

Archived Information

U.S. Department of Education Reading Excellence Act State Competitive Grant Program



Non-Regulatory Guidance for State Applicants: March 9, 1999

If you have comments, suggestions, or additional questions about this guidance or the Reading Excellence Act:

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Purpose of these guidelines

These guidelines contain information primarily on:

- General implementation and purpose of the Reading Excellence Act programs;
- The State education agency application process
- State administration of the program; and
- How local educational agencies can use Reading Excellence Act funds to improve student reading achievement.

The guidance does not impose any requirements beyond those that the law specifies. Where possible, it encourages varying approaches and focuses on what can be done rather than what cannot. Any requirements referred to in this document are taken directly from the authorizing statute, from the Closing Date Notice, or from other existing statutes or regulations whose requirements pertain to this program. U.S. Department of Education officials will consider state and local recipients that follow these guidelines to be in compliance with the applicable Federal statutes and regulations.

All applicants are encouraged to pay particular attention to questions C2, G7, and G8.

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America Reads Challenge

The Secretary of Education's Special Initiative to Ensure that Every Child Can Read

The America Reads Challenge is a grassroots call to action. In 1994, 40 percent of America's fourth graders failed to attain the basic level of reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. In response to these results, President Clinton announced the Administration's commitment to mobilizing public and private resources to help all children read well. This national campaign challenges every American to help all children learn to read, including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency. The Challenge touches citizens from all walks of life and sparks collaborations between educators, parents, librarians, business people, senior citizens, college students, and community and religious groups.

The strategies used to help meet the goals of the America Reads Challenge include:

- ❖ starting early by strengthening parent involvement and improving opportunities in childcare settings;
- ❖ bringing best practices into the school and classroom;
- ❖ creating extended learning time opportunities that are built on and connected to solid reading programs in our Nation's schools;
- ❖ promoting greater public awareness of reading and local partnership building; and
- ❖ supporting research and evaluation.

The Reading Excellence Act supports the goals of the America Reads Challenge.

Introduction

The Reading Excellence Act program addresses the problems of the nation's neediest districts and schools, providing resources to implement findings from reading research to improve instruction for children with critical learning needs. According to the 1998 results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 68 percent of fourth graders in high poverty schools are not able to read at even the "basic" level on NAEP. These children are already far behind their more fortunate peers. A much smaller percentage of children in low poverty schools—23 percent—are not able to read at the basic level.

This program supports research-based reading activities that are integrated into state and local reform efforts. Local projects will offer well-integrated components to improve instruction at the elementary and preschool levels, work with families to ensure that children have good support for learning, and provide extended learning opportunities that support classroom instruction in reading. Together these components will help turn around poorly performing schools or provide additional support to good schools struggling to serve the neediest students in the district.

In the last 20 years, a considerable body of knowledge has been developed on effective ways to teach children to read. It is now time to put those findings into practice across the country. The Reading Excellence Act will provide assistance to teachers to allow them to use findings from scientifically based reading research, including findings relating to phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension, to help improve students' reading.

Standards-based reform

The Reading Excellence Act joins the family of federal education initiatives at a time when states and school districts are beginning to reap the benefits of the national school reform movement. For the past few years, most educational policy makers and practitioners have come to agree that school reform can result in increased student achievement only to the extent that we:

- Set high academic standards that all students are expected to achieve;
- Measure student progress;
- Ensure that there is a well-qualified teacher in every classroom; and
- Hold schools accountable for results.

The Administration and the Congress designed the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) around these four principles. Today, most states have adopted challenging standards for their students—particularly in reading and mathematics—and there are promising signs of real progress toward meeting these higher standards in the classroom. Most importantly, ESEA's flagship program—Title I—works through states and communities to support higher standards in the poorest districts and schools, where the needs are the greatest. Teachers in Title I schools increasingly reporting that standards are helping to guide instruction. Moreover, preliminary data gathered for the upcoming reauthorization of the ESEA from states that have implemented the Title I standards and assessment provisions generally show increased achievement levels in high-poverty schools.

Need for improved reading instruction

At the same time that the ESEA was being redesigned in 1994, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) focused the nation's attention on the fact that schools were badly in need of extra help in reading instruction. NAEP reported in that year that 40 percent of the nation's fourth graders failed to read at the basic level. Sixty-nine percent of African American and 64 percent of Hispanic American fourth-graders were reading below the basic level. The fact that fourth-graders have such poor reading skills is particularly troublesome. Schools typically stop teaching reading by

the fourth grade and start expecting students to use their reading skills to learn other subjects—science, mathematics, literature, and social studies. Children who are not reading well by this time are in great danger of failing in school.

Difficulty in Learning to Read

Failure to read at the “basic” level as reported in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is serious: students at this level of achievement have only a partial mastery of the knowledge and skills that are fundamental for school work at their grade level.

- To meet the NAEP “basic” level, fourth graders need only to make relatively obvious connections between material in a text passage and their own experiences, and to extend the ideas in the text by making simple inferences. For example, they might be asked to read a short story and answer straightforward questions about information in the story.
- Fourth-graders who are unable to read such material—and understand what they have read—are likely to have difficulty in school, since by fourth grade they are expected to have made the transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.”

Research also has shown that approximately 5 percent of all children in public schools are identified as having a learning disability.¹ A vast majority of these children (approximately 80 percent) experience their primary difficulties in learning to read.¹ One provision in the Reading Excellence Act is specifically designed to help ensure that children who are unable to read because they have received inadequate reading instruction are not inappropriately identified as children in need of special education services. Research indicates that these children should, instead, receive intensive reading instruction, including explicit instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics. Research indicates early intervention—generally, before age 9—can help as many as two-thirds of the children identified as children with learning disabilities who are at risk of reading failure become average or above average readers.²

The Administration responded to the problems identified by NAEP in several ways:

- First, through the ESEA reauthorization, the Administration proposed sweeping changes in federal elementary and secondary education programs, linking the setting of high standards with targeted resources for improving instruction in the fundamental subjects of reading and mathematics in the schools that needed them the most.

¹ Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children, the Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, and the National Research Council. *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. National Academy Press. 1998.

² Lyon, G. R. Learning Disabilities. *The Future of Children: Special Education for Students with Disabilities*. 1996. 6:54-76.

- The President and the Secretary of Education put reading at the top of an agenda of seven national education priorities, setting as a goal that “All children learn to read independently and well by the end of third grade.”
- The President issued a challenge to the country—the America Reads Challenge. He called on parents, teachers, libraries, religious institutions, universities, college students, the media, community and national groups, business leaders, and senior citizens to join the effort to meet this challenge. Through the America Reads Challenge, Federal Work-Study students in more than 1,100 colleges and universities are tutoring children in reading. Thousands of America Reads tutors serve their communities through Americorps, VISTA, National Senior Service Corps, and Learn & Serve America.

The hard work that states have invested in developing higher standards and setting goals for improving student achievement for all students is beginning to pay off. Four years after the dismaying reading results were announced from the 1994 NAEP, there are signs of improvement in reading at all three grade levels. In the 1998 assessment, average scores increased over the 1994 level for students in grades 4, 8, and 12, with the lower-performing fourth-graders and most middle school children showing the most progress.

While this overall progress is encouraging, there is still a troubling gap in achievement between disadvantaged and minority students and their more advantaged peers.

Reading Excellence Act

The Reading Excellence Act comes at an opportune time to help accelerate the progress of student learning. This program creates an important link between the research community and states and school districts that have been setting high standards, assessing student progress, placing highly qualified teachers in classrooms, and targeting resources to areas of great need.

The Act amends Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 by adding a component to improve students’ reading ability. The program has five main purposes, as stated in section 2251:

- providing children with the readiness skills and support they need in early childhood to learn to read once they enter school;
- teaching every child to read by the end of the third grade;
- improving the reading skills of students and the instructional practices of teachers and, as appropriate, other instructional staff;
- expanding the number of high quality family literacy programs; and
- providing early literacy intervention to reduce the number of children who are inappropriately referred to special education.

To accomplish these purposes, the Act supports four primary activities related to reading:

- professional development;
- extended learning (tutoring and after-school programs);
- family literacy; and
- transition programs for kindergarten students.

The Act emphasizes strongly the importance of scientifically based reading research, including findings related to phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension, in carrying out these activities. SEAs that receive funding will make competitive subgrants to eligible LEAs for two programs: Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance.

In adopting these research-based programs, schools and LEAs will ensure that teachers receive *professional development* associated with the reading instruction program; that *family literacy services* will be available to involve parents; that special assistance will be given to *kindergartners* who need help making the transition to the first grade; and that *tutors* who have been appropriately trained will provide additional help to children. The National Institute for Literacy will be available to provide special help to LEAs and schools in choosing reading instruction strategies appropriate for their needs.

To ensure broad-based participation and commitment to state and local reading goals, each state's Reading Excellence program will be overseen by a *reading and literacy partnership* consisting of the Governor, the chief state school officer, members of the state legislature, and representatives of eligible local educational agencies (LEAs), community-based organizations, state directors of federal or state programs supporting reading instruction, parents, teachers, family literacy service providers, and a variety of optional participants. At the local level, each LEA will work in partnership with a *community-based organization*.

Using all available resources

Recent federal legislation has crafted a framework of educational reform intended to improve education for all children, including those most in need. Local Reading Excellence programs will integrate key elements of reform—including standards reforms, changes to improve teaching and learning, flexibility and accountability for states and school districts, family and community involvement, reduction in class size for K-3 grades, and greater targeting of resources to highest poverty districts and communities—with its research-based focus on improving elementary school reading instruction.

Targeting Assistance Where the Need is Greatest. Both the Reading Excellence and the Class-Size Reduction programs are designed to help the poorest and most disadvantaged of students. This focus links these two new resources naturally to Title I of the ESEA. Title I has been helping schools lay a foundation for success, by setting challenging reading standards and aligned assessments for all children in Title I schools. Further, through its schoolwide programs, Title I offers schools the opportunity of using Reading Excellence Act funds together with funding from many other sources to provide coherent education programs for all children in the schools. While schools with schoolwide programs are expected to carry out the basic intent and purpose of all the federal programs whose funds are included, they are not required to track the funds separately.

Professional Development. The Reading Excellence Act was appropriately authorized as a part of the ESEA and, by its placement in Title II, is linked with the program that has been most responsible for providing solid professional development opportunities to teachers—the Eisenhower Professional Development program. The Eisenhower program has been used to improve the skills primarily of teachers of mathematics and science. Schools can now bring their Eisenhower experience to bear on improving the skills of all teachers in reading instruction for young children. In addition, the new Teacher Quality Enhancement program (Title II, HEA) will support comprehensive approaches to improving teacher quality in states, institutions of higher education, and local districts.

Reducing Class-Size with Qualified Teachers. Like the new Class-size Reduction program, the Reading Excellence Act concentrates on young children in the first through third grades, in addition to providing special help to kindergartners. The Class-size Reduction program and the Reading Excellence program can and should be viewed in tandem by school districts to ensure that

additional, highly qualified teachers are available to teach reading to the youngest and neediest children.

Extended Learning Opportunities. Many children would benefit by receiving more instruction in reading than can be provided by teachers during the regular classroom day. The local subgrants (Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance) both provide resources for tutoring and extended learning programs (before- and after-school, weekends, during non-instructional periods of the school day, or summer. Two major programs in the department (21st Century Schools and Federal Work Study programs) provide resources for extended learning (as do some smaller programs as well). Reading Excellence programs can take advantage of these related programs but may need to add special training to ensure staff are well-trained and that the programs directly support classroom instruction.

Family Literacy and Early Childhood Education. One of the most important interventions for reading is to help parents of young children develop skills for being their children's first teacher, including improving their own literacy if needed. In addition, strong early childhood education programs supplement the parents' efforts by reinforcing emergent literacy and starting to develop children's phonemic awareness. The Department strongly supports family literacy and preschool services through its Title I, Even Start, and Adult Education and Family Literacy programs—as well as through IDEA's preschool state grants. The state and local Reading Excellence program will probably be able to build on already well-developed efforts but can supplement them as needed to provide a comprehensive program of services centered on the most needy schools and feeder preschools.

Section H (page 38) offers further ideas and examples of ways in which Reading Excellence programs can work cooperatively with these and other federal education programs.

Guidance for applicants

These guidelines contain information for state and local educational agencies on:

- General implementation and purpose of the Reading Excellence Act programs
- The state educational agency application process
- State administration of the program
- Allowable use of funds and application/eligibility process for local educational agencies
- Principles and criteria for selecting and using scientifically based reading research

This document provides guidance on only two issues that may eventually require rulemaking:

1. A provision that the SEA must include the proposed local application form and description of the application process and criteria in its application to the Department.
2. Clarification that funds are to be used only for activities to improve elementary school reading instruction.

Where possible, the guidance encourages varying approaches and focuses on what can be done rather than what cannot. Any requirements referred to in this document are taken directly from the authorizing statute, from the Closing Date Notice, or from other existing statutes or regulations whose requirements pertain to this program. In many cases, the related section of the law is cited; absence of a citation, however, does not imply that the requirement is not contained in the statute. U.S. Department of Education officials will consider state and local recipients that follow these guidelines to be in compliance with the applicable federal statutes and regulations.

Please note that the guidance is comprehensive, addressing many items in the Reading Excellence Act legislation. Readers may wish to skip to sections of particular interest as follows:

Section A. Overview (starting on page 7)

Section B. Scientifically Based Reading Research (page 9)

Section C. Federal Awards to States (page 16)

Section D. State Application (page 20)

Section E. Funds Reserved for State Use and Evaluation (page 25)

Section F. State Awards to LEAs for Local Reading Improvement Subgrants (page 27)

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Appendices:

Appendix A. Continuum of Evidence of Effectiveness **(page 43)**

Appendix B. Required Contents of a State Application **(page 50)**

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Appendix E. Tutorial Assistance Subgrant Activities **(page 56)**

Appendix F. Definitions **(page 59)**

Acronyms

CSR	Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program
ED	Department of Education
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
LEA	Local educational agency
LRI	Local Reading Improvement subgrants
REA	Reading Excellence Act
SEA	State educational agency
TAS	Tutorial Assistance subgrants

Section A. Overview

A1 Is the REA a competitive program?

