three to six year grant implementation period. This professional development will be provided by the MDE through the Office of Reading, Early Childhood and Language Arts. Professional development will include, but not be limited to, the following modules:

- The Mississippi Language Arts Frameworks K-3

- Identifying Research Based Reading Programs and Assessments

- The Essential Components of Reading: Phonemic Awareness

- The Essential Components of Reading: Phonics

- The Essential Components of Reading: Vocabulary

- The Essential Components of Reading: Fluency

- The Essential Components of Reading: Comprehension

- Utilizing Data and Peer Coaching Study Groups

- *Reading First* Academies K, 1, 2, 3

- *Reading First* Leadership Institute

Implementation of new strategies will begin immediately and will be strengthened through the utilization of peer coaching study teams and through observation and feedback provided by the school's on-site Literacy Coach and the MDE regional coordinator. Feedback from the Literacy Coach and the regional coordinator based upon in-class observations of reading assessment and instruction will allow teachers to refine instructional practice and ensure coherence of instruction across *Reading First* classrooms. Teachers in *Reading First* classrooms will also utilize Peer Coaching Study

Teams to help in the decision-making process. When students do not perform at expected levels, these teams will focus on what can be done at the classroom level to help students become successful. Such an approach will result in continued assessment and planning for instruction.

Expansion of *Reading First* Activities Statewide

It is the intent of the MDE to expand *Reading First*'s intensive focus on SBRR to LEAs and schools statewide. MDE plans to accomplish this in several ways. By establishing a list of state endorsed SBRR comprehensive, supplemental and extensive remediation programs, MDE has begun to focus attention state wide on a new standard for evaluation of reading programs and materials. The *Reading First* Reading Assessment Committee's report on SBRR assessments will be published statewide. Strategies and suggestions for appropriate use of assessments listed will also be provided by MDE staff. Intensive, cohesive professional development will also provide a common focus for teachers statewide. State level Reading Academies will be offered statewide to all K-3 teachers. Training academies will emphasize effective research based reading instructional strategies and assessments focusing on the components of reading. Academies will also emphasize the use of SBRR assessment data with SBRR strategies in order to improve reading achievement for all students. The MDE's Office of Reading, Early Childhood and Language Arts will oversee the coordination of all professional development offerings. This office is responsible for the implementation of several other reading programs. This office is directed by Dr. Bonita Coleman-Potter. Dr. Coleman-Potter and her staff will ensure that all reading programs in the Office of Reading, Early Childhood and Language Arts adhere to the same rigorous standards for SBRR instruction and assessment as *Reading First*. In addition, the impetus of federal accountability standards from No Child Left Behind and Mississippi's own accountability model will move the measure of success from an analysis of school level data to data based upon the success of subgroups and then to the success of individual children ultimately raising the bar for reading education throughout the state.

Incorporating SBRR into Title I and Other Reading Activities

Title I and special education classrooms will utilize reading programs that meet the same rigorous criteria for selection based upon scientifically-based reading research with an emphasis on the essential components of reading instruction. Teachers within these programs will complete the same rigorous professional development as teachers of regular education *Reading First* kindergarten, first, second and third grade classrooms through the implementation of state level Reading Academies and professional development modules. In addition, Title I and special education classrooms must utilize reading programs and assessments from the state's endorsed list of K-3 SBRR comprehensive, supplemental and remediation programs and from the *Reading First* Reading Assessment Committee's list of approved assessments.

Coherence Between Pre-School and K-3 Literacy Strategies

The *Reading First* Initiative will be operated through MDE's Office of Reading, Early Childhood and Language Arts. This office is responsible for the implementation of a diversity of initiatives impacting reading and early childhood programs throughout the state. All staff members in this office have received training in SBRR. These staff members are expected to utilize their knowledge of SBRR when working with pre-school programs to ensure coherence between programs. The Head Start Collaborative Office is also housed within this office. Laura Beth Hebbler, the director of this office, will work closely with Head Start executive directors and Head Start program directors to ensure that their literacy programs are aligned with the goals of *Reading First*.

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Appendix A

Evaluation of Instructional Materials

Appendix B

List of Eligible Local Education Agencies

Appendix C

Draft Requests for Proposals

Mississippi Reading First Program

Request for Proposals

MISSISSIPPI *READING FIRST* PROGRAM
"Every Child A Reader"

AUTHORIZED UNDER
(Title I, Part B, Subpart 1)

Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
359 North West Street
Jackson, MS 39201
(601) 359-3778

Request for Proposals Issue Date: January 3, 2003

Closing Date-5:00 p.m., Central Time
March 7, 2003

NOTICE OF INTENT
Mississippi Reading First Program

The undersigned school district hereby files a notice of intent to apply for the *Reading First* Program.

Name of Contact Person:_____

Name of School District:_____

Mailing Address:_____

_____

Phone Number: (_____)_____

FAX Number: (_____)_____

Email: _____

- The filing of this notice is not mandatory. It is intended to assist the Mississippi Department of Education in anticipating the volume of applications in order to better expedite the review process and finalize awards.
- Filing this notice in no way binds the applicant in regards to its application for the Mississippi *Reading First* Program.
- Applicants who do not file this notice are still eligible to apply for funding.

PLEASE SUBMIT THIS NOTICE BY MAIL OR BY FAX AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER RECEIPT OF THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS, BUT NOT LATER THAN February 3, 2003, TO:

MISSISSIPPI *READING FIRST* PROGRAM
OFFICE OF READING, EARLY CHILDHOOD, AND LANGAUGE ARTS
ATTN: DR. BONITA COLEMAN-POTTER
P.O. BOX 771, SUITE 230
JACKSON, MS 39205
FAX: (601) 359-1818

FINAL CHECKLIST
FOR APPLICANTS APPLYING FOR FUNDING

FOR DISTRICT USE ONLY
DO NOT FORWARD THIS CHECKLIST WITH THE APPLICATION

PLEASE CHECK YOUR APPLICATION FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

Required number of copies ☐
- One original (signed in blue ink) and five (5) copies of the completed application are enclosed.

Signatures ☐
- At least 1 copy of the application has an original signature of certifying officials.