Yes. Grants will be distributed to states through a competitive process. There is no formula to determine how much money states will receive, and there is no guarantee that all states will receive awards. States receiving grants will, in turn, hold subgrant competitions for eligible LEAs.

A2 How will the Reading Excellence Act funds flow from the Department of Education to the schools?

Under the Act, the Secretary of Education is authorized to make competitive grants to state educational agencies (SEAs). All states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and some outlying areas are eligible to apply. A state education agency may not receive more than one grant during the authorization period of FY 1999 and 2000.

State educational agencies that receive funding are required to make subgrants under two separate programs, Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance.

- *Local Reading Improvement* subgrants (Section 2255) are awarded on a competitive basis to: (1) local districts that have at least one school in Title I school improvement status; (2) districts with the highest or second highest number of poor children in the state (as counted under section 1124(c)); or (3) districts with the highest or second highest percentages of poverty in the state.
- *Tutorial Assistance* subgrants (Section 2256) are awarded on a competitive basis to LEAs that meet one of the eligibility criteria listed for the Local Reading Improvement subgrants plus LEAs that have at least one school in the geographic area served by the agency that is located in an area designated as an empowerment zone under part I of sub-chapter U of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or is located in an area designated as an enterprise community under that part.

Local districts that receive funds must use the funds to support services to eligible schools. Eligibility is determined as follows:

- Local Reading Improvement subgrants must be used to support the reform of reading instruction in any eligible school selected by the LEA that is a (1) school in Title I school improvement status; (2) school with the highest or second highest number of poor children in the district; or (3) school with the highest or second highest percentages of poverty in the district.
- Tutorial Assistance subgrants must be used for children enrolled in any school selected by the agency that meets the eligibility criteria for Local Reading Improvement schools or is within an empowerment zone or enterprise community.

A3 Must all eligible LEAs receive grants?

SEAs that receive grants must make competitive subgrants to eligible LEAs. SEAs should make subgrants only to those eligible LEAs that submit high quality applications for funding and which in their applications show a clear commitment to using grant funds to support the types of reading programs and activities that are described in the REA. If all eligible LEAs submit high quality applications, they may all receive funding. However, there is no requirement to give money to all eligible LEAs. SEAs could, for example, not fund the LEA

with the largest number of poor children if that LEA submitted an application that was not of high quality.

In addition, SEAs may want to consider whether the funds available will allow them to fund all qualified applicants at a sufficient level to support effective programs and make awards accordingly, since a solid level of funding is necessary to effectively carry out the REA activities.

A4 How much money was appropriated for the Reading Excellence Act for FY 1999?

For FY 1999, \$260 million was appropriated for the Reading Excellence Act. This includes \$10 million for Even Start Statewide family literacy initiative grants, \$3.9 million for national evaluation activities, \$5 million for National Institute for Literacy dissemination, and \$241.1 million for Reading Excellence Act grants to states.

The President's budget request for FY 2000 includes \$286 million for the program, an increase of \$26 million. Congressional action on the request is likely to occur during the summer or fall, 1999.

A5 What types of activities may be supported with Local Reading Improvement or Tutorial Assistance subgrants?

- For Local Reading Improvement subgrants, among the allowable activities are: providing professional development for teachers based on the best research and practice; operating tutoring programs before school, after school, during non-instructional periods of the school day, on weekends, and during the summer; providing family literacy services (based on programs such as the Even Start model) that enable parents to be their children's first and most important teachers; providing programs to assist kindergarten children who are not ready for the transition to 1st grade; and providing coordination of reading, library, and literacy programs within the local educational agency to avoid duplication and increase the effectiveness of activities. (Section 2255(d))
- Tutorial Assistance subgrants provide tutoring for children who have difficulty reading, including difficulty mastering phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension. Such assistance may be provided before school, after school, on weekends, or during the summer, and instructional practices must be based on scientifically based reading research. (Section 2256(b))

Section B. Scientifically Based Reading Research

B1 What is scientifically based reading research?

The statute defines scientifically based reading research as the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties (Section 2252(5)). To meet the statutory definition, the research must:

- employ systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- involve rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
- rely on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
- have been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

B2 What are characteristics of scientifically based reading research?

When reviewing research findings to determine whether the research on which the findings were based met the four criteria specified in the REA (listed in bold below), readers may want to ask themselves questions about how well the research met each of the criteria. Examples of the types of questions that could be asked about each criteria include:

- **Use of rigorous, systematic, and empirical methods.** Does the work have a solid theoretical or research foundation? Was it carefully designed to avoid biased findings and unwarranted claims of effectiveness? Does the research clearly delineate how the research was conducted, by whom it was conducted, and on whom it was conducted? Does it explain what procedures were followed to avoid spurious findings?
- **Adequacy of the data analyses to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn.** Was the research designed to minimize alternative explanations for observed effects? Are the observed effects consistent with the overall conclusions and claims of effectiveness? Does the research present convincing documentation that the observed results were the result of the intervention? Does the research make clear what populations were studied (i.e., does it describe the participants' ages, as well as their demographic, cognitive, academic, and behavioral characteristics) and does it describe to whom the findings can be generalized? Does the study provide a full description of the outcome measures?
- **Reliance on measurements or observational methods that provided valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations.** Are the findings based on a single-investigator single-classroom study, or were similar findings observed by multiple investigators in numerous locations? What procedures were in place to minimize researcher biases? Do observed results “hold up” over time? Are the study interventions described in sufficient detail to allow for replicability? Does the research explain how instructional fidelity was ensured and assessed?
- **Acceptance by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.** Has the

research been carefully reviewed by unbiased individuals who were not part of the research study? Have the findings been subjected to external scrutiny and verification?

B3 What activities must be grounded in scientifically based research?

The primary purpose of the Reading Excellence Act is to improve the reading skills of students and the instructional practices of current teachers (and, as appropriate, other instructional staff) who teach reading, through the use of findings from scientifically based reading research, including findings relating to phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension

Not all activities funded by the REA must be based on scientifically based research, although the statute heavily emphasizes the importance of such research in program selection and implementation. The provisions of the statute that specifically refer to activities based on scientifically based reading research are as follows:

The Secretary must:

- Give priority to applications from SEAs whose states have modified, are modifying, or will provide an assurance that they will within 18 months modify the teacher certification requirements for elementary school teachers. The revisions to the certification requirements must increase the training and the methods of teaching reading required for certification as an elementary school teacher to reflect scientifically based reading research. (Note, however, that this provision is not meant to establish a national system of teacher certification.) (Section 2253(c)(2)(C))
- Evaluate SEA applications using a panel which includes experts who provide professional development to teachers and other staff based on scientifically based reading research. (Section 2253(c)(2)(B))

In their applications for funding, state educational agencies must:

- Describe how the SEA will ensure that professional development activities are based on scientifically based reading research (section 2253(b)(2)(B)(II)) and that all subgrantees will use practices based on scientifically based reading research. (Section 2253(b)(2)(B)(vi))
- Provide an assurance that each LEA receiving a subgrant will provide professional development to classroom teachers and other appropriate instructional staff on the teaching of reading based on scientifically based reading research. (Section 2253(b)(2)(C)(i))
- Provide an assurance that each LEA receiving a subgrant will ensure that teachers, other instructional personnel, and tutors providing supplemental reading support for students entering kindergarten or in kindergarten through grade 3 have been appropriately trained using scientifically based reading research. (Section 2253(b)(2)(C)(iv))

When forming REA partnerships, State educational agencies must:

- Give consideration to including a community-based organization that uses scientifically based reading research. (Section 2253(d)(1)(E))
- Consider including a representative of an institution of higher education operating a program of teacher preparation based on scientifically based reading research in the state (section 2253(d)(2)(A)) and a representative of an eligible private nonprofit or for-profit professional development provider that provides instruction based on scientifically based reading research. (Section 2253(d)(2)(C))

When conducting the required program evaluation, the SEA must:

- Contract with an entity that conducts scientifically based reading research. (Section 2259(a)(2))

Local educational agencies applying for Local Reading Improvement (LRI) subgrants must:

- Describe in their applications how they will work with schools selected to receive LRI funding to select one or more programs of reading instruction that have been developed using scientifically based reading research (section 2255(b)(1)(A)) and that they will use supervised individuals, including tutors, who have been appropriately trained using scientifically based reading research to provide additional support for children preparing to enter kindergarten or in kindergarten through grade 3 who are experiencing difficulty reading (section 2255(b)(2)(D)).
- Include in their application an assurance that they will carry out professional development for classroom teachers and other instructional staff on the teaching of reading based on scientifically based reading research. (Section 2255(b)(2)(A))

Local educational agencies receiving Local Reading Improvement (LRI) subgrants must:

- Secure technical and other assistance from a program of reading instruction based on scientifically based reading research. (Section 2255(d)(1)(A)(i))
- Provide professional development activities to teachers and other instructional staff (including training of tutors), using scientifically based reading research. (Section 2255(d)(1)(B))
- Provide additional support to children entering kindergarten and in grades K through 3 who are experiencing difficulty reading using individuals (including tutors) who have been appropriately trained using scientifically based reading research. (Section 2255(d)(1)(H))
- Provide instruction to parents and reading tutors that is based on scientifically based reading research. (Section 2255(d)(1)(F))

LEAs that receive Tutorial Assistance subgrants must:

- Ensure that the tutorial assistance provided uses instructional practices based on scientifically based reading research. (Section 2256(b)(2))

The National Institute for Literacy must:

- Disseminate information on scientifically based reading research. (Sections 2258(a) and (b))

B4 Must research meet all of the characteristics of the REA definition of scientifically based reading research to be considered?

Yes. The statute requires these characteristics.

Readers seeking additional guidance may wish to consult standard references on research methods. One source readers may want to consider is the National Research Council report "Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children" (1998). The National Research Council, when conducting a review of reading research, followed basic guidelines for scientific method. The NRC wrote:

"Our review and summary of the literature are framed by some very basic principles of evidence evaluation. These principles derive from our

commitment to the scientific method, which we view not as a strict set of rules but instead as a broad framework defined by some general guidelines. Some of the most important are that (1) science aims for knowledge that is publicly verifiable, (2) science seeks testable theories—not unquestioned edicts, (3) science employs methods of systematic empiricism...Science renders knowledge public by such procedures as peer review and such mechanisms as systematic replication.”

B5 What kind of evidence is critical in determining whether instructional programs and professional development activities meet the required standards?

Applicants should review all theoretical and conceptual claims and assumptions that serve as the foundation for each reading strategy, program, or method of instruction. Too often, assumptions that underlie reading instruction are not supported by scientific data.

A clear definition of reliable evidence of effectiveness is critical to the successful selection and implementation of research-based reading improvement strategies.

One approach to assessing the adequacy of professional development activities or instructional programs is to examine the extent to which they vary along four dimensions: the theoretical foundation for the activity or program, how well the activity or program improves student achievement, the conditions required for activity or program implementation, and evidence of replicability. The Department encourages states to consider these four dimensions when they examine evidence of the effectiveness of research-based reading improvement programs and professional development activities that will be implemented by local educational agencies that compete for subgrants. The types of information states may want to consider along these four dimensions include:

- **The theoretical or research foundation for the program or activity.** Does the program or activity provide a well-developed theory or research findings to explain why a particular program, service, or activity improves students’ reading ability?
- **Evaluation-based evidence of improvements in students’ reading achievement.** Does the program or activity provide evidence of educationally significant improvement through reliable measures of student reading before and after implementation of the program or intervention? Does the evidence make clear the magnitude of the improvement, and show that the results are educationally significant (that is, of sufficient magnitude to make a “real” difference in student performance), not just statistically significant?
- **Evidence of the conditions required for effective implementation.** Does the program explain what it takes to make the program fully operational, including estimates of the cost, in respect to both time and money, of implementation? Does it explain the full costs of the professional development activities, including teachers’ time?
- **Evidence of replicability.** Has the program or activity been successfully implemented in more than one location? Was information provided on the conditions under which the program or activity was replicated: for example, descriptions of the students’ ages, educational background and achievement level; classroom and teacher characteristics; or parental and community involvement?

Ideally, evidence would be available across all four of these dimensions for reading improvement programs and professional development activities under consideration. In practice, the quality of the evidence available for each of the four dimensions is likely to vary not only from program to program but also within a particular program. A program might have a very strong theory for why it should work and evidence that it improves student outcomes

for some children, but might have only weak evidence of effective replicability. In considering alternatives, states might want to evaluate evidence along a continuum from most rigorous to marginal.

The table in Appendix A, page 43, is designed to assist states in evaluating the effectiveness of reading programs and teacher development activities proposed by local educational agencies in their applications, or of the criteria for program selection proposed by the local educational agencies. The table poses illustrative questions that states might want to ask when evaluating research-based alternatives. The most effective programs would be those that can provide the most rigorous evidence for each of the four dimensions. Programs and activities that do not provide rigorous evidence along each of the four would be weaker, with those providing limited information along two or more dimensions being unlikely to meet the REA criteria for scientific rigor. Following Appendix A's table are examples in which the factors are applied to hypothetical reading programs.

B6 Is a state educational agency responsible for ensuring that it funds research-based programs of reading instruction?

Yes. In its application to the Department for Reading Excellence Act funding, each SEA must describe how it will ensure that the subgrantees will use practices based on scientifically based reading research. In determining which local educational agencies receive subgrants, it is the SEA's responsibility to ensure that all REA-funded programs, services, and activities proposed and implemented by districts meet the requirements of the REA.

States may want to consider using the guidance and chart on research-based programs (see Appendix A, page 43) to establish a subgrant process and selection criteria that address this fundamental program requirement. However, use of this guidance is optional.

B7 Must funded local educational agencies select only programs of reading instruction that have been fully evaluated and had the results published in a peer-reviewed journal?

The law requires that local educational agencies work with schools receiving assistance to select one or more programs of reading instruction developed using scientifically based reading research. Local educational agencies may wish to consider whether well-established, nationally-known programs with strong evaluation evidence meet their needs. We expect that many will want to use such programs. However, when selecting the programs, state and local personnel should review the programs carefully to ensure that they meet the criteria for scientifically based reading research in the REA.