Project Proposal Package ☐
- All project proposal forms have been completed for the grant and included in each application copy.
  - *Reading First* Program Cover Page
  - Narrative
  - Budget
  - Coordination of Funding Assessment
  - Documentation of Eligibility

Assurances ☐
- All assurances requested for the *Reading First* Program have been provided.

Documentation ☐

- School districts will be required to present the following:
  - Rank and process of selecting applying K-3 schools

Tips for Formatting Project Proposal Package
- Number narrative sections and create headings to correspond to the required components
- Avoid difficult-to-read fonts (double-spaced, 12 point font)
- Proposal packages can not exceed 100 pages
- Proposal must be bound or stapled; NO paper clips: NO rubber bands

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PART I

OVERVIEW

<div align="center">

OVERVIEW
MISSISSIPPI *READING FIRST* PROGRAM

</div>

Background Information

    A. Federal Initiative

The *Reading First* program focuses on putting proven methods of early reading instruction in classrooms. Through *Reading First*, States and districts will receive support to apply scientifically based reading research – and the proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with this research – to ensure that all children learn to read well by the end of third grade. The *Reading First* program will provide the necessary assistance to States and districts to establish research-based reading programs for students in kindergarten through third grade. Funds will also support a significant increase in professional development to ensure that all teachers have the skills they need to teach these reading programs effectively. Additionally, the program provides assistance to States and districts in preparing classroom teachers to screen, identify and eliminate reading barriers facing their students.
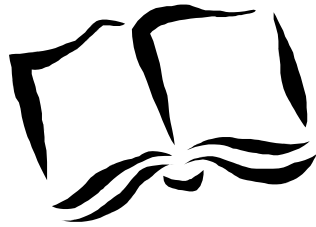
    B. State Initiative

In 1997, Mississippi embarked upon a new challenge and extended the horizons of our children. The Mississippi Reading Initiative…"Every Child a Reader," guided by several goals and action steps, was designed to "break the mold" for this state. This Initiative was developed by the Superintendent's Management Team and the State Board of Education to strategically address reading improvement in the state with scientifically-based reading research best practices. It is the intent of the state initiative that the educators of this state, in partnership with parents and families, will develop children who read well and independently by the third grade.

The Mississippi Reading Reform Model's four scientifically-based reading research conclusions are the foundation for the goals of the ***Mississippi Reading First*** Program:
- Well-designed early literacy interventions to ensure reading readiness;
- Prescriptive direct instruction utilizing the essential elements of reading instruction and based upon the results of appropriate assessments;
- Extended instructional opportunities for children; and
- High quality professional development to improve reading instructional practices of Mississippi teachers, administrators, and support staff.

PART II

MISSISSIPPI READING FIRST PROGRAM
PROPOSAL PACKAGE

Mississippi Reading First Program Grant Cover Page

Mississippi Department of Education
Mississippi *Reading First* Program

Individual LEA Application MIS Code: CS _ _ _ _ -00		1. District Name	2. School Name
3. District Superintendent:		3a. Tel. #: FAX #:	
4. Principal:		4a. Tel. #: FAX #:	
5. Address:		6. County Name:	
7. Project Duration:		8. Board Approval Date for Application Submission:	

PROGRAM	DISTRICT TITLE I ALLOCATION	SCHOOL TITLE I ALLOCATION	EXISTING FUNDING TO IMPLEMENT THE MISSISSIPPI READING REFORM MODEL (LIST SOURCE)	TOTAL *READING FIRST* FUNDS REQUESTED
Mississippi *Reading First* Program				

I certify that the information contained in this application is correct and complete and that the LEA has authorized me, as its representative, to provide the Assurances, to abide by the standard terms and conditions, and to file this application.

_____
Signature of District Superintendent   *Date*

_____
Signature of Principal   *Date*

_____
Signature of Principal   *Date*

_____
Signature of Principal   *Date*

_____
Signature of District Grant Coordinator   *Date*

Application Information

Request for Proposals

This Request for Proposals (RFP) describes the competitive process that MDE will use to award grants for the implementation of scientifically based reading programs; valid and reliable scientifically based reading assessments; improvement of reading instruction practices of teachers and other instructional staff; acquisition of materials for the advancement of reading instruction; and intervention strategies for children experiencing reading difficulties.

Who is Eligible to Apply for Reading First?

For the *Reading First* grant, only LEAs meeting the following criteria are eligible to apply:

- *Highest percentage of students not reading at grade-level*

    All eligible LEAs listed have 20% or more of grades 2-4 students scoring in the minimal (lowest) category of the MCT for Reading. MCT is administered in the spring of each school year and results are received in mid-summer. Fourth grade results were included to give a comprehensive analysis of K-3 reading instruction.

- *The LEA has jurisdiction over at least one of the following:*

    iv. A geographic area that includes an area designated as an empowerment zone or an enterprise community under part I of subchapter U of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

    v. A significant number or percentage of schools that are identified for school improvement under section 116(b); or

The highest numbers of percentages of children who are counted under section 1125(c), in comparison to other local educational agencies in Mississippi.

> *LEAs will be required to present documentation supporting the rank and selection of applying schools.*

Project Description and Requirements

A comprehensive proposal must address strategies of prevention/intervention for children grades K through 3rd grade. In an effort to establish an effective tool for school districts, the MDE offers the following guiding principles to establish needs and objectives and to plan the appropriate activities for use in the implementation of schoolwide comprehensive reading improvement.

> **Step One: Assess needs in key components of Scientifically-based reading research instructional programs, assessments and instructional practices.**

The five key goals of **Reading First** must be addressed in each proposal.

>> Mississippi *Reading First* Program Goals:
>> 1. *Children will exit Kindergarten with appropriate reading readiness skills*
>> 2. *All students will exit each grade reading at grade level.*
>> 3. *All students in need of extensive instructional intervention services will be offered through in-school intervention, extended day/year and transitional services*
>> 4. *Teachers and staff will increase their instructional capacities to provide direct instruction in the reading process.*
>> 5. *Instructional leaders will increase their capacities to direct the focus of their school's reading program.*

> **Request for Proposals must address all five goals of the Mississippi Reading First Program in order to be considered for funding.**

> **Step Two: Identify feasible program objectives and specific activities related to objectives.**

Objectives

After reviewing the school's needs assessment and identifying the most pressing needs as they relate to the goals and purposes of *Reading First*, an applicant should determine the program objectives of each key component. Program objectives are the major goals identified for each key component of a proposed program. Objectives should be broad statements, allowing for the designation of related activities.