A locally developed program that is based on high quality, peer-reviewed research may be acceptable even if the program itself has not been fully evaluated, peer-reviewed, and published in a journal. We encourage states and districts that have identified high quality local programs to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the programs and publish or otherwise disseminate the findings. Again, personnel will need to ensure that the programs meet the REA criteria for reading research.

B8 Where can I get help about what constitutes scientifically based reading research?

In addition to carrying out the broader dissemination activities as described in the Reading Excellence Act (see section 2258), the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) will provide help to any SEA that requests assistance in determining what constitutes scientifically based reading research. This information could be useful to the SEA in developing its own application and in designing subgrant application forms.

The National Institute for Literacy is an independent federal organization that is leading the national effort toward a fully literate America. By fostering collaboration and innovation, the Institute builds and strengthens state, regional, and national literacy infrastructures, with the goal of ensuring that all Americans with literacy needs receive the high-quality education and basic skills services necessary to achieving success in the workplace, family, and community. Information on NIFL is available on-line at <http://nifl.gov/> or at (202) 632-1500.

B9 Where can I learn more about reading research that meets the criteria for inclusion in programs and activities funded by the Reading Excellence Act?

Note: Many organizations, including the Department of Education, provide information on a wide variety of programs and practices, ranging from those that have been carefully evaluated to those that are thought to be promising. States should evaluate each program under consideration to determine whether it meets the requirements of the REA. We have provided the following information as a service to readers and not as an endorsement.

For more information, readers may wish to consider the following sources, among others.

- *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*. Catherine E. Snow, M. Susan Burns, and Peg Griffin, Ed. National Research Council, National Academy Press, Washington, DC, 1998. <http://www.nap.edu/>
- *America Reads Challenge*, the U.S. Department of Education program to improve reading. <http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/>
- *The National Reading Panel Progress Report*. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, February 22, 1999.
- *Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning about Print*, Marilyn Adams, MIT Press, 1990.
- *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success*. M. Susan Burns, Peg Griffin, and Catherine Snow, Ed. National Research Council, National Academy Press, Washington, DC, 1998. <http://www.nap.edu/>

Eligible applicants may also consult the U.S. Department of Education technical assistance and information providers. The Department's assistance and information providers include:

- *Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers*. The U. S. Department of Education funds 15 Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers that help states, schools districts, schools, tribes, community-based organizations, and other grant recipients with the administration, integration and implementation of programs funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The Centers provide comprehensive training and technical assistance to improve teaching and learning and to meet the needs of children served by ESEA programs. More information about Comprehensive Centers is available at www.wested.org/cc/html/ccnetwork.htm.
- *Regional Educational Laboratories*. The U. S. Department of Education's Regional Educational Laboratory Program is a network of 10 Regional Labs working to ensure that those involved in educational improvement at the local, state and regional levels have access to the best available research and knowledge from practice. The program is designed to help educators, policymakers, and communities improve schools and help all

students attain their full potential. Information about the Regional Educational Lab program is available at www.ed.gov/prog_info/Labs/

- *The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)*. ERIC is a distributed national information system designed to provide users with ready access to an extensive body of education-related literature. Supported by the National Library of Education, ERIC encompasses the world's largest and most frequently searched education data base and a network of knowledgeable and helpful subject experts. ERIC features an extensive Internet presence, including the award-winning AskERIC question-answering service and Virtual Library, and the National Parent Information Network. Additional information about ERIC is available at www.accesseric.org:81/.
- *The Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA)*. CIERA is a national research center funded by the Department of Education. CIERA's mission is to improve the reading achievement of America's children by generating and disseminating theoretical, empirical, and practical solutions to persistent problems in the learning and teaching of beginning reading. CIERA information is at <http://www.ciera.org/>.

For examples of programs of reading instruction identified by other organizations, readers may want to consult the following sources, among others:

- Learning First Alliance. (1998). *Every Child Reading: An Action Plan*. <http://www.learningfirst.org/>.
- The International Reading Association, <http://www.ira.org> and the National Association for the Education of Young Children, <http://www.naeyc.org/> have prepared a joint position statement on reading: *Overview of Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children: A joint position of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)*, http://www.naeyc.org/about/about_main.htm

Section C. Federal Awards to States

C1 Who is eligible to apply for a Reading and Literacy Grant under Section 2253 of the Reading Excellence Act?

Eligible applicants include state educational agencies in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau are *not* eligible to receive a grant.

C2 When should a state educational agency submit its application for Reading Excellence Act funds?

State educational agencies must submit their applications for FY 1999 Reading Excellence funds by May 3, 1999. All eligible applications received by that date will be reviewed by the expert peer review panel described in section 2253, (c) Approval of Applications. Late applications will be rejected.

C3 Will grant awards be competitive or will funds be awarded by formula?

The Secretary will make awards to state educational agencies on a competitive basis.

C4 What must SEAs do to apply for to apply for the funds?

SEAs must submit applications that contain specific information required by the statute. Section D contains information on the application requirements.

C5 If a state educational agency chooses not to apply to the U.S. Department of Education for a grant, may eligible local educational agencies in the state apply directly to the Department?

No. Only state educational agencies and the outlying areas noted above may apply for a grant.

C6 How many grants may a state educational agency receive?

Each state educational agency may only receive one award under the Reading Excellence Act program for the authorizing period of FY 1999 and 2000.

C7 What is the expected size of the awards to state educational agencies?

The minimum grant award for the 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico, if selected to receive a grant, is \$500,000. The Department expects actual awards to be higher, ranging from \$1 million to as high as \$30 million. The Secretary anticipates that states with larger populations of children will apply for and, if selected, receive a larger grant than smaller states.

The minimum grant award for the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, if selected to receive an award, is \$100,000. Actual awards are expected to be higher, with an average estimated award of about \$250,000.

SEAs and outlying areas are eligible to apply for any size grant over the respective minimum amounts. Table D1 provides estimates of the possible grant amounts. The amounts listed are only estimated average awards. These figures were developed to aid Departmental and state planning, and are not binding on the Department or the states. States may apply for larger or smaller grant amounts if they believe other amounts are reasonable given state needs.

Table D1. Estimated Awards		
Category	States	Estimated Range of Awards
1	California, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas	\$15,000,000 to \$30,000,000
2	Arizona, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin	\$7,500,000 to \$15,000,000
3	Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Utah	\$4,000,000 to \$7,500,000
4	Alaska, Delaware, D.C., Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming	\$1,000,000 to \$4,000,000
5	American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Virgin Islands	\$200,000 to \$300,000
NOTE: Amounts are estimated average awards and are not binding on the Department. States may apply for any size grant depending on individual state needs and program plans.		

C8 Who will review the state applications?

SEA applications will be reviewed and evaluated by a peer review panel. In accordance with the Reading Excellence Act, the Secretary, in consultation with the National Institute for Literacy, will convene the panel. As required by section 2253(c)(2)(A), the peer review panel will be composed of:

- representatives from the National Institute for Literacy, the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences, and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development;
- three individuals selected by the Secretary of Education;
- three individuals selected by the National Institute for Literacy;
- three individuals selected by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Science; and
- three individuals selected by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

The peer review panel will include (section 2253(c)(2)(B)):

- experts who are competent, by virtue of their training, expertise, or experience, to evaluate applications under this program,

- experts who provide professional development to teachers of reading to children and adults, and
- experts who provide professional development to other instructional staff, based on scientifically based reading research.

C9 What review criteria will be used to evaluate applications?

The Secretary has selected criteria from those available in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). These criteria, which are listed in the application package and in the closing date notice, will be used to evaluate all applications. The criteria were selected to enable reviewers to judge the quality of proposals, particularly the extent to which they address the requirements of scientifically based reading research.

C10 Will any priorities be established for the evaluation of applications?

Yes. The Reading Excellence Act requires the panel to give priority to applications from SEAs whose states have modified, are modifying, or will within 18 months modify teacher certification requirements for elementary school teachers. The modification must increase the training and the methods of teaching reading to reflect scientifically based reading research. Priority will be given to states that already have made such modification, those who are in the process of doing so, and those who provide an assurance that they will make the modification within 18 months of receiving an REA grant. (Section 2253(c)(2)(C))

In addition, the Secretary has added an absolute priority to clarify the intent of the REA, which is to strengthen early reading instruction. The priority is:

“ABSOLUTE PRIORITY: Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3) of the Department's General Administrative Regulations, the Secretary has the authority to establish an absolute priority for applications under programs administered by the Department. For all funds to be awarded under this competition, the Secretary establishes an absolute priority to States that propose projects that exclusively fund, at the subgrant level, activities to improve elementary school reading instruction and related early childhood, professional development, family literacy, and tutorial assistance activities. To qualify for this priority, States could not fund, at the subgrant level, any activities for middle schools or high schools. Under this competition, the Secretary will consider for funding only those applications that meet this absolute priority.”

C11 Will all state educational agencies receive grants under the Reading Excellence Act?

The Secretary will award grants on a competitive basis. Funds are limited and the Department does not expect that every state will receive funding under the FY 1999 competition. The Department plans to make awards only to applicants who submit qualified proposals. If the Department does not award all FY 1999 funds in the first competition, it may hold a second competition during 1999.

If funds are appropriated in FY 2000, the Department will conduct another competition in that year. State educational agencies that do not receive grants from the FY 1999 competition(s) will be eligible to apply for an award in FY 2000. The submission date for the FY 2000 competition(s), if any, will be announced in the *Federal Register*.

C12 When will the announcements of grants be made?

The Secretary will announce the selection of grants to states on or about June 1, 1999.

C13 When will Reading Excellence Act funds become available to the states?

Fiscal year 1999 Reading Excellence Act funds are available for obligation by the Department to the state educational agencies on July 1, 1999. The Department anticipates obligating the funds on that date or shortly thereafter.

C14 How long are the grant funds available to states?

A state educational agency that receives a grant must expend the funds during the 3-year period beginning on the date on which the grant is made (Section 2253(a)(2)(B)).

The Secretary strongly encourages grant recipients to award subgrants to high-quality applications in the first year of the SEA's award. By doing so, the local educational agencies will be able to address the urgent reading and literacy needs of children and families.

C15 What regulations apply to the Reading Excellence Act program?

The Education Department General Administrative Regulation (EDGAR) provisions applicable to the Reading Excellence Act program are:

- Part 75 (Direct Grant Programs),
- Part 77 (Definitions),
- Part 79 (Intergovernmental Review of Department of Education Programs and Activities),
- Part 80 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to state and Local Governments),
- Part 81 (General Education Provisions Act-Enforcement),
- Part 82 (New Restrictions on Lobbying),
- Part 85 (Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants), and
- Part 86 (Drug-Free Schools).

In addition, 34 CFR Part 299, which implements the general provisions in Title XIV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, applies to the Reading Excellence Act program.

Section D. State Application

D1 What must be covered in a state educational agency application?

Section 2253(b)(2) contains a complete list of information that must be covered in the SEA application for a Reading and Literacy Grant under the Reading Excellence Act. The statutory language also is provided in Appendix B of this guidance.

In general, the SEA application must include descriptions or assurances regarding proposed activities and processes, including information on the following topics, among others:

- Reading and literacy partnership
- Professional development and instruction based on scientifically based reading research
- Parent participation
- Use of educational technology
- Local educational agency activities
- Students at risk of being inappropriately referred to special education
- Program coordination
- Promoting reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading materials
- Public notification of the availability of Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance subgrants
- Program evaluation, including information on evaluation instruments

All reading instruction supported under the grant—both classroom and tutorial—and professional development for teachers and tutors must be based on scientifically based reading research. (See B3.)

States must also include in their application (1) a copy of their proposed local educational agency subgrant application and (2) a description of the proposed review process, including review criteria. Federal reviewers will need information about how states plan to select participating LEAs and ensure that successful LEA applicants will implement high quality programs. Information on required elements of the LEA subgrant applications are contained in Appendix D, page 54.

D2 What types of documentation might state educational agencies include in their application to facilitate the federal review process?

The SEA, when addressing each content area, should include supporting documentation that will enable the federal peer review panel to determine the extent to which the activities will satisfy the particular content area, as well as the purpose of the Reading Excellence Act.

For example, the REA requires that the SEAs provide a description of how the activities funded by the grant will address the needs of teachers and other instructional staff, and will effectively teach students to read. The type of information that could assist the peer review panel may include a description of how the teachers' needs for professional development were assessed, descriptions of the professional development activities to be provided, and information on how the impact on students will be measured.

The SEA also must provide a description of the extent to which the activities will prepare teachers in all the major components of reading instruction (including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension). Applicants may want to include a

description of how they will determine whether the teachers benefit from the professional development activities and how the subgrant applicants will ensure that teachers improve classroom practices.

D3 What is required for a state Reading and Literacy Partnership?

The governor of the state, in consultation with the SEA, must establish a Reading and Literacy Partnership in order to receive an REA grant, and the Department strongly encourages SEAs to use the partnership to create a seamless approach to reading and literacy throughout the state. SEAs must include in their application an assurance on how the partnership assisted in the development of the state plan, how it will advise on the selection of subgrantees, and how it will assist in oversight and evaluation. (See Appendix B, page 50.) The Department encourages SEAs to provide in their applications a list of the participants, a copy of the mission statement for the partnership, information on proposed partnership activities and how the activities will link on-going reading and literacy activities in the state, a timeline for implementation, and the resources that will be available for the partnership.

The partnership must consist of at least the following participants (see Section 2253(d)(1) of the statute):

- A. The Governor of the state.
- B. The chief state school officer.
- C. The chairman and the ranking member of each committee of the state legislature that is responsible for education policy.
- D. A representative, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief state school officer, of at least one local educational agency that is eligible to receive a Local Reading Improvement subgrant.
- E. A representative, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief state school officer, of a community-based organization working with children to improve their reading skills, particularly a community-based organization using tutors and scientifically based reading research.
- F. State directors of appropriate Federal or state programs with a strong reading component.
- G. A parent of a public or private school student or a parent who educates his or her child or children in their home, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief state school officer.
- H. A teacher who successfully teaches reading and an instructional staff member, selected jointly by the Governor and the chief state school officer. The term "instructional staff" includes staff such as principals, teachers, librarians, and library media specialists. (See Section 2252 of the REA or Appendix F, page 59, for the definition of "instructional staff".)
- I. A family literacy service provider selected jointly by the Governor and the chief state school officer.