Applicants should also include any additional objectives that would support and further the purpose of the Mississippi *Reading First* Program and the state's Reading Initiative. However, the review panel, must be able to see specific connections between the school's needs and the program objectives that are identified. The panel must also be able to see the clear connection between all program objectives and the overall goal of all children reading well and independently by the end of each grade.

After prioritizing the needs within the key components and established objectives for each, applicants should address the specific activities, which must be completed to attain the stated objectives. Activities should include a form of evaluation to establish progress or need for corrective measures.

The integrity of the Mississippi *Reading First* Program must be maintained in the implementation of the following ***required objectives and activities*** within the program's key goals.

Required objectives and activities to be addressed in Project Narrative

❑ Form a plan to fully assess and address the instructional needs of staff and students.

❑ Provide coordination and blending of resources (including but not limited to Head Start, Title I, Even Start, and other programs designed to achieve the components of the Mississippi Reading Reform Model). If this type of partnership is not possible, the applicant must provide information on why it would not have been feasible to do so.

❑ Implement programs to assist those Kindergarten students who are not ready for the transition to first grade, particularly students experiencing difficulty with reading skills.

❑ Provide additional support for children entering Kindergarten and students in Kindergarten through third grade who are experiencing difficulty reading.

❑ Use supervised individuals (including tutorial staff) who have been appropriately trained in scientifically based reading research to provide additional support before school, after school, on weekends, during non-instructional parts of the school day or during the summer for K through 3rd grade students who are experiencing difficulty with readiness or reading skills.

❑ Allocate time to effectively incorporate Peer Coaching Study Teams which research indicates increases the instructional staff's skill of using data to impact instruction.

❑ Diagnose students' instructional strengths and weaknesses with valid and reliable SBRR screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcome assessment methods that are appropriate for each grade level K-3.

❑ Implement SBRR comprehensive, supplemental, and extensive remediation reading programs based on the assessed instructional needs of students.

Evaluation
A strong evaluation design must be included in the project narrative. All grant recipients will be required to measure: (a) the extent to which students have improved their reading skills, (b) direct benefit to teachers, (c) the effectiveness of professional development activities, and (d) the effectiveness of the programs offered through the grant. *Applicants must propose a plan to evaluate the most essential elements Reading First at the school level*.

The plan must describe the overall evaluation design and shall include the following information:

- Reliable and valid quantitative and qualitative data regarding the effectiveness and impact of the program for children, teachers, and schools;
- Performance feedback and periodic assessment of progress toward achieving the intended goals of *Reading First*; and
- Description of methods to adjust elements of the program that are not proving to be effective.

In addition to the applicant's proposed evaluation plan, MDE will conduct an external evaluation study. ***Submission of an application constitutes an acceptance of participating in the evaluation study.*** LEAs will be required to provide the information needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the program including child, teacher and tutor, classroom, and school data.

Project Funding
The funding range of grants to be awarded to LEAs is between $200,000 per school for years 1 and 2 of the grant period and approximately $75,000 for year three of the grant period. Applicants will plan for a project starting date no earlier than May 30, 2003 and an ending date of June 30, 2006. ***The Mississippi Department of Education reserves the right to negotiate grant award amounts with all grantees.***

Continued project funding will be based on continual, satisfactory progress toward the established objectives and activities and timely submission of all required reporting and documentation.

The final number of grants awarded and the final dollar amount of each grant will depend on the quality of the proposals as measured against the requirements set forth in this RFP and the size and characteristics of participating school districts. In addition, the size of the district and the ratio of participating children to the requested dollar amount will be taken into consideration in determining the total amount of funds awarded to a LEA.

Grants will be awarded across the state, representing the diversity of our many school districts. Proposal narratives should clearly address ongoing improvement efforts in reading, district wide efforts, decisions made close to the classroom, clear objectives and timelines, use of current personnel and resources, evaluation methods, and continuation of reform efforts once Reading First funds are depleted.

Funds granted under the Mississippi *Reading First* Program must be used for the expressed purposes described in this RFP. Applicants will also need to identify additional resources and other sources of support (complete **Coordination of Funds Assessment**) to help maximize the effectiveness of the program goals and objectives. **Program funds shall not be obligated for expenditure prior to the effective date of the grant or after the ending date of the grant.**

Funds may be requested only for those items that are reasonable and necessary for accomplishing the objectives of the program as defined in this RFP and for implementing activities as described. In general, the budget narrative must show evidence that:

1. Project costs are reasonable in relation to expected outcomes.
2. The program will identify and coordinate funding from several sources (provide evidence of blending of resources).
3. All expenditures are pertinent to and appropriate for the objectives/activities stated.

Limitations of Administrative Expenditures

The LEA may use up to 2 ½ percent of its grant for administrative costs, including indirect costs. Funds requested for administrative use must be requested in the application on the appropriate budget forms. Administrative funds include both direct administrative costs and indirect costs. Cost-Indirect costs shall not exceed your approved restricted indirect cost rate. Direct administrative costs may include: evaluation, costs associated with accounting, auditing, overall program administration, and salaries and benefits for administrative staff.

Mississippi Reading First Scoring Rubric

The following criteria will be used to evaluate LEAs' proposals. The maximum possible score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses for the criterion.

PROPOSAL NUMBER   **MAXIMUM POINTS**

1. Significance   **(10 points)**

The MDE considers the significance of the proposed project. LEAs must indicate how they have or will develop the capacity to serve **Reading First** schools. Proposals will include the following information:

- Providing necessary leadership at the district and school levels;

- Establishing high expectations for student achievement;

- Providing a local infrastructure to support **Reading First** schools;

- Providing adequate resources to support planning, professional development, and implementation of SBRR programs, assessments and instructional practices;

- Modifying existing policies and procedures to be supportive of **Reading First** activities;

- Providing structures for administration of valid and reliable SBRR screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments, and

- Providing structures for collection, aggregation, disaggregation and reporting of SBRR data.