A reading and literacy partnership may include additional participants (Section 2253(d)(2)). If there are additional participants, they must be selected jointly by the Governor and the chief state school officer. Additional partners may include a representative of—

- A. An institution of higher education operating a program of teacher preparation based on scientifically based reading research in the state;
- B. A local educational agency;
- C. A private nonprofit or for-profit eligible professional development provider providing instruction based on scientifically based reading research;
- D. An adult education provider;
- E. A volunteer organization that is involved in reading programs; or
- F. A school library or a public library that offers reading or literacy programs for children or families.

Some SEAs may have established a reading consortium, partnership, or other similar body before the date of the enactment of the Reading Excellence Act. If this consortium, partnership, or other body includes the Governor and the chief state school officer and has, as a central part of its mission, the promotion of literacy for children in their early childhood years through the 3rd grade and of family literacy services, the state may elect to treat that consortium, partnership, or body as the reading and literacy partnership for the state. In this case, the partnership may be considered a reading and literacy partnership for purposes of the other provisions of this part even though it does not include all of the required participants under this part.

D4 What is the purpose of the Reading Excellence Act assurance regarding children at risk of referral to special education?

Early literacy intervention for children who are experiencing reading difficulties often can prevent such children from being referred to special education. In their state applications, SEAs must provide an assurance that instruction in reading will be provided to children with reading difficulties who are at risk of being referred to special education (Section 2253(b)(2)(D)). This provision aims to prevent the misidentification of students in need of effective reading instruction. In some cases, children with reading difficulties, due to inadequate instruction and curriculum, have been unnecessarily referred to special education services and identified as having a disability.

D5 Are children with reading difficulties who have been identified as students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act eligible for services under the Reading Excellence Act?

Yes. Students with disabilities are eligible for services under the Reading Excellence Act, and should receive those services to which they are entitled under IDEA. The intent of the special education provision in the Reading Excellence Act is to avoid student misidentification and to provide early literacy intervention to prevent unnecessary referral to special education, not to restrict services to students who are appropriately identified as students with disabilities.

D6 What types of evaluation instruments might the state educational agency employ to evaluate the subgrantees' programs?

Each state educational agency that receives a Reading and Literacy Grant under section 2253 must evaluate the success of the agency's subgrantees in meeting the statutory purposes of grant. (Section 2259) In their applications, SEA must describe how the

evaluation will measure the extent to which students who are the intended beneficiaries of the subgrants made by the agency have improved their reading skills.

Section 2253(b)(2)(E)(iv) requires SEAs to provide a description of how they will assess and evaluate LEA activities. The statute does not mandate specific evaluation components, but SEAs may want to consider providing information on:

- How they plan to collect information from the project sites,
- Over what period of time they will measure student progress in reading,
- How they will assess the impact of teacher professional development on classroom practices and student outcomes, and
- How they will assess the impact of tutorial programs.

Section 2253(b)(2)(F) requires SEAs to provide a description of the evaluation instrument they will use to assess the LEA activities. Again, the SEAs have discretion on what to include, but should attempt to provide sufficient detail to allow the peer reviewers to make an informed assessment of the quality of the state plans. Such information may include:

- Whether the SEA plans to require or encourage the LEAs to use common tests. This could include a description of the age/grade of test takers as well as a content description of the test.
- A discussion of value-added indicators. This description should provide information on how the SEA will determine whether the students learned more than they would have without the REA program activities and could, for example, provide for collecting data on prior growth rates.
- A discussion of how the SEA will determine if the improvements in student reading are educationally significant.

Section F of the guidance provides additional information on evaluation requirements.

D7 What additional assurances and certifications are required in the state application?

The following assurances and certification are required in the state application:

- Assurances for Non-Construction Programs
- Assurance for Section 427 of the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)
- Certifications regarding lobbying, debarment, suspension, and other responsibility matters; and drug-free workplace requirements

Please note that respective guidelines and/or standard forms are provided in the application package.

D8 What is the responsibility of the SEA with regard to the LEA choice of reading program or the way that professional development is provided?

The SEA's application to the Department for the Reading and Literacy Grant must describe the process and selection criteria by which the SEA will make competitive grants to eligible LEAs and how it will ensure that only programs of reading instruction based on scientifically based reading research will be funded.

The responsibility to select the reading program and the way in which professional development will be provided rests with the LEA. (Section 2255(b)(1)) However, the SEA may only approve applications that clearly describe how the LEA will work with schools to implement a reading program and provide professional development based on scientifically based reading research. The SEA is responsible for ensuring that LRI funds go only to LEAs that will implement such programs.

In carrying out this responsibility, an SEA has considerable flexibility:

- The SEA may assist LEAs in identifying programs of reading instruction and professional development that meet the intent of the Act. It could disseminate guidance on the types of programs and professional development that would qualify and identify actual examples of such for LEA consideration. For example, the SEA could provide further guidance on what constitutes “scientifically based reading research” as defined in section 2252(5) of the Act. Such guidance, however, cannot change the definition in the REA.
- Some SEAs have established reading standards that are directly linked (matched) to specific programs/models. SEAs may require LEAs to select from the state’s preferences if the programs/models satisfy the statute’s definition of scientifically based reading research.
- Furthermore, an SEA may establish a competitive preference for programs that incorporate certain models using scientifically based reading research that the SEA determines are particularly effective. The SEA should exercise care, however, when establishing a competitive preference for particular models, to ensure that its LEAs and schools have sufficient flexibility to adopt a program based on scientifically based reading research that best meets their needs. If the LEA’s options are too limited, it may not have the flexibility to best meet its needs.

SEAs may wish to ask LEAs to discuss specific reading approaches they are considering and the scientific basis for each in their application to the SEA.

D9 How does the Reading Excellence Act serve private school children?

Funds awarded to SEAs and LEAs under the REA are subject to the requirements of Section 14503 of ESEA (Participation by Private School Children and Teachers) and the regulations in 34 C.F.R. 299, Subpart E. The statute and regulations require the grantee and subgrantees to provide private school children and their teachers, or other educational personnel, with program educational services or other benefits on an equitable basis with public school children and teachers.

Expenditures for the educational services and benefits provided for private school children and their teachers must be equal, taking into account the number and educational needs of the children to be served, to the expenditures for participating public school children and their teachers.

All services or benefits provided under the REA must be secular, neutral, and non-ideological.

The services and benefits provided under the REA must be provided by employees of a public agency or through a contractor that is independent of the private school and any religious organization in the provision of those services and benefits.

Potential grantees and subgrantees must consult with appropriate private school officials during the design and development of the programs under the REA on such issues as how the children’s needs will be identified; what services will be offered; how and where the services will be provided; and how the services will be assessed.

Section E. Funds Reserved for State Use and Evaluations

E1 May a state educational agency reserve a portion of its grant for state use?

Yes. Section 2254 specifies what funds may be reserved for state use.

For administrative costs:

- Each SEA may reserve no more than 5 percent of its REA grant funds for (1) costs of state administration of the Section 2255 Local Reading Improvement Subgrants and (2) evaluation of both programs—see below.
- SEAs pay for state administration costs related to the Section 2256 Tutorial Assistance subgrants (TAS) out of the grant funds reserved for the TAS subgrants. (States reserve up to 15 percent for the TAS program and may use an unspecified amount for soliciting applications, making awards, and overseeing the performance of the subgrants.)

For evaluation and performance reporting:

- Each SEA may use no more than 2 percent of its REA grant fund to carry out evaluation and performance reporting required by section 2259. *Evaluation and reporting activities must cover both the Local Reading Improvement Subgrants and the Tutorial Assistance Subgrants.*
- Further, this 2 percent is part of the 5 percent reserve for administration.

E2 Must a state conduct an evaluation of its Reading Excellence Act program?

Yes. Each SEA that receives a grant must evaluate the success of the agency's subgrantees in meeting the purposes of the Reading Excellence Act. (Section 2259(a)) At a minimum, the evaluation shall measure the extent to which students who are the intended beneficiaries of the subgrants made by the agency have improved their reading skills. The SEA must submit the findings from the evaluation under this subsection to the Secretary.

The Secretary must submit a summary of the findings from the SEA evaluations to the appropriate committees of the Congress, including the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Labor and Human Resources of the Senate. (Section 2259(a)(3))

E3 Will the Department conduct a national evaluation of the Reading Excellence Act?

The Secretary must submit the results of a national evaluation of the Reading Excellence Act to the Congress (see sections 2257 and 2259). The national evaluation will cover several aspects of the program, including monitoring the program's implementation by states, local educational agencies, and tutorial assistance providers; evaluating outcomes and impact; and identifying effective practices.

Research questions may include such questions as:

- How effective is the training provided to teachers, tutors, and parents?
- "What works" in reading instruction and tutoring? What are effective models for instruction and teacher training in reading?

- How well are state and local evaluations going? Are SEAs and LEAs using performance information for continuous improvement?
- What is the impact of the REA program on student achievement in participating schools?

The Department will also provide technical assistance to SEAs and LEAs regarding state and local evaluations.

In developing the criteria for the national evaluation, the Secretary will obtain recommendations made by the expert peer review panel that reviews the state applications. The Secretary submits this report to the Congress.

The Department of Education plans to convene a national meeting to discuss options for the required national program evaluation and will invite SEA representatives to that meeting. To the extent possible, the Department will coordinate national evaluation activities with SEA evaluations.

E4 Who should conduct the state evaluation?

The SEA must carry out the evaluation through a contract with an entity that conducts scientifically based reading research. That entity, not the SEA, conducts the evaluation.

When determining an appropriate contractor for the work, state educational agencies are encouraged to look at the contractor's past record in conducting rigorous, high-quality evaluations. Evidence of successful past work could include publications in rigorous peer-reviewed journals; research awards from national research organizations; and recognized reports to Congress, state educational agencies and other government agencies.

E5 What reports must a state file on the performance of its grant?

Each SEA that receives a grant must submit an annual performance report to the Secretary. The report shall include (1) a description of the LEAs that received funds; (2) information on the program or programs of reading instruction used by the LEAs; (3) the results of the state evaluation; and (4) other information as required by the Secretary.

E6 How can the evaluation of REA family literacy services be coordinated with evaluations of Even Start and Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs?

In evaluating the quality of family literacy services carried under subgrants, SEAs may employ the methodology used at the state and local level to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of programs that receive funds under the Even Start program and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Under both programs, states establish systems for measuring the success of local programs in achieving specific student outcomes for participating adults and children. These performance indicators may be used in evaluating family literacy services supported by reading improvement subgrants.

Section F. State Awards to LEAs for Local Reading Improvement Subgrants

F1 What are Local Reading Improvement subgrants (LRIs)?

Local Reading Improvement subgrants are awarded to local educational agencies (LEAs) based on a competitive review process. The subgrants must be for an amount sufficient to enable the subgrantee to operate a program for a 2-year period.

The subgrants provide support to local educational agencies to advance reform of reading instruction in participating schools. This must include, among other activities:

- improving the reading instruction practice of teachers and other instructional staff through professional development based on scientifically based reading research,
- carrying out family literacy services (e.g., parent and child interactive activities, early childhood education, adult training, and parent education), and
- providing early literacy intervention to children experiencing reading difficulties, including kindergarten transition programs.

A complete list of activities is provided in Section 2255(d); these activities are listed in Appendix C, page 52.

Key features include the requirement that the LEA will base the project's activities on scientifically based reading research and will enter into an agreement with an expert on the particular reading program being implemented to gain assistance with its implementation.

Other important features are:

- Participating LEAs and schools must either be in Title I school improvement status or have the first or second highest numbers or rates of children living in poverty in the state. (See Section F2.)
- The LEA must form a partnership with one or more community-based organizations of demonstrated effectiveness in early childhood literacy and reading readiness, reading instruction, and reading achievement in carrying out the project's activities, or describe why such a partnership is not feasible.

F2 Who can apply to the SEA for LRI subgrants?

Only local educational agencies (LEAs) or a consortium of LEAs are eligible to apply to their SEAs for LRI subgrants.

In addition, all applicant LEAs must have at least one of the following (section 2255(a)(1)):

- i) **School improvement status.** At least one school identified for school improvement under section 1116(c) of Title I, ESEA. (A Title I school is identified for school improvement if for two consecutive years it has failed to make adequate progress in meeting the state's student performance standards, as defined in the state's plan.)
- ii) **High poverty numbers.** The largest or second largest number of children in the state counted for the Title I formula under section 1124(c). (The children to be counted under section 1124(c) are children age 5-17 from low-income families from the most recent census, children age 5-17 in local institutions for neglected or delinquent children or

being supported in foster homes with public funds, children age 5-17 from families above the census poverty line but receiving aid to families with dependent children.)

- iii) **High poverty rate.** The highest or second highest poverty rate of school-age children in comparison to other LEAs in the state. *The LEA's poverty rate is the number of children counted under section 1124(c) of Title I divided by the total number of children aged 5-17 residing in the LEA, expressed as a percentage.*

Each LEA applying in a consortium must also meet one or more of the above requirements.

F3 What schools may participate?

Participating schools must be in Title I school improvement status, have the highest or second highest number of poor children in the LEA, or have the highest or second highest percent of poor children in the LEA.

Note on poverty rate: With respect to calculating the poverty rate for possible or proposed participant schools, the LEA may use a school's number of children counted under section 1124(c) of Title I divided by the total number of children in the school, expressed as a percentage. Alternatively, since the poverty counts under section 1124(c) are not available at the school building level, the LEA may use the number of poor children divided by all children in the school's attendance area or school. Under section 1113(a)(5) of Title I, LEAs may select a poverty measure from the following options to identify eligible school attendance areas and determine the ranking of each area:

- Children ages 5-17 in poverty counted in the most recent census data approved by the Secretary.
- Children eligible for free and reduced-price lunches under the National Free School Lunch Act.
- Children in families receiving assistance under the Aid to Families with Dependent children (AFDC) program.
- Children eligible to receive medical assistance under the Medicaid program.
- A composite of the above measures.