2. Quality of project design   **(35 points)**

The MDE considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. LEA proposals must meet the following criteria:

- The proposed project design reflects up-to-date knowledge of scientifically-based reading research instructional practices, programs, and assessments.

- All staff members, including all K-3 teachers and all K-12 special education teachers, will participate in on-going professional development and follow-up based on the scientifically based reading research.

- The proposed project outlines an effective plan to change classroom instructional practices based on scientifically-based reading research.

- The proposed project is based upon a specific research design and the quality and appropriateness of that design, including the collection and use of quantitative and qualitative data from appropriate assessments designed for progress monitoring and for classroom instructional decision-making.

- The proposed project will implement classroom-monitoring, screening, outcome, and diagnostic assessments to measure the progress of students and the instructional effectiveness of K-3 regular and special education teachers. It is probable that LEAs will need to use a variety of assessments in order to fully meet **Reading First** requirements. LEAs must list the assessments that will be used for each of the five critical components of reading instruction, indicate the validity and reliability of each assessment, and provide a schedule for test administration. LEAs should provide explanation and justification for assessment schedules.

- The proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and supports rigorous reading standards for students through the implementation of the **Reading First Program**.

- The proposed project provides supplementary intervention and extended remediation for students not reading at grade level.

- School and district level leadership of the proposed project exemplify a commitment to fully implementing the **Reading First Program**.

- The proposed project will implement scientifically-research based comprehensive, supplemental, and extensive remediation programs and discontinue the use of non-researched based programs.

MDE will also consider the extent to which the following criteria are addressed:

- The proposed project is coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, state, and federal resources.

Quality of project service   **(35 points)**

The MDE considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. All proposals must demonstrate sufficient strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for all eligible project participants. In addition, LEA proposals must address the following criteria:

- Training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project, are based on scientific research, are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in instructional practices among the recipients of those services according to the *Reading First Program*;

- The LEA presents an initial plan and process for delivering the fundamental professional development modules based on scientifically based reading research to every K-3 teacher and K-12 special education teacher;

- The LEA commits to allocating time to effectively incorporate Peer Coaching Study Teams which research indicates increases the instructional staff's skill of using data to refine instruction. In order to be considered for funding, LEAs must obligate at least two hours per week to this method of professional development follow-up and support;

- The LEA commits to the selection and retention of a full-time Literacy Coach; and

- Services, to be provided by the proposed project, are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services.

MDE will also consider whether or not the following criteria are present:

- Technical assistance services to be provided by the proposed project involve the use of technology, as appropriate, and the leveraging of non-project resources; and

4. Adequacy of resources   (10 points)

❑ The MDE considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the MDE considers the extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. As required by federal statute, the minimum funding allocation will be at least the same percentage of the State's total *Reading First* subgrant funds as the LEA received of the total Title I, Part A funds received by all LEAs in the State for the preceding fiscal year. The subgrants amount must also be of sufficient size and scope to enable the eligible LEA to fully implement programs to improve reading instruction.

5. Quality of the management plan   (10 points)

❑ The MDE considers the quality of the management plan personnel who will carry out the proposed LEA project. In determining the quality of the management plan, the MDE considers how the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as deemed appropriate. In addition, the MDE considers the commitment level of the school and district level leadership and the commitment of the district to hire and retain a qualified Literacy Coach.

6. Quality of project evaluation   (10 points)

❑ The MDE considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. At a minimum, the LEAs *__initial__* evaluation plan must discuss the connection between instructional decision making and evaluation outcomes. In addition, LEAs must address how the district will intervene with schools not making appropriate progress.

(i)   Methods of evaluation will include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data for classroom instructional decision-making;

(ii)   Methods of evaluation will provide on-going performance feedback through formal and observational periodic assessments of progress toward achieving intended outcomes, and

(iii)   The LEA provides a plan to evaluate the five essential elements reading instruction as defined by Reading First and commit the resources of the district level office to the school's evaluative process. At a minimum, the LEA must commit to the selection and administration of valid and reliable screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring data for each of the five critical elements at each grade level. The LEA must provide a schedule for administration of assessments and a clear description of how assessment results will be linked to instructional interventions.

Budget Narrative

TIPS FOR COMPLETING THE PROJECTED BUDGET SUMMARY AND
EXPENDITURE FUNCTION PAGES

- Indicate the name of your school district (LEA) in the appropriate blank.
- Use the space provided under "General Description" to note your object descriptions, as well as the formula used for figuring indirect cost. Have several people "work" the math formulas.
- Provide an original signature in **blue** ink from the superintendent, local board of education president, and project coordinator.
- In completing your expenditure function narrative pages, provide in the general description space the computations used to arrive at the total amount indicated for each line item. The expenditure function pages should include a detailed description of the costs included, sufficient to document the necessity and reasonableness of costs, and a clear and concise description of the computations used to arrive at the total amounts indicated. Again, have several people "work" the computations, checking their accuracy.
- Review the limitations that legislation provides in the area of budget. For example, only 2 ½ % of your budget can be spent on administration.
- The following expenditures are not allowable:
  - Construction
  - Excessive equipment/software purchases without companion professional development and/or a direct relationship to local improvement
  - Excessive consultant salaries
  - Only school districts are eligible to be awarded subgrant dollars.

Instructional Services

- Salaries for instructional staff
- SBRR comprehensive, supplemental and extensive remediation programs
- Valid and reliable SBRR screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcome assessments
- School/home liaison officer salaries
- Trainer/ consultants contracts
- Equipment
- Educational software
- Professional development
- Release time for teachers
- Literacy packets
- Stipends for non-contractual time

Non-instructional Services

- Community Involvement activities
- Incentives for students
- Parent/Family involvement activities
- Travel
- Transportation costs
- Bus-drivers' salaries

Continuum of Evidence of Effectiveness

All activities funded through the Mississippi Reading First Program must be limited to those designed to meet the overall goals of the Reading First. Moreover, second-year project funding will be based on continual, satisfactory progress toward the established objectives and activities and timely submission of all required reporting and documentation. In addition, all applicants must submit and sustain the requested assurances that accompany this RFP. Failure to comply with any assurances will remove any LEA from consideration for a grant.