LEAs must use the same measure of poverty for all schools when calculating school poverty, whether it is based on children in the schools or children in the attendance areas.

F4 May middle schools, junior high schools, or high schools receive Local Reading Improvement or Tutorial Assistance funds?

No. The purpose of the Reading Excellence Act is to provide children with the readiness skills they need to learn to read once they enter school, and to teach every child to read in the child's early childhood years – as soon as the child is ready, or as soon as possible once the child enters school, but not later than the 3rd grade. (Section 2251) Only schools with elementary grades may be served under this program.

F5 May a district qualify for an REA subgrant because it has a middle or high school in Title I school improvement if it then serves only its poorest elementary schools?

Yes. Under the statute, it would be possible for an LEA to qualify for a subgrant because it had a secondary school in Title I school improvement status. The LEA could then serve its two poorest elementary schools based on the numbers of students and the two poorest

elementary schools based on the percentages of poor children in the schools. However, the intent of the law is to improve young children's reading ability in areas of greatest need, and the Department encourages SEAs and LEAs to serve only schools with a need for the program.

F6 When determining which schools, based on poverty numbers and percentages, are to be served, may an LEA include only elementary schools?

Yes. LEAs should rank order their elementary schools and select the two poorest based on the percent of children in poverty and the two poorest based on the number in poverty.

If there is overlap—for example, if the two poorest based on percent are also the two poorest based on numbers—the LEA should not add additional schools to the list.

F7 Are public charter schools eligible to participate in LRI subgrants?

Yes. Under state law, public charter schools are either LEAs or public schools within an LEA. As such, public charter schools are eligible for support on the same basis as other public schools or LEAs in the state.

If under state law the charter school is considered an LEA and meets the Act's eligibility requirements, it may apply to the SEA for a subgrant as an LEA. If the charter school is one of the public schools in the LEA, it would be eligible on the same basis as other LEA schools and the LEA may include it in its application for a subgrant.

F8 Can an LEA use subgrant funds to support a school that is already using a research based reading program?

Yes. LRI funds can be used to support eligible schools that start new programs based on scientifically based reading research or to expand or improve reading and professional development activities at a school that is already using such a reading program.

F9 What is the duration and size of the subgrants?

The SEA must give subgrants to LEAs that are sufficient to operate a program for a two-year period. Beyond this provision, the Act sets no minimum (or maximum) funding requirements for LEA grants. The Department encourages SEAs to ensure that the subgrantees receive sufficient resources to accomplish their goals.

Note: An LEA can continue to use its subgrant even if it becomes ineligible with respect to the REA eligibility criteria. For example, if its schools in Title I school improvement status leave that status during the two-year subgrant period, the LEA (and schools) can still participate.

F10 What activities must the LEA perform?

Appendix C (page 52) provides the exact statutory language on required uses of funds for Local Reading Improvement Subgrants from the Reading Excellence Act. (Section 2255(d))

In general, the LEA must provide for a variety of activities to advance reform of reading instruction in participating schools, and subgrant funds may be used for all of these activities. Reading instruction activities *must* be based on scientifically based reading research. Required activities include:

- High quality professional development for the classroom teacher and other instructional staff
- Parent training to help their children with reading
- Training for tutors
- Family literacy services (parent and child interactive activities, early childhood education, adult literacy, and parenting education)
- Kindergarten transition programs
- Tutoring and other reading support services during non-instructional time (after-school, summer, on weekends, etc.)
- Reading instruction to children with reading difficulties who are at risk of being identified as learning disabled
- Curriculum and supportive materials
- Technical assistance
- Promotion of reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading materials
- Coordination of local reading, library, and literacy programs and others supported by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
- Administrative costs

Note: Nothing precludes an LEA from using its own funds or funds from other sources to support the activities of the Local Reading Improvement subgrant project.

F11 May a school operating a Title I schoolwide program combine LRI funds with other funds in the schoolwide program?

Yes. A schoolwide program school may combine LRI funds with its other schoolwide funds to upgrade the entire instructional program of the school, including the improvement of reading through the use of programs and professional development based on scientifically based reading research. The school must carry out the activities required by the REA, but would not be required to maintain a separate account for use of LRI funds. LRI activities would be part of the schoolwide program plan. The LEA must, however, carry out the purposes and intent of the individual programs. The Department has provided guidance on schoolwide programs, "Implementing Schoolwide Programs: An Idea Book on Planning" October 1998, which is available at http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Idea_Planning/.

F12 How are administrative costs handled?

The LEA may use up to 5 percent of its subgrant for administrative costs. In addition, under Section 14203 of ESEA, it may consolidate its administrative funds under the REA with other administrative funds received under ESEA "covered programs."

F13 Can the LEA train personnel from other schools or LEAs in the research based reading instruction program being used in participating schools?

Yes, but only on a fee-for-service basis. To pay for these services, non-participating schools or LEAs may use Title I or other appropriate federal funds to the extent consistent with law and may be able to use state, local, or other resources as well.

F14 How does the LEA partnership with community-based organizations work?

The LEA must, to the extent feasible, form a partnership with one or more community-based organizations (CBOs) to carry out its subgrant activities. The partner CBO or CBOs must have demonstrated effectiveness in early childhood literacy, reading readiness, reading instruction, and reading achievement for both adults and children.

Examples of some CBO organizations that may meet this requirement include family literacy programs, public libraries, Head Start programs, and adult education programs.

Note: One way for the partnership of LEA and CBO(s) to demonstrate that the CBO(s) meets this effectiveness requirement is by providing evaluation or performance measurement data on services. SEAs may need to provide guidance on what kind of information is needed to meet the legislative requirement.

If the LEA does not propose a partnership with one or more CBOs, it must provide information in its application on why it was not able to do so.

F15 How can local Even Start programs and Local Reading Improvement subgrants complement one another?

Local Even Start programs and Local Reading Improvement subgrants can complement one another in a number of ways. A community that has the benefit of Even Start and a Local Reading Improvement subgrant may:

- Expand family literacy services to more families with young children; or
- Coordinate and provide joint professional development so that there is greater continuity between early learning experiences of young children and their families and the reading instruction provided in the elementary grades.

F16 What must an LEA include in its application to its SEA for an LRI subgrant?

Appendix D, page 54, contains the statutory language (section 2255(b)) on local applications for Local Reading Improvement subgrants from the Reading Excellence Act.

In general, in addition to any information required by the state, the LEA must describe how it will work with the schools it proposes as participants. *The LEA activities must be based on reading instruction programs based upon scientifically based reading research.*

Required activities that must be described or for which assurances are to be provided include:

- Selection of reading improvement programs based on scientifically based reading research
- Implementing the program(s) with all academic teachers in the schools and, where appropriate, with parents

- Technical assistance from experts familiar with reading programs selected by the LEA, or with their implementation
- Professional development for classroom teachers and other instructional staff
- Curriculum and supporting materials, if needed
- Family literacy services
- Kindergarten transition programs or services for students having difficulty with reading skills
- Support programs administered by trained staff for before- or after-school, weekends, non-instructional periods of the school day, or summer
- Coordination of reading, library, and literacy programs to avoid duplication and increase program effectiveness
- Parent, tutor, and early childhood education provider involvement
- Reading instruction for children at risk of being referred to special education or who had been evaluated and were not identified as having a disability
- Promoting reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading materials
- Parent information on teacher qualification in reading
- Partnership with one or more community-based organizations in implementing the reading programs, if feasible.

In addition, the Secretary encourages SEAs to consider requiring in the application information about how the applicant intends to comply with the equitable participation requirements of private school children (see Section F17, page 32).

See Section B9, page 14, for other resources, including Internet sites with information on after-school and summer programs, family literacy programs, special education, and effective professional development.

F17 Are there any special "types" of LEAs that may apply for subgrants?

Yes. Some intermediate units, BIA schools, and charter schools may be eligible:

- **Intermediate units.** An intermediate unit within a state may apply for LRI funds on behalf of eligible LEAs for which it provides services, as long as it meets the definition of an LEA under section 14101(18) of ESEA.
- **Bureau of Indian Affairs schools.** Bureau of Indian Affairs schools may be eligible to apply if they qualify as an LEA under the specific definition of LEA in section 14101(18)(A), (B), or (C) of ESEA. A consortium of BIA schools that meets the requirements of section 14103 of ESEA would also be eligible. Because the BIA is not eligible to receive a state grant, individual BIA schools or a consortium of BIA schools would apply for subgrants directly to the SEAs of their respective states.
- **Charter schools.** In some states, charter schools may function as independent LEAs. These charter schools would qualify for eligibility using the same criteria as other LEAs in the state. (See F7, page 29.)

F18 How does the Reading Excellence Act serve private school children?

See Section D9, page 24, for information on private school participation.

Section G. State Awards to LEAs for Tutorial Assistance Subgrants

G1 What is a Tutorial Assistance Subgrant (TAS)?

The Tutorial Assistance Subgrants fund tutorial assistance in reading to children having difficulty in reading. TAS funds may be used to provide tutoring assistance before or after school, on weekends, or during the summer.

Each SEA may reserve up to 15 percent of its overall grant for this subgrant program, and must award at least one Tutorial Assistance Subgrant, assuming that an eligible LEA applies.

SEAs award Tutorial Assistance Subgrants to LEAs based on a competitive review process. There is no time period specified for the length of the subgrants, but SEAs may set a reasonable project period for the subgrants.

Other important features:

- Eligible LEAs must have schools in empowerment zones, in enterprise communities, in Title I school improvement status, or have the first or second highest poverty numbers or rates among districts in the state. Participating schools must be in an empowerment zone or enterprise community, in Title I school improvement status, or have the first or second highest poverty numbers or rates among schools in the districts. (Section 2256(a)(1))
- *The LEA must give public notice of the availability of the subgrant funding to possible providers and to parents, within 30 days of receiving the state notice. (Section 2256(a)(2))*
- *Please read section G8, page 36, below regarding the unlikely but possible situation in which funds reserved for Tutorial Assistance Subgrants could not be used .*

As with the Local Reading Improvement Grants, a key feature is the requirement that the tutoring provided under the TAS must be based on scientifically based reading research and also be consistent with the reading program used by the child's school.

G2 Who provides the tutoring services?

- Tutoring providers must include a school-based program as well as at least one independent provider under contract to the LEA.
- The contract provider(s) must be independent, in the provision of these services, of any private school whose children are being served and any religious organization.
- The tutorial assistance providers accepted for this program must have a record of effectiveness in providing tutorial services in reading readiness, reading instruction, or early childhood literacy.

G3 Must parents be notified about the availability of TAS tutoring programs?

Yes, parents must receive the following information about choices of services under this program (section 2256(a)(2)(B)):

- Parents must be notified of the TAS tutoring options available for their children. Each LEA receiving a TAS subgrant must be able to offer parents multiple choices for providers, including a school-based program and at least one non-LEA provider under contract.
- The LEA must develop information for parents of eligible children on their choices for tutorial assistance, including information on the quality and effectiveness of the tutorial assistance offered by each approved provider.

G4 How must the LEA use TAS funds?

The LEA must use the funds for a variety of activities to provide tutorial assistance in reading—before school, after school, on weekends, or during the summer—to children having difficulty reading (section 2256(b)). *The tutoring must be based on scientifically based reading research.* (See page 9 for definition and discussions.) Activities required include, among others:

- Developing provider eligibility criteria
- Offering multiple choices among providers for parents, including at least one school-based program and one contract program
- Developing procedures for:
 - providing initial and additional information to parents on their choices, including recommendations when requested by the parent
 - selecting children for the program, including selecting among children when too many are identified for services. *The selection procedures must include giving priority to children most in need, as determined through assessments, and randomly selecting children equally in need.*
 - a methodology for paying providers through a contract
 - ensuring oversight over the providers
 - providing information to parents on the quality of the programs and on their child's progress
 - ensuring participant confidentiality—the names of children participating in the program (and their parents) and any personally identifiable information about any child or parent may not be disclosed without the prior written consent of the parent.

See Appendix E, page 56, for the exact language on use of funds for Tutorial Assistance Subgrants from the Reading Excellence Act.

G5 Which LEAs are eligible to receive Tutorial Assistance Subgrants?

To be eligible for a Tutorial Assistance Subgrant, the LEA must qualify by one or more of the following criteria:

- i) ***Title I school improvement status.*** At least one school that is identified for school improvement under section 1116(c) of ESEA must be located in the geographic area served by the LEA.

- ii) **High poverty numbers.** The LEA must have the largest or second largest number of children who are counted under section 1124(c) of ESEA, in comparison to all other LEAs in the state.
- iii) **High poverty rate.** The LEA must have the highest or second highest school-age child poverty rate, in comparison to all other LEAs in the state.

The term 'school-age child poverty rate' means the number of children counted under section 1124(c) who are living within the geographic boundaries of the local educational agency, expressed as a percentage of the total number of children aged 5-17 years living within the geographic boundaries of the local educational agency.

- iv) **Empowerment zone or enterprise community.** The LEA must have at least one school in the geographic area served by the LEA that—(i) is located in an area designated as an empowerment zone under part I of sub-chapter U of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986; or (ii) is located in an area designated as an enterprise community under part I of subchapter U of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

Also see Section F17 (page 32) regarding special types of LEAs that may apply (some intermediate units, BIA schools, and charter schools).

G6 May an LEA receive both a Local Reading Improvement and a Tutorial Assistance Subgrant?

Yes, an eligible LEA may apply to either or both state competitions for these subgrant programs.

G7 How is notification made of the availability of Tutorial Assistance Subgrants?

Both SEAs and LEAs have duties with respect to notification on Tutorial Assistance Subgrants:

- **SEAs.** Prior to receiving applications, the SEA must provide a notice to all its LEAs regarding the availability of the subgrants. (Section 2256(a)(2)(A))
- **LEAs.** Within 30 days of receiving a state's notice, all LEAs that qualify (see G4 above) must provide public notice to potential tutorial assistance providers and parents in its jurisdiction that the subgrants are available and the LEA could apply to the state under a competitive process for the funds. **LEAs must make this public notification as a condition of receiving Title I funds.** (Section 2256(a)(2)(B))

G8 Must an SEA award a Tutorial Assistance Subgrant?

Yes. Each SEA must make at least one Tutorial Assistance Subgrant to a school district. The state may reserve up to 15 percent of its Reading and Literacy Grant for this purpose.

There is one important exception, however. If no LEA submits an application for a Tutorial Assistance Subgrant within 6 months from the date on which the SEA notified the LEAs that subgrants were available, the SEA may use the funds for Local Reading Improvement Subgrants—after fulfilling the following conditions. To do so, the SEA must certify to the Secretary of Education that:

- i) The SEA provided appropriate notice to LEAs regarding the availability of subgrants;
- ii) No Tutorial Assistance Subgrant applications were received;

- iii) The eligible LEAs properly provided public notice; and
- iv) The LEAs satisfactorily demonstrated that no qualified research based tutorial assistance provider within their jurisdiction asked them to submit an application that met the stated criteria in the law.

If no eligible LEA submits an application for a Tutorial Assistance Subgrant (TAS) and the SEA cannot make the above certifications, the SEA cannot use the reserved TAS funding for Local Reading Improvement grants (LRIs). *For example, if at least one potential tutorial provider asks an LEA to apply and it refuses (and no eligible LEA submits an application), this would trigger the provision prohibiting use of TAS money for LRIs.* The Department strongly encourages SEAs to encourage LEAs and eligible tutoring providers to participate in this program.

G9 What schools may participate?

Participating schools must be in Title I school improvement status, or be first or second in the LEA with respect to high poverty numbers or rate, or be in an empowerment zone or enterprise community.

Note on poverty rate: With respect to calculating the poverty rate for possible or proposed participant schools, the LEA may use a school's number of children counted under section 1124(c) of Title I divided by the total number of children in the school, expressed as a percentage. Alternatively, the LEA may use the Title I children divided by all children in the school's attendance area. (See Section F3, page 28, for additional guidance on how to use attendance area for this calculation.) LEAs must use a consistent approach for all schools when calculating school poverty—whether it is based on children in the school or children in attendance areas.

See Section F17, page 32, regarding participation of private schools.

G10 What must an LEA application contain?

Awards to LEAs for these subgrants must be made on a competitive basis. The SEA should develop an appropriate application form and instructions to ensure that it receives good applications and can make appropriate judgments about the likely quality of the local program.

- The LEA must submit whatever information the SEA requires.
- In addition, the LEA must submit an assurance that it will carry out each of the duties specified in section 2256(b) on Use of Funds for participating children.
- The LEA must also assure that it will limit use of the funds to children from eligible schools (see section G5 above).

In addition, the Secretary encourages SEAs to consider requiring in the application information about how the applicant intends to comply with the equitable participation requirements of private school children. (See Section F17, page 24, for more information on this requirement.)

G11 How do Tutorial Assistance Subgrants serve private school children?

See Section D9, page 24, for information on private school participation.

Section H. Coordination with Other Programs

H1 How does the Reading Excellence Program fit within the broader context of a state's and school's reform efforts?

The statute strongly encourages state and local education agencies to coordinate Reading Excellence Act activities with existing programs. The Reading Excellence Act requires state educational agencies to build on and promote coordination among literacy programs in the state to increase the effectiveness of the programs in improving reading for adults and children and to avoid duplication of the efforts of the programs. These programs include federally funded programs such as those funded by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as well as any state, regional, or local programs and initiatives.

A local educational agency that receives a Reading Excellence Act subgrant must ensure that REA funds are effectively coordinated and integrated with other funds available for reading instruction in grades K-6.

H2 How does the President's Coalition for the America Reads Challenge fit with the Reading Excellence Act?

The President's Coalition for the America Reads Challenge is made up of organizations committed to fulfilling the goals of the America Reads Challenge. Members of the Coalition commit time and resources to building community coalitions for literacy by supporting existing literacy programs and developing new ones where needed, and by recruiting learning partners to work on reading with America's young children from birth through third grade. Coalition members could potentially help schools receiving grants set up the partnerships required under the Reading Excellence Act. Coalition members might also be able to help schools implement tutoring programs and/or set up family literacy services with community partners such as libraries, community based organizations, companies, and other organizations. For more information and a membership list of the President's Coalition, please visit <http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/coalition.html>, or call (202) 401-8888.

H3 How does the REA fit with other federal programs and initiatives that support reading?

A variety of federal programs and initiatives, including those in Figure H1 below, are designed to provide reading instruction or to support reading. For optimal success, all reading efforts within a school should be coordinated.

School staff may want to begin by conducting a comprehensive assessment of the reading needs of all children in the school (including children with special needs such as limited English proficiency and children with disabilities). The assessment might identify the strengths the children possess, skills that need development, range of activities that will potentially improve the reading performance of the children, and professional development that will equip the school staff to address the needs of the children. The staff can then select the scientifically based reading program that best meets student needs and align professional development activities to support program implementation. Reading instruction should be seamless across grades within the school.

Having determined the appropriate reading strategy or strategies for the children and the professional development required, the school, with the assistance of the LEA, would then identify and coordinate all sources of funds available to support these activities.

Figure H1. Federal programs that support reading	
<p>Grants supporting reading services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title I • Even Start • Reading Excellence • Bilingual Education • IDEA, Parts B and C • Adult Education and Family Literacy • Class Size Reduction • Education for Homeless Children and Youth • National Writing Project • Inexpensive Book Distribution • Ready to Learn Television <p>Tutoring and after-school programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Work Study • 21st Century Community Learning Centers • Fund for the Improvement of Education <p>Standards for reading instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals 2000 Educate America Act <p>Comprehensive reform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program 	<p>Teacher training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eisenhower Professional Development • Teacher Quality Enhancement, Recruitment and Preparation (HEA, Title II) • Educational Innovations (Title VI) • IDEA Personnel Preparation <p>Technical assistance/development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Institute for Literacy • Comprehensive Technical Assistance Centers • Regional Educational Laboratories <p>Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National education research institutes • IDEA Research and Innovation • National Institute for Child Health and Human Services (HHS) • Statistics and Assessment

H4 How should Reading Excellence Programs work with Title I?

Given the criteria for school eligibility under the REA, many schools participating in the REA will be Title I schools. Some of these schools will be eligible for REA funds because they are in Title I school improvement status; others will qualify for both Title I and REA because of their level of poverty. (A school or an LEA participating in Title I is identified for Title I improvement if, for two consecutive years, it has not made adequate yearly progress toward meeting the state’s student performance standards as defined in the state’s plan.)

For participating schools that are in Title I school improvement status, the LEA and school must coordinate Title I school improvement activities with the Local Reading Improvement and/or Tutorial Assistance Subgrant activities. This includes coordinating professional development activities, where appropriate, and technical assistance provided to the LEA and school as part of its Title I school improvement status. In addition, the Title I statute requires each Title I program to include strategies to increase parent involvement, such as family literacy services.

Participating schools that receive Title I funds but which are not in school improvement status may also want to coordinate activities, but the exact procedures for doing so may vary depending on whether the school has a schoolwide program or is a targeted assistance school.

- A school-wide program school is a Title I school with 50 percent or more of its children from low-income families. It has the flexibility to plan and implement comprehensive strategies for improving the whole school so that every student, especially those at greatest risk of school failure, achieves to high levels of proficiency.

Schools that decide to operate school-wide programs have great latitude to determine how to organize their operations and utilize the multiple funding sources available to them. They do not have to identify particular children as eligible for services or separately track federal dollars. Instead, school-wide program schools can use all allocated funds to increase the amount and quality of learning time. In this way, they can embrace a high-

quality curriculum, according to a comprehensive plan they have developed that ensures that children meet the state's challenging academic standards.

(For examples of how a Title I schoolwide program school can meet the intent and purposes of various Federal education programs whose funds may be combined in a schoolwide program, see the Schoolwide Program Notice published on September 21, 1995. (See <http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA/title-fr.html>.)

- A targeted assistance school is a Title I school that is ineligible for or has chosen not to operate a school-wide program. The term "targeted assistance" signifies that the services are provided to a select group of children—those identified as failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the state's challenging content and performance standards—rather than for overall school improvement, as in a school-wide program school.

Like school-wide program schools, the goal of a targeted assistance school is to improve teaching and learning to enable participants to meet the state's challenging state performance standards that all children are expected to master. To accomplish this goal, a targeted assistance program must be based on effective means for improving achievement of participants; use effective instructional strategies that give priority to extended time; provide accelerated, high quality curricula; minimize removing children from the regular classroom during regular school hours; coordinate with and support the regular educational program; provide instruction by highly qualified and trained professional staff; and implement strategies to increase parental involvement.

H5 How will the Reading Excellence Program coordinate with a Title I School Improvement Plan?

Each school identified for Title I school improvement, in consultation with parents, the local educational agency, and the school support team:

- develops or revises a school plan in ways that have the greatest likelihood of improving performance of participating children in meeting the state's student performance standards;
- submits the plan or revised plan to the local educational agency for approval;
- improves the skills of its staff by providing effective professional development activities, devoting to such activities (over two consecutive years) at least 10 percent of the Title I funds received or otherwise demonstrating that the school is carrying out effective professional development activities; and
- receives technical assistance from the local educational agency or its designee as the school develops and implements its plan.

The proposed Reading Excellence Program activities should be coordinated and integrated with the school's school improvement plan.

H6 How will the REA work with the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program?

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program, new in 1998, will help raise student achievement by assisting public schools across the country to implement effective, comprehensive school reforms that are based on reliable research and effective practices, and that include an emphasis on basic academics and parental involvement. The CSRD is designed to build upon and leverage ongoing efforts to connect higher standards with school improvement at the state and local level through Title I and other major reform

initiatives. The CSRD is intended to foster coherent school-wide improvements that cover virtually all aspects of a school's operations—including reading programs—rather than piecemeal, fragmented approaches to reform. Because of this, schools that receive funds under both the CSRD and the REA will need to ensure that efforts under the two programs are complementary.

H7 Are family literacy activities conducted under the Reading Excellence Act the same as those conducted under the Even Start Family Literacy and Adult Education programs?

The same definition of “family literacy services” applies to programs funded under the Reading Excellence Act, the Even Start Family Literacy program (Title I, Part B), and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. That definition has the following four general components: (1) parent and child together (PACT) literacy activities; (2) parenting education; (3) adult literacy training; and (4) age-appropriate child education.

A local education agency receiving a Local Reading Improvement subgrant may choose to carry out the required “family literacy services” based on a program following the Even Start model, or use another family literacy program model. In addition to the four family literacy service components, Even Start programs must serve low income families with children from birth through age seven who are among those most in need of family literacy services in the community. Even Start programs must also provide some instructional services in the home.

H8 How should a state educational agency coordinate the administration of its Local Reading Improvement subgrants with family literacy programs supported by Even Start, Title I Part A, or Adult Education programs?

One of the purposes of the Reading Excellence Act is “to expand the number of high-quality family literacy programs.” State educational agencies receiving a Reading Excellence Act grant are required to assure that each local educational agency to which they make a subgrant will provide family literacy services based on programs such as the Even Start family literacy model. Local educational agencies, in turn, must include an assurance that they will provide those family literacy services.

One way states can coordinate administration of the Local Reading Improvement subgrants with other family literacy programs is through Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative grants. The Reading Excellence Act provided increased funding under Section 1202(c) of the Even Start law for these grants to coordinate and, where appropriate, integrate existing federal, state, and local literacy resources to strengthen and expand family literacy services in the state. States with an Even Start Statewide Initiative grant must coordinate family literacy activities through a consortium of state-level programs. That coordination must include activities of the reading and literacy partnership formed by a state receiving a Reading Excellence Act grant, as well as other programs such as Title I Part A, Even Start, and Adult Education.

H9 How does the Reading Excellence Act fit with the America Reads/Work-Study Program?

On July 1, 1997, the U.S. Department of Education encouraged Federal Work-Study students to serve as reading tutors by waiving the requirement that employers pay part of their wages. In just one year, more than 1000 colleges and universities have joined the America Reads/Work-Study Program. School districts receiving local reading improvement grants must use part of their award to train and supervise tutors. In addition, school districts participating in tutorial assistance grants must arrange tutoring for children in selected schools. These programs can take place after school, before school, during non-instructional

periods during the school day, on weekends, and during the summer. College Work-Study student tutors from nearby colleges and universities could be a resource to schools and tutorial assistance providers as they implement and strengthen these programs. For a complete list of colleges and universities currently signed on to America Reads, please visit <http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/committed.html>. For information on how to contact a college not on the list, please call (202) 401-8888.

Appendix A. Continuum of Evidence of Effectiveness

The table following provides a framework for assessing whether a program is effective. This table can be used to evaluate alternative research based reading programs. By asking sample questions about each program, the programs can be categorized from “most rigorous” to “marginal.” The most effective programs would be those falling into the “rigorous” category on three or four criteria.

Following the table are two examples applying the framework's criteria to reading instruction and to teacher training in reading. We've shown a "good" example with strong evidence of effectiveness and a "poor" one for each topic.