PROJECTED BUDGET SUMMARY

Mississippi Reading First Program

DISTRICT NAME_____

TOTAL BUDGET AMOUNT $_____

Total amount and % *ADMINISTRATION* $_____ **Not to exceed 2 ½ %**
*(Total should equal the sum of the
Special Area Administration Services
Subtotal and the Indirect Cost Subtotal
from the Expenditure Function
Narrative.)* **Reminder: Administrative
costs may not exceed 2 1/2% of the
total budget to include evaluation,
costs associated with accounting,
auditing, indirect costs, overall
program administration, and salaries
and benefits for administrative staff.**

Total amount and % *FUNDING TO SCHOOLS* $_____
*(Total should equal the sum of the
Instructional Services Subtotal and the
Improvement of Instruction Services
Subtotal from the Expenditure Function
Narratives.)*

Total amount and % *NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES* $_____
*(Total should equal the sum of the Other
Non-Instructional Services from the
Expenditure Function Narrative.)*

FUNDS FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT WILL BE USED $_____
TO IMPLEMENT THE PROJECT *(If Applicable)*
(Please indicate sources in the space below)

1._____

2._____

Required signatures: (Note - signatures must be in **blue** *ink)*

_____   _____   _____   _____
Superintendent   **Date**   **Principal**   **Date**

_____   _____   _____   _____
Local Board of Education President   Date   **Business Manager**   **Date**

SPECIAL AREA ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

AMOUNT	GENERAL DESCRIPTION
SUBTOTAL SPECIAL AREA ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICE	$

INDIRECT COST

	D. Show your formula for estimating Indirect Cost-Indirect costs shall not exceed your approved restricted indirect cost rate.

TOTAL ALL ADMINISTRATION	**$**
NOTE: TOTAL ALL ADMINISTRATION should equal the sum of the Special Area Administrative Services Subtotal and the Indirect Cost Subtotal. Also note that the TOTAL ALL ADMINISTRATION may not exceed 2 1/2% of your entire project budget.	

This page may be reproduced as needed.

INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES	
(Supplies, materials, equipment to be used in the regular instructional program)	
AMOUNT	**GENERAL DESCRIPTION**
***SUBTOTAL* INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES**	$

OTHER NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES	
(Community involvement, parent/family involvement, blended services, *etc.*)	
AMOUNT	**GENERAL DESCRIPTION**
Subtotal Non-Instructional Services	**$**

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Coordination of Funding Assessment

Please assist us in serving your students, families and teachers by providing the following information.

Programs	Current Funds	Current Use	Projected Use
Reading Sufficiency			
Barksdale Reading Inst.			
Reading Excellence			
Head Start			
Even Start			
Title I			
Title II – Quality Teacher			
Community-based			
LEA			
Other			

School Name:_____

DOCUMENTATION OF ELIGIBILITY

Complete this form for each school that is to be considered for the proposal process using Census 2000 data and other pertinent information. Provide as much of the following information as possible, as priority will be given to LEAs having a greater number or percentage of disadvantaged children than the statewide average:

	Number and/or	Percentage	Data Current As of (Year)	Data Source
Free lunch (K-3)				
Economically disadvantaged families (K-3)				
Persons below poverty level (K-3)				
Unemployment (K-3)				
Percentage of 2nd grade students performing at the minimal level on the most current MS-CRT in reading				
Percentage of 3rd grade students performing at the minimal level on the most current MS-CRT in reading				
Percentage of 4th grade students performing at the minimal level on the most current MS-CRT in reading				

Conditions For Submission Of Applications

Procedures for Delivery of the Proposal
One (1) original and **five (5)** copies of the proposal must be received **on or before 5:00 P.M. on March 7, 2003** at the following address:

> Mississippi Department of Education
> Attn: Ms. Jane Black
> 359 North West Street, Suite 359 (Physical Address)
> P.O. Box 771 (Mailing Address)
> Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Upon receipt, the sealed proposals will be opened and recorded in Suite 359 of the Central High School. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the competitive proposal is delivered by the required time and **also assumes all risks of delivery**.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted and cannot be returned for revisions. No faxed copies will be accepted and the original application must have original signatures in blue ink. Because this process is very competitive, please have someone proof your proposal.

We strongly recommend that you plan to submit early in order to allow for unforeseen circumstances. We do not want anyone to work hard on a proposal and miss the deadline for submission. **Applications will <u>not</u> be accepted after the deadline.**

Acceptance of Proposals
The Department reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in proposals. A minor irregularity is a variation from the RFP that does not affect the proposal, or give one applicant an advantage or benefit not enjoyed by other applicants, or adversely impacts the interest of the Department.

Rejection of Proposals
Proposals that do not conform to the requirements of this RFP may be rejected by the Department.

Proposals may be rejected for reasons that include, but are not limited to, the following:

The proposal contains unauthorized amendments to requirements of the RFP.

The proposal is conditional.

The proposal is incomplete or contains irregularities that make the proposal indefinite or ambiguous.

The proposal is received late.

The proposal is not signed by an authorized representative of the applicant.

The proposal contains false or misleading statements or references.

The proposal does not meet all requirements of the RFP.
Disposition of Proposals
All proposals become the property of the Mississippi Department of Education.

Conditions of Solicitation

The MDE reserves the right to accept, reject, or negotiate regarding submitted proposals on the basis of the evaluation criteria contained in this document. The final decision to award a grant rests solely with the MDE.