Table A1. Continuum of Effectiveness

Evidence	Criteria: Most Rigorous	Criteria: Somewhat Rigorous	Criteria: Marginal
Theory/research foundation	Does the program explain the theory behind its design, including references to the scientific literature, that elucidate why the program improves students' ability to read?	Does the program state the theory behind its design explaining how the program's components reinforce one another to improve students' ability to read?	Does the program explain the theory behind its design?
Evaluation-based evidence of effectiveness	Have student reading gains been shown using experimental and control groups created through large-scale random assignment or carefully matched comparison groups?	Have student reading gains been shown using between or within-school comparisons?	Have student reading gains been shown for a single school?
	Has the program produced educationally significant pre and post intervention student reading gains as reliably measured using appropriate assessments?	Has the program produced student reading gains relative to district means or other comparison groups using appropriate assessment instruments?	Has the program produced improvements on other indicators of student reading achievement , e.g. amount of time students spend reading outside of school or student engagement?
	Have the student reading achievement gains been sustained for three or more years?	Have the student reading achievement gains been sustained for one or two years?	Have other indicators of improved student reading performance been sustained for one or two years?
	Have the student reading gains been confirmed through independent, third-party evaluation?	Has the program been evaluated by a state, district, or school evaluation team?	Has the program been evaluated by its developers?
Implementation	Has the program been fully implemented in multiple sites for more than 3 years?	Has the program been fully implemented in the original site(s) for more than three years?	Has the program been fully implemented in the original pilot site(s) for a minimum of one school year?
	Is documentation available that clearly specifies the program's implementation requirements and procedures, including staff development, curriculum, instructional methods, materials, assessments, and costs?	Is documentation available that attempts to describe the implementation requirements of the program including staff development, curriculum, instruction methods, materials, and assessments?	Is documentation available that provides a general description of the program's requirements?
	Are the costs of full implementation clearly specified, including whether or not the costs of materials, staff development, additional personnel etc. are included in the program's purchase price?	Have the costs of full implementation been estimated, including whether or not the costs of materials, staff development, additional personnel, etc. are included in the program's purchase price?	Is documentation available that provides general information about the program's costs?
	Has the program been implemented in schools with characteristics similar to the target school: same grade levels, similar size, similar poverty levels, similar student demographics such as racial, ethnic, and language minority composition?	Has the program been successfully implemented in at least one school with characteristics similar to the target school?	Is information on grade level, size, student demographics, poverty level, and racial, ethnic and language minority concentration available for the schools where the program has been implemented?
Replicability	Has the program been replicated successfully in a wide range of schools and districts, e.g. urban, rural, suburban?	Has the program been replicated in a number of schools or districts representing diverse settings?	Is full replication of the program being initiated in several schools?
	Have the replication sites have been evaluated, demonstrating significant student reading gains comparable to those achieved in the pilot site(s)?	Have some replication sites been evaluated, demonstrating positive gains in student reading ability?	Are promising initial results available from the replication sites?

Example 1: Applying the Criteria to Reading Instruction

Example 1A. Application of effectiveness criteria for a reading instruction example (Good evidence of effectiveness)

The "1A" Reading Program: Teachers at the Libby School observed that the school's early elementary students continued to have difficulty learning to read, and that by the end of third grade the majority were reading well below grade level. After reviewing research on effective early reading programs, they selected a comprehensive instructional program, A to Z Reading, that combines early direct instruction in phonemic awareness and systematic phonics with instruction designed to enhance students' reading comprehension.

The program includes comprehensive teacher guides, as well as the option of on-site professional development activities. All of Libby School's classroom teachers completed a one week training program during the summer before they began using instructional program in their classroom. Most teachers reported spending another week reviewing materials on their own, something which was recommended by the publisher. The publisher strongly recommends that its materials be supplemented with a rich variety of reading materials and that students have ready access to books for out-of-school reading. Because funds were limited, the school staff worked with local businesses to develop a "Books for Kids" campaign, and were able to assemble a sizeable school library. Books are placed within classroom—each classroom now has a colorful "Book Nook" where students can sign out books. Teachers work with students, using a variety of strategies developed at the school to encourage reading, to encourage students to read a wide variety of materials. The publisher provides information on effectiveness of its instructional materials, with data available from about 200 districts around the nation.

The Libby School modification—the A to Z Reading program coupled with the "Books for Kids" program—is now in its sixth year, and as of last fall, 20 schools in other districts in the state (including one in a poor neighborhood in the state's largest city) and 4 in other states have implemented the combined program. These schools have implemented the program for between one and four years.

The state education agency, upon noticing that the program appeared to be effective, assisted the school district in conducting an evaluation of the program. The state helped pay for an external evaluation, which was conducted at 8 schools, four in rural areas, two in poor neighborhoods in a large city, and two in suburban schools. The evaluation also examined the progress of similar students in 10 schools without the program. (Descriptions of the reading programs in the 10 "comparison" school are provided.) The evaluation included scores on the state reading assessment, structured teacher observations, and measures of the number of books students read over the year. Achievement information is available over 5 years at the Libby School, and for 2 to 3 years in the other schools. The results showed that students in the "Libby School" program outscored other students on all measures, and that the results were educationally significant.

Criteria	Evidence	Why?
A. Theory	Rigorous	❖ The program has a strong theoretical base and is based on findings from research.
B. Evaluation data	Rigorous	❖ The program has been evaluated using both test scores and structured observations of student behaviors. Evaluation data were available for multiple years, with students followed for between 2 and 5 years. Results were educationally significant.
C. Implementation	Somewhat rigorous	❖ The program has been running for over 5 years in the original school and up to 4 years in other schools. Information is provided on teacher training activities and on-going "additional" teacher activities, but no cost estimates are given. Some information is provided on the demographic characteristics of the students in the study schools.
D. Replicability	Rigorous	❖ The program has been successfully implemented in a variety of schools, with gains similar to those in the original site.

Example 1B. Application of effectiveness criteria for a reading instruction example (Some evidence of effectiveness)

The "1B" Reading Program: A school is considering a reading program designed to improve students' reading skills. Staff at P.S. 102, a large (1,000 student) school in an urban area, developed the program. The teachers and principal developed the program after observing that the children at the school spent little time outside of school reading, and that out-of-school reading would help support classroom instruction. They further observed that most of these students, the majority of whom were eligible for free or reduced price lunch, had limited access to books. Most families are unable to purchase many reading materials for the students, and because of transportation problems most do not have access to the local public library.

The staff spent time learning what other schools had done to improve student reading skills, and reviewed research on effective instructional strategies. They began by selecting a well-regarded beginning reading series that contains curricular materials, daily lessons, and teachers' guides, and the teachers attended a summer institute sponsored by the developer. In addition, the school staff examined studies on students' motivation to read, and decided to make a major effort to build classroom libraries.

Because funds were limited, the school staff worked with local business and churches to develop a "Books for Kids" campaign, and were able to assemble a sizeable school library. Books are placed within classroom—each classroom now has a colorful "Book Nook" where students can sign out books. Program staff report that they spend approximately 100 hours a year soliciting books, and about 400 hours a year reviewing the books for suitability and maintaining the "Book Nooks." The "Book Nooks" themselves were constructed by parent volunteers with donated materials.

Teachers have noted increased enthusiasm for reading, and (based on counts from the sign out sheets) estimate that each child reads, on average, two books a week. Teachers report that the students have improved their reading skills and, after three years of the program, most of the students are now working close to grade level in reading. Teachers maintain checklists of student reading skills and track progress over time. In addition, student test scores have continued to rise, as measured by the XYZ Test of Reading Comprehension. Three schools in other districts in the state have implemented similar programs, and report promising results after two years (as measured by structured observation and state reading assessments).

Criteria	Evidence	Why?
A. Theory	Somewhat rigorous	❖ The program is based on a review of literature on reading, and program staff explain the reason, based on that review, for the program components.
B. Evaluation data	Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ This program is assessing student reading skills by a combination of structured teacher observations and a reading test, over two years. Data analyses consist mainly of longitudinal measurements, with no information provided on whether the student population changed over time, what proportion of the students were tested, and whether different categories of students (i.e., both boys and girls) benefited from the program. ❖ Results are available for only one school, and there has been no independent evaluation of the program standards. ❖ No information is provided to show how the program staff ruled out alternative explanations for the changes observed. ❖ The project staff conducted all evaluations, and none were reviewed and approved by a panel of independent experts.
C. Implementation	Somewhat rigorous	❖ The program has been in place for one year. Limited information is provided on project costs.
D. Replicability	Somewhat rigorous	❖ The program has been implemented in three other schools with similar findings.

Example 1C. Application of effectiveness criteria for a reading instruction example (Poor evidence of effectiveness)

The "1C" Reading Program: A school is considering a reading program designed to improve students' motivation to read. The program was developed by staff at the Green School, a small (250 student) school in a rural area. The program was developed after teachers and the principal at the school observed that the children at the school spent little time outside of school reading. They further observed that most of these students, the majority of whom were eligible for free or reduced price lunch, had limited access to books. Most families are unable to purchase many reading materials for the students, and the small local library is unable to meet community needs.

The school staff worked with local businesses to develop a "Books for Kids" campaign, and were able to assemble a sizeable school library. Books are placed within classroom—each classroom now has a colorful "Book Nook" where students can sign out books. Staff believe that children, if placed in a literature-rich environment, will be able to overcome their reading difficulties.

Teachers have noted increased enthusiasm for reading and (based on counts from the sign out sheets) estimate that each child reads, on average, two books a week. Teachers report that the students have improved their reading skills and, after one year of the program, are now working close to grade level in reading.

Criteria	Evidence	Why?
A. Theory	Marginal	❖ The program does not explain the theory behind the program. The program does not build in current research on effective reading practice, including research on the effectiveness of specific instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension.
B. Evaluation data	Marginal	❖ The only measures of student reading ability are observations by the project staff who developed the program. Anecdotal descriptions of student improvement are not adequate data. ❖ The program itself would not meet the definition of scientifically based research provided in the LEA: there are no data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn; the conclusions do not include multiple measurements and evaluators; and the results have not been reviewed and approved by a panel of independent experts.
C. Implementation	Marginal	❖ The program has been in place for only one year and only in one school. No information is provided on project costs, although they appear to be minimal.
D. Replicability	Marginal	❖ The program has been implemented in only one school.

Example 2: Applying the Criteria to Professional Development for Reading Instruction

Example 2A. Application of effectiveness criteria for a teacher training example (Good evidence of effectiveness)

The "2A" Teacher Training Program provides professional development for first and second grade teachers in reading. The goal of the course is to improve teachers' knowledge and skills to teach reading. Initially, teachers take a 3-day course to instruct them in key concepts and methods. One-hour follow-up sessions are held at one-month intervals along with classroom visits by a master teacher experienced in the training's content and practice. All teachers in the schools meet by grade level several times a month to discuss how they are implementing the training program.

The training content is centered around findings from scientifically based reading research, including developing understanding on how children become literate, the relationship between early literacy behavior and later reading, the alphabetic principle, reading comprehension strategies, assessing children's progress, and other content from the reading research base.

The course has excellent information for a training program. The original training program was developed by three local university professors who tested it on teachers in three large schools who were randomly assigned to this training, a much shorter version with only one follow-up session, or no training. The evaluation results found this approach to have statistically significant results. Since then, the professors have evaluated the training as they implemented it in new schools, by comparing the training for the selected schools with close-by, comparable schools that offered only standard district training. In five out of six cases, the training showed much stronger effects.

The training program has good information on what kinds of schools and grade levels it has been implemented in, all of which are similar to the proposed school considering it. Information is available on costs, follow-up requirements, and materials.

The initial evaluation consisted of (1) pre-post questionnaires assessing teachers' knowledge before training started, immediately after the training, and six months later; (2) observation by graduate students of a sample of the teachers as they taught reading during the year; (3) questionnaires filled out by teachers several times during the year describing practice, peer interactions, barriers encountered to implementation, and need for additional support or assistance, filled out several times during the year, (4) measures of student reading achievement, and (5) a "customer satisfaction" survey. Later evaluations included all but the graduate student observations. A new professor is planning to videotape selected teachers over the next year.

Criteria	Evidence	Why?
A. Theory	Most rigorous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context of the course is fully consistent with current reading research theory. ❖ The training is consistent with current theory on effective professional development for teachers. It was sustained (more than 36 hours over the year), involved direct teaching of content, practical application, opportunities for peer collaboration, and supervised practice.
B. Evaluation data	Most rigorous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The original training was tested using experimental design (random assignment of teachers to sustained training, short training, and no training). This checks whether the teachers might have been able to achieve similar results with less costly or even no training. The replication in six more schools, with positive results adds credibility to the claims for the training's effectiveness—even though the replication used a weaker design, ❖ Use of multiple measures to check effectiveness, including collection of baseline data on knowledge, data on immediate perceptions of the training, observations to see if classroom practice changed along with teacher-reported data as well, and information on implementation by teachers and the effects of the follow-up and peer interactions. The most important effect is student learning gains, although it is also important that teachers like the training very much.
C. Implementation	Most rigorous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Good information is available on how the program was implemented in the prior schools.
D. Replicability	Somewhat rigorous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Not bad. The training program has now been implemented in 9 schools, with positive, statistically significant effects on students and teacher behavior as well as enthusiastic acceptance by teachers.

Example 2B. Application of effectiveness criteria for a teacher training example (Poor evidence of effectiveness)

The "2B" Teacher Training Program provides professional development for first and second grade teachers in reading. The goal of the course is to improve teachers' knowledge and skills to teach reading. It is a one-day course taught by a local university professor who had developed it in the prior year and provided it to teachers in two schools. It claims to provide highlights of the research base for teaching reading, including some phonics. The course reassures teachers that they do not need to cover phoneme awareness or phonics other than to illustrate them as an adjunct to reading rich text. Children are to be encouraged to try and figure out words they don't know from context. Teachers who have children who are having trouble learning to read are told to refer those children to Title I or special education.

The program was implemented in two schools, with all first and second grade teachers participating. The types of schools weren't identified in the report. The evaluation consisted of a two-page questionnaire filled out at the end of the day by participants. Evaluation results showed that 95 percent of the teachers participating felt that the training program provided excellent information that they could use in their classrooms.

Criteria	Evidence	Why?
A. Theory	Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Context of the course is not consistent with current reading research theory. For example, current research shows that guessing unfamiliar words from their context (as a primary strategy) is generally not effective for children who have difficulty learning to read. ❖ The training is for only one day. Current theory on effective professional development for teachers supports sustained training with direct teaching of content, practical application, opportunities for peer collaboration, and supervised practice. For reading, the training may need to be more than 30 hours of training, plus follow-up.
B. Evaluation data	Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Teachers (and others) participating in training programs traditionally have evaluated their training very highly, regardless of actual effects or utility of the training. While customer satisfaction is an important measure, it is should not be the primary measure. Increases in teacher knowledge and skills in teaching reading, changes in classroom practice, and—the gold standard—improvements in student achievement are the most important measures. ❖ Since the training program didn't check on teachers' knowledge at entry to the program, there was no way to judge whether the teachers already knew a lot about the content and to what extent they increased their knowledge. ❖ There was no control or comparison group to test whether teachers who didn't take the training knew as much as the trained teachers, changed their classroom instruction too, and achieved student learning gains.
C. Implementation	Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The program was only offered in two schools, was small scale with few likely effects. No documentation is available on the processes being used.
D. Replicability	Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Unknown. Two schools do not constitute replication.