A) Before preparing the proposal, applicants should note that:
1. all proposals, in their entirety, will become the property of the Mississippi Department of Education upon submission and will be available to the public upon request.
2. the award of a grant for any proposed program is contingent upon the following:
   a) favorable evaluation of the proposal
   b) approval of the proposal by the Office of Reading, Early Childhood & Language Arts, Mississippi Department of Education
   c) State Board of Education approval
   d) successful negotiation of any changes to the proposal as required by MDE
3. the MDE will not be liable for any costs associated with the preparation of proposals incurred by the applicant; and
4. dollars received as an outcome of this proposal cannot be used to cover any costs associated with the preparation of the proposal.

B) Likewise, the MDE also reserves the right to accept any proposal as submitted for grant award, without negotiation. Therefore, applicants are advised to propose their most favorable terms initially.

C) Applicants will be required to assume full responsibility for meeting all specified requirements stated in the RFP.

D) Clarifying Information
Any person wishing to obtain clarifying information about this RFP may attend a Regional Technical Assistance session or contact:

Dr. Bonita Coleman-Potter, Bureau Director or
Robin Miles, Division Director
Office of Reading, Early Childhood and Language Arts
Mississippi Department of Education
P. O. Box 771
Jackson, MS 39205
(601) 359-3778 (phone)   (601) 359-1818 (fax)
bpotter@mde.k12.ms.us   rmiles@mde.k12.ms.us.

Proposal Format
Requirements
The following components must be included, in the following order in all proposals that are submitted:
- A completed application cover page including all original required signatures in BLUE ink;
- Signed assurances with original signatures in BLUE ink;
- A complete Project Proposal Package not to exceed 100 pages (double-spaced, 12 point font)
  - *Reading First* Grant Cover Page
  - Narrative
  - Budget
  - Coordination of Funding Assessment
  - Documentation of Eligibility

MISSISSIPPI *READING FIRST* IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Key activity	Timeline	Staff
Mail Request for Proposal (RFP) to eligible LEAs	January 3, 2003 Contingent on federal award to MDE	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Pre-Application Workshops	January 6 and 7, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Regional Technical Assistance Workshops	January 13-24, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Proposals Due	March 7, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Training for Proposal Reviewers	March 12, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Proposals Reviewed	March 13-20, 2003	Proposal Review Committees Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Principal/District Administrator Interviews of finalists (to assess school leadership/district level commitment)	March 27-28, 2003	Reading Leadership Team Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Reading Leadership Team recommends final set of grant applicants to Mississippi State Board of Education for approval.	April 4, 2003	Reading Leadership Team Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Notification of Award (Contingent on availability of federal funds and State Board of Education Approval)	April 11, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Grant Recipient's Regional Meetings/Negotiations	April 17-18, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Disbursement of Funds(For those who have met special conditions of grant)	May 9, 2003	Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
SEA Evaluator RFP disseminated	February 1, 2003	Reading Leadership Team Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts

Scientifically based Reading Research Training for *Reading First* Literacy Coaches	January- March 2003	Regional Reading Coordinators -Office of Reading, Early Childhood, and Language Arts
Begin delivery of on-site *MRRM* professional development modules	January 2003	Regional Reading Coordinators /Literacy Coaches
LEA selection of SBRR programs and assessments	March 15, 2003	Reading Practitioner's Committee
Complete implementation of all *Reading First* Grant components	August 2003	*Reading First* Schools
Mississippi Reading Academies (required participation)	June 1, 2003	All kindergarten instructors in the state
Continual monitoring of progress and implementation	Ongoing	Regional Reading Coordinators /Literacy Coaches

The dates, except the project start and end date, may vary slightly, as conditions require. Please note that authorization to expend any funds will be given on an individual basis.

Selection Criteria

LEA's ***Reading First*** proposals will be evaluated by a Grant Award Committee authorized by the MDE and the Reading Leadership Team. Each proposal will be evaluated using the selection criteria as described in this section. The Grant Award Committee will recommend the proposals to be funded to the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Reading, Early Childhood and Language Arts, the State Superintendent of Education, the State Board of Education, and the Reading Leadership Team. Representatives of the Reading Leadership Team will nominate members to serve on the Grant Award Committee. LEAs must include, in their proposals, a description of the proposed procedures in order to ensure the successful implementation of high quality programs required by the ***Reading First Program.***

The grants will be negotiated with the LEAs that have the highest points and are comprehensive and responsive as determined by the Grant Award Committee. Results of the evaluation and the recommendation of the evaluation team will be forwarded to the Reading Leadership Team and the State Board of Education for approval.

MDE reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to negotiate with the best offeror to address issues other than those described in the proposal, or not to make any award if the evaluation committee determines that this is in the best interest of MDE and the ***Reading First Program***. The following criteria will be used to evaluate LEAs' proposals.

Significance (10 points)
The MDE considers the significance of the proposed project. LEAs must indicate how they have or will develop the capacity to serve ***Reading First*** schools. Proposals will include the following information:
- Providing necessary leadership at the district and school levels;
- Establishing high expectations for student achievement;
- Providing a local infrastructure to support ***Reading First*** schools;
- Providing adequate resources to support planning, professional development, and implementation of SBRR programs, assessments and instructional practices;

- Modifying existing policies and procedures to be supportive of ***Reading First*** activities;

- Providing structures for administration of valid and reliable SBRR screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcome assessments, and

- Providing structures for collection, aggregation, disaggregation and reporting of SBRR data.

Quality of project design   (35 points)

The MDE considers the quality of the design of the proposed project. LEA proposals must meet the following criteria:

- The proposed project design reflects up-to-date knowledge of scientifically-based reading research instructional practices, programs, and assessments.

- All staff members, including all K-3 teachers and all K-12 special education teachers, will participate in on-going professional development and follow-up based on the scientifically based reading research.

- The proposed project outlines an effective plan to change classroom instructional practices based on scientifically-based reading research.

- The proposed project is based upon a specific research design and the quality and appropriateness of that design, including the collection and use of quantitative and qualitative data from appropriate assessments designed for progress monitoring and for classroom instructional decision-making.

- The proposed project will implement classroom-monitoring, screening, outcome, and diagnostic assessments to measure the progress of students and the instructional effectiveness of K-3 regular and special education teachers. It is probable that LEAs will need to use a variety of assessments in order to fully meet ***Reading First*** requirements. LEAs must list the assessments that will be used for each of the five critical components of reading instruction, indicate the validity and reliability of each assessment, and provide a schedule for test administration. LEAs should provide explanation and justification for assessment schedules.

- The proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and supports rigorous reading standards for students through the implementation of the ***Reading First Program***.

- The proposed project provides supplementary intervention and extended remediation for students not reading at grade level.

- School and district level leadership of the proposed project exemplify a commitment to fully implementing the ***Reading First Program***.

- The proposed project will implement scientifically-research based comprehensive, supplemental, and extensive remediation programs and discontinue the use of non-researched based programs.

Quality of project service (35 points)

The MDE considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project. All proposals must demonstrate sufficient strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for all eligible project participants. In addition, LEA proposals must address the following criteria:

- Training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project, are based on scientific research, are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in instructional practices among the recipients of those services according to the ***Reading First Program***;

- The LEA presents an initial plan and process for delivering the fundamental professional development modules based on scientifically based reading research to every K-3 teacher and K-12 special education teacher;

- The LEA commits to allocating time to effectively incorporate Peer Coaching Study Teams which research indicates increases the instructional staff's skill of using data to refine instruction. In order to be considered for funding, LEAs must obligate at least two hours per week to this method of professional development follow-up and support;

- The LEA commits to the selection and retention of a full-time Literacy Coach; and

- Services, to be provided by the proposed project, are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services.

MDE will also consider whether or not the following criteria are present:

- Technical assistance services to be provided by the proposed project involve the use of technology, as appropriate, and the leveraging of non-project resources; and

Adequacy of resources (10 points)

❑ The MDE considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project. In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the MDE considers the extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits. As required by federal statute, the minimum funding allocation will be at least the same percentage of the State's total *Reading First* subgrant funds as the LEA received of the total Title I, Part A funds received by all LEAs in the State for the preceding fiscal year. The subgrants amount must also be of sufficient size and scope to enable the eligible LEA to fully implement programs to improve reading instruction.

Quality of the management plan (10 points)

❑ The MDE considers the quality of the management plan personnel who will carry out the proposed LEA project. In determining the quality of the management plan, the MDE considers how the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as deemed appropriate. In addition, the MDE considers the commitment level of the school and district level leadership and the commitment of the district to hire and retain a qualified Literacy Coach.

Quality of project evaluation (10 points)

❑ The MDE considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project. At a minimum, the LEAs *__initial__* evaluation plan must discuss the connection between instructional decision making and evaluation outcomes. In addition, LEAs must address how the district will intervene with schools not making appropriate progress.

(i)   Methods of evaluation will include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data for classroom instructional decision-making;

(ii)   Methods of evaluation will provide on-going performance feedback through formal and observational periodic assessments of progress toward achieving intended outcomes, and

(iii)   The LEA provides a plan to evaluate the five essential elements reading instruction as defined by Reading First and commit the resources of the district level office to the school's evaluative process. At a minimum, the LEA must commit to the selection and administration of valid and reliable screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring data for each of the five critical elements at each grade level. The LEA must provide a schedule for administration of assessments and a clear description of how assessment results will be linked to instructional interventions.

PART IV

ASSURANCES
&
STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

LEA Assurances and Certifications

LEA Assurances and Certifications will be completed on the enclosed forms for:

Mississippi Department of Education Reading First Cover Page

In addition, the application must contain the following components:

A. An assurance that each LEA receiving a MDE subgrant will:
   - Carry out the Mississippi Department of Education's research-based Process of Prevention/Intervention professional development for classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and partnering community-based organizations (as applicable) on the teaching of reading, family literacy, and transitions from home through first grade;

   - Schedule weekly common planning times or early release time for grade level peer coaching study teams to engage in follow-up on professional development and implementation of a diagnostic, prescriptive teaching process of intervention for students who have reading difficulties;

   - All staff members, including all K-3 teachers and all K-12 special education teachers, will participate in the following professional development modules directly related to assessment, including but not limited to:
     - *Peer Coaching & Data Analysis*
   - The LEA will select valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, and classroom based assessments from the endorsed listing.

   - The LEA will develop a clear schedule for administering assessments that are appropriate for the skills and goals of particular grade levels.

   - The LEA will utilize the data collected to make instructional decisions for all K-3 students and to inform decisions about appropriate interventions and program continuation.

   - All staff members, including all K-3 teachers and all K-12 special education teachers, will participate in on-going professional development including but not limited to:
     - *Essential Components of Reading Instruction*
     - *Peer Coaching & Data Analysis*
     - *Utilizing the Mississippi Language Arts Framework (K-3)*
     - *Identifying Research-Based Programs and Assessments*
   - LEAs must assure the MDE to select and retain a full-time Literacy Coach.

   - LEAs must assure the MDE of the selection of programs from an approved list and implement the most appropriate for their schools based on their school's needs assessment and the **Evaluation of Instructional Materials**

- LEAs must assure the MDE that supplemental and extensive remediation programs will be implemented as intended and integrated and coordinated with the comprehensive reading program.

- LEAs must assure the MDE that all professional development and follow up for programs selected will be fully implemented.

- LEAs must assure the MDE to discontinue the use of non-researched based programs.

- School and district administrators will commit to providing continuity to the grant and will commit participating in all professional development that is expected of them.

- Carry out programs to assist those students in transitions from home to kindergarten, from pre-kindergarten to kindergarten, and those who are not ready for the transition to first grade, particularly students experiencing difficulty with reading skills; and

- Use supervised individuals (including AmeriCorps and volunteer tutors), who have been appropriately trained in scientifically-based reading research best practices to provide additional support, before school, after school, on weekends, during non-instructional periods of the school day, or during the summer, for children preparing to enter kindergarten and students in kindergarten through grade 3, who are experiencing difficulty reading.

B. An assurance that instruction in reading will be provided to children with reading difficulties who:

(i) are at risk of being referred to special education based on these difficulties; or

(ii) have been evaluated under Section 614 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act but, in accordance with Section 614(b)(5) of such Act, have not been identified as being a child with a disability (as defined in Section 602 of the such Act).

C. A description of how the LEA:

(i) will build on, and promote coordination among, literacy programs in the district (including federally funded programs such as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), in order to increase the effectiveness of the programs in improving reading for adults and children and to avoid duplication of the efforts of the programs;

(ii) will promote reading and classroom library programs that provide access to appropriate and engaging reading material;

(iii) will conduct yearly pre and post outcome assessments for K – 3rd grade students to assess and to evaluate local educational agency activities assisted under this program, with respect to whether they have been effective in achieving the purposes of this program. The assessments should provide data that yields:

- Quantitative Data (numerical score) in reading recognition, comprehension, and listening comprehension (capacity to comprehend) and

- Qualitative Data (how a child processes text) to be utilized to make informed classroom instructional decisions.

D. A description of the evaluation instrument which the LEA will use for purposes of the assessments and evaluations.

E. LEAs must include, in their application, a description of the proposed procedures in order to ensure the successful implementation of high quality comprehensive, supplemental and extensive remediation programs.

All applications must be received by the closing date.

STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Changes

This agreement shall not be modified, altered, or changed except by mutual agreement by an authorized representative(s) of each party to this agreement, and must be confirmed in writing through the Mississippi Department of Education grant modification procedures.

Independent Grantee

The grantee shall perform all services as an independent grantee and shall discharge all of its liabilities as such. No act performed or representation made, whether oral or written, by grantee with respect to third parties shall be binding on the Mississippi Department of Education.

Termination

The Mississippi Department of Education, by written notice, may terminate this grant, in whole or in part, if funds supporting this grant are reduced or withdrawn. To the extent that this grant is for services, and if so terminated, the Mississippi Department of Education shall be liable only for payment in accordance with payment provisions of this grant for services rendered prior to the effective date of termination.

The Mississippi Department of Education, in whole or in part, may terminate this grant for cause by written notification. Furthermore, the Mississippi Department of Education and the grantee may terminate this grant, in whole or in part, upon mutual agreement.

Either the Mississippi Department of Education or the grantee may terminate this agreement at any time by giving written notice to the other party of such termination and specifying the effective date thereof. The grantee shall be paid an amount which bears the same ratio to the total compensation as the services actually performed bear to the total services of the grantee covered by the agreement, less payments of compensation previously made.

Access to Records

The grantee agrees that the Mississippi Department of Education, or any of its duly authorized representatives, at any time during the term of this agreement, shall have access to, and the right to audit and examine any pertinent books, documents, papers, and records of grantee related to grantee's charges and performance under this agreement. Such records shall be kept by grantee for a period of five (5) years after final payment under this agreement, unless the Mississippi Department of Education authorized their earlier disposition. Grantee agrees to refund to the Mississippi Department or Education any overpayments disclosed by any such audit. However, if any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action involving the records has been started before the expiration of the five year period, the records shall be retained until completion of the action and resolution of all issues which arise from it.

Laws

This agreement, and all matters or issues collateral to it, shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of Mississippi.

Legal Authority

The grantee assures that it possesses legal authority to apply for and receive funds under this agreement.

Equal Opportunity Employer

The grantee shall be an equal opportunity employer and shall perform to all affirmative action and other applicable requirements; accordingly, grantee shall neither discriminate nor permit discrimination in its operations or employment practices against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, handicap or sex in any manner prohibited by law.

Copyrights

MDE grants to the Grantee the right to copyright materials and articles that may result from research carried out under this grant. MDE shall have unlimited royalty free license to use, reproduce, translate or publish all product(s) produced under this agreement for and on behalf of MDE and the public school districts of the State of Mississippi.

Personnel

Grantee agrees that, at all times, the employees of grantee furnishing or performing any of the services specified under this agreement shall do so in a proper, workmanlike, and dignified manner.

Surrender of Equipment

On termination or expiration of this agreement, grantee shall restore all equipment furnished under this agreement to the Mississippi Department of Education in the same condition as when originally made available to grantee, reasonable wear and tear excepted. Grantee and the Mississippi Department of Education shall jointly conduct a closing inventory and grantee shall replace or repair all equipment lost, damaged, or destroyed to make up any deficiency between opening and closing inventories.

Assignment

Grantee shall not assign or subcontract in whole or in part, its rights of obligations under this agreement without prior written consent of the Mississippi Department of Education. Any attempted assignment without said consent will be void and of no effect.

Property, Equipment and Supplies

Property, equipment and supplies purchased, in whole or in part, with funds provided under this agreement shall be procured, accounted for and disposed of in accordance with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations. Title to any equipment and supplies purchased under this agreement shall be vested in the grantee.

Mississippi Ethics

It is the responsibility of the grantee to ensure that subcontractors comply with the Mississippi Ethics Law in regard to conflict of interest. A statement attesting to said compliance shall be on file by the grantee.

Appendix D

Letter of Commitment from Mississippi Governor Ronnie Musgrove

State-Level Office Administrator's Vitas

Reading Leadership Team

Mississippi Reading and Literacy Panel

Honorable Ronnie Musgrove Governor	Dr. Henry L. Johnson State Superintendent of Education
Honorable Alice Hardin Education Chairman	Honorable Billy McCoy Senate House Education Chairman
Honorable Eloise Scott House Reading Subcommittee Chairperson	Supt. Joyce McNair, Humphreys Co. School District Rep.
Ms. Randee Williams, AmeriCorps Community Based Organization	Dr. Susan Rucker, Ass. State Supt. Office of Academic Education
Dr. Bonita Potter, Bureau Director Reading/Early Childhood/ Language Arts State Program Director	Robin L. Miles, Division Director Reading/Early Childhood/ Lang. Arts
Ms. Nadine Coleman Parent Family Provider	Dr. Capucine Torey Robinson Parent
Ms.Tina Scholtes Teacher-Grade 1	Dr. Cathy Grace Family Literacy Ser. Provider
Dr. William McHenry, Institutions of Higher Learning	Claiborne Barksdale, Director Barksdale Reading Institute
Carla Dearman, Director of Training Barksdale Reading Institute	Bobby Brown, Head Start

Appendix E

A Consumer's Guide to Selecting a Core Program: Critical Analysis