Appendix B. State Application

Figure B1. State Application	
Title II, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Part C, Reading and Literacy Grants	Checklist
Section 2253. Reading and Literacy Grants to State Educational Agencies	
“(b) Application. —	
“(2) CONTENTS.—An application under this sub-section shall contain the following:	
“(A) An assurance that the Governor of the state, in consultation with the state educational agency, has established a reading and literacy partnership described in subsection (d), and a description of how such partnership—	
“(i) assisted in the development of the state plan;	
“(ii) will be involved in advising on the selection of subgrantees under sections 2255 and 2256; and	
“(iii) will assist in the oversight and evaluation of such subgrantees.	
“(B) A description of the following:	
“(i) How the state educational agency will ensure that professional development activities related to reading instruction and provided under this part are—	
“(I) coordinated with other state and local level funds and used effectively to improve instructional practices for reading; and to improve instructional practices for reading; and	
“(II) based on scientifically based reading research.	
“(ii) How the activities assisted under this part will address the needs of teachers and other instructional staff, and will effectively teach students to read, in schools receiving assistance under section 2255 and 2256.	
“(iii) The extent to which the activities will prepare teachers in all the major components of reading instruction (including phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension).	
“(iv) How the state educational agency will use technology to enhance reading and literacy professional development activities for teachers, as appropriate.	
“(v) How parents can participate in literacy-related activities assisted under this part to enhance their children’s reading.	
“(vi) How subgrants made by the state educational agency under sections 2255 and 2256 will meet the requirements of this part, including how the state educational agency will ensure that subgrantees will use practices based on scientifically based reading research.	
“(vii) How the state educational agency will, to the extent practicable, make grants to subgrantees in both rural and urban areas.	
“(viii) The process that the state used to establish the reading and literacy partnership described in subsection (d).	
“(C) An assurance that each local educational agency to which the state educational agency makes a subgrant—	
“(i) will provide professional development for the classroom teacher and other appropriate instructional staff on the teaching of reading based on scientifically based reading research;	

Figure B1. State Application	
Title II, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Part C, Reading and Literacy Grants	Checklist
Section 2253. Reading and Literacy Grants to State Educational Agencies	
“(b) Application. —	
“(ii) will provide family literacy services based on programs such as the Even Start family literacy model authorized under part B of title I, to enable parents to be their child’s first and most important teacher;	
“(iii) will carry out programs to assist those kindergarten students who are not ready for the transition to first grade, particularly students experiencing difficulty with reading skills; and	
“(iv) will use supervised individuals (including tutors), who have been appropriately trained using scientifically based reading research, to provide additional support, before school, after school, on weekends, during noninstructional periods of the before school, after school, on weekends, during noninstructional 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.	
“(D) 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).	
“(E) A description of how the state educational agency—	
“(i) will build on, and promote coordination among, literacy programs in the state (including federally funded programs such as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), in order to in-crease 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 library programs that provide access to engaging reading material;	
“(iii) will make local educational agencies described in sections 2255(a)(1) and 2256(a)(1) aware of the availability of subgrants under sections 2255 and 2256; and	
“(iv) will assess and evaluate, on a regular basis, local educational agency activities assisted under this part, with respect to whether they have been effective in achieving the purposes of this part.	
“(F) A description of the evaluation instrument the state educational agency will use for purposes of the assessments and evaluations under subparagraph (E)(iv).	

Appendix C. Local Reading Improvement Activities

Figure C1. Local Reading Improvement Activities	
Title II, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Part C, Reading and Literacy Grants	Checklist
Section 2255. Local Reading Improvement Subgrants	
“(d) USE OF FUNDS.—	
<p>“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), a local educational agency that receives a subgrant under this section shall use amounts from the subgrant to carry out activities to advance reform of reading instruction in any school that is (A) described in subsection (a)(1)(A), (B) has the largest, or second largest, number of children who are counted under section 1124(c), in comparison to all other schools in the local educational agency, (C) has the highest, or second highest, school-age child poverty rate (as defined in the second sentence of subsection (a)(1)), in comparison to all other schools in the local educational agency.</p> <p>Such activities shall include the following:</p>	
“(A) Securing technical and other assistance from—	
“(i) a program of reading instruction based on scientifically based reading re-search;	
“(ii) a person or entity with experience or expertise about such program and its implementation, who has agreed to work with the recipient in connection with its implementation; or	
“(iii) a program providing family literacy services.	
“(B) Providing professional development activities to teachers and other instructional staff (including training of tutors), using scientifically based reading research and purchasing of curricular and other supporting materials.	
“(C) Promoting reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading material.	
“(D) Providing, on a voluntary basis, training to parents of children enrolled in a school selected to receive assistance under subsection (d)(1) on how to help their children with school work, particularly in the development of reading skills. Such training may be provided directly by the subgrant recipient, or through a grant or contract with another person. Such training shall be consistent with reading reforms taking place in the school setting. No parent shall be required to participate in such training.	
“(E) Carrying out family literacy services based on programs such as the Even Start family literacy model authorized under part B of title I, to enable parents to be their child’s first and most important teacher.	
“(F) Providing instruction for parents of children enrolled in a school selected to receive assistance under subsection (d)(1), and others who volunteer to be reading tutors for such children, in the instructional practices based on scientifically based reading research used by the applicant.	
“(G) Programs to assist those kindergarten students enrolled in a school selected to receive assistance under subsection (d)(1) who are not ready for the transition to first grade, particularly students experiencing difficulty with reading skills.	
“(H) Providing additional support for children preparing to enter kindergarten and students	

Figure C1. Local Reading Improvement Activities	
Title II, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Part C, Reading and Literacy Grants	Checklist
Section 2255. Local Reading Improvement Subgrants	
“(d) USE OF FUNDS.—	
in kindergarten through grade 3 who are enrolled in a school selected to receive assistance under subsection (d)(1), who are experiencing difficulty reading, before school, after school, on weekends, during noninstructional periods of the school day, or during the summer, using supervised individuals (including tutors), who have been appropriately trained using scientifically based reading research.	
“(l) Providing instruction in reading 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).	
“(J) Providing coordination of reading, library, and literacy programs within the local educational agency to avoid duplication and increase the effectiveness of reading, library, and literacy activities.	
“(2) LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.— A recipient of a subgrant under this section may use not more than 5 percent of the subgrant funds for administrative costs.	
“(e) TRAINING NONRECIPIENTS.— A recipient of a subgrant under this section may train, on a fee-for-service basis, personnel from schools, or local educational agencies, that are not a beneficiary of, or receiving, such a subgrant, in the instructional practices based on scientifically based reading research used by the recipient. Such a non-recipient school or agency may use funds received under title I of this Act, and other appropriate Federal funds used for reading instruction, to pay for such training, to the extent consistent with the law under which such funds were received.	

Appendix D. Local Reading Improvement Subgrant Application

Figure D1. Local Reading Improvement Subgrant Application	
Title II, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Part C, Reading and Literacy Grants	Checklist
Section 2255. Local Reading Improvement Subgrants	
“(b) APPLICATIONS.—	
A local educational agency that desires to receive a subgrant under this section shall submit an application to the state educational agency at such time, in such manner, and including such information as the agency may require. The application—	
“(1) shall describe how the local educational agency will work with schools selected by the agency to receive assistance under subsection (d)(1)—	
“(A) to select one or more programs of reading instruction, developed using scientifically based reading research, to improve reading instruction by all academic teachers for all children in each of the schools selected by the agency under such subsection and, where appropriate, for their parents; and	
“(B) to enter into an agreement with a person or entity responsible for the development of each program selected under subparagraph (A), or a person with experience or expertise about the program and its implementation, under which the person or entity agrees to work with the local educational agency and the schools in connection with such implementation and improvement efforts;	
“(2) shall include an assurance that the local educational agency—	
“(A) will carry out professional development for the classroom teacher and other instructional staff on the teaching of reading based on scientifically based reading research;	
“(B) will provide family literacy services based on programs such as the Even Start family literacy model authorized under part B of title I, to enable parents to be their child’s first and most important teacher;	
“(C) will carry out programs to assist those kindergarten students who are not ready for the transition to first grade, particularly students experiencing difficulty with reading skills; and	
“(D) will use supervised individuals (including tutors), who have been appropriately trained using scientifically based reading research, 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;	
“(3) shall describe how the applicant will ensure that funds available under this part, and funds available for reading instruction for kindergarten through grade 6 from other appropriate sources, are effectively coordinated, and, where appropriate, integrated with funds under this Act in order to improve existing activities in the areas of reading instruction, professional development, program improvement, parental involvement, technical assistance, and other activities that can help meet the purposes of this part;	
“(4) shall describe, if appropriate, how parents, tutors, and early childhood education providers will be assisted by, and participate in, literacy-related activities receiving financial assistance under this part to enhance children’s reading fluency;	
“(5) shall describe how the local educational agency—	

Figure D1. Local Reading Improvement Subgrant Application	
Title II, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Part C, Reading and Literacy Grants	Checklist
Section 2255. Local Reading Improvement Subgrants	
“(b) APPLICATIONS.—	
“(A) provides instruction in reading 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); and	
“(B) will promote reading and library programs that provide access to engaging reading material; and	
“(6) shall include an assurance that the local educational agency will make available, upon request and in an understandable and uniform format, to any parent of a student attending any school selected to receive assistance under subsection (d)(1) in the geographic area served by the local educational agency, information regarding the professional qualifications of the student’s classroom teacher to provide instruction in reading.	
“(c) SPECIAL RULE.—	
To the extent feasible, a local educational agency that desires to receive a grant under this section shall form a partnership with one or more community-based organizations of demonstrated effectiveness in early childhood literacy, and reading readiness, reading instruction, and reading achievement for both adults and children, such as a Head Start program, family literacy program, public library, or adult education program, to carry out the functions described in paragraphs (1) through (6) of subsection (b). In evaluating subgrant applications under this section, a state educational agency shall consider whether the applicant has satisfied the requirement in the preceding sentence. If not, the applicant must provide information on why it would not have been feasible for the applicant to have done so.	

Appendix E. Tutorial Assistance Subgrant Activities

Figure E1. Tutorial Assistance Subgrant Activities	
Title II, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Part C, Reading and Literacy Grants	Checklist
Section 2256. Tutorial Assistance Subgrants	
“(b) USE OF FUNDS.—	
“(1) IN GENERAL.—A local educational agency that receives a subgrant under this section shall carry out, using the funds provided under the subgrant, each of the duties described in paragraph (2).	
“(2) DUTIES.—The duties described in this paragraph are the provision of tutorial assistance in reading, before school, after school, on weekends, or during the summer, to children who have difficulty reading, using instructional practices based on scientifically based reading research, through the following:	
“(A) The creation and implementation of objective criteria to determine in a uniform manner the eligibility of tutorial assistance providers and tutorial assistance programs desiring to provide tutorial assistance under the subgrant. Such criteria shall include the following:	
“(i) A record of effectiveness with respect to reading readiness, reading instruction for children in kindergarten through 3rd grade, and early childhood literacy, as appropriate.	
“(ii) Location in a geographic area convenient to the school or schools attended by the children who will be receiving tutorial assistance.	
“(iii) The ability to provide tutoring in reading to children who have difficulty reading, using instructional practices based on scientifically based reading research and consistent with the reading instructional methods and content used by the school the child attends.	
“(B) The provision, to parents of a child eligible to receive tutorial assistance pursuant to this section, of multiple choices among tutorial assistance providers and tutorial assistance programs determined to be eligible under the criteria described in subparagraph (A). Such choices shall include a school-based program and at least one tutorial assistance program operated by a provider pursuant to a contract with the local educational agency.	
“(C) The development of procedures—	
“(i) for the provision of information to parents of an eligible child regarding such parents’ choices for tutorial assistance for the child;	
“(ii) for considering children for tutorial assistance who are identified under subparagraph (D) and for whom no parent has selected a tutorial assistance provider or tutorial assistance program that give such parents additional opportunities to select a tutorial assistance provider or tutorial assistance program referred to in subparagraph(B); and	
“(iii) that permit a local educational agency to recommend a tutorial assistance provider or tutorial assistance program in a case where a parent asks for assistance in the making of such selection.	
“(D) The development of a selection process for providing tutorial assistance in accordance with this paragraph that limits the provision of assistance to children identified, by the school the child attends, as having difficulty reading, including difficulty mastering phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension.	
“(E) The development of procedures for selecting children to receive tutorial assistance, to be used in cases where insufficient funds are available to provide assistance with	

Figure E1. Tutorial Assistance Subgrant Activities	
Title II, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Part C, Reading and Literacy Grants	Checklist
Section 2256. Tutorial Assistance Subgrants	
“(b) USE OF FUNDS.—	
respect to all children identified by a school under subparagraph (D), that—	
“(i) give priority to children who are determined, through state or local reading assessments, to be most in need of tutorial assistance; and	
“(ii) give priority, in cases where children are determined, through state or local reading assessments to be equally in need of tutorial assistance, based on a random selection principle.	
“(F) The development of a methodology by which payments are made directly to tutorial assistance providers who are identified and selected pursuant to this section and selected for funding. Such methodology shall include the making of a contract, consistent with state and local law, between the provider and the local educational agency. Such contract shall satisfy the following requirements:	
“(i) It shall contain specific goals and timetables with respect to the performance of the tutorial assistance provider.	
“(ii) It shall require the tutorial assistance provider to report to the local educational agency on the provider’s performance in meeting such goals and timetables.	
“(iii) It shall specify the measurement techniques that will be used to evaluate the performance of the provider.	
“(iv) It shall require the provider to meet all applicable Federal, state, and local health, safety, and civil right laws.	
“(v) It shall ensure that the tutorial assistance provided under the contract is consistent with reading instruction and content used by the local educational agency.	
“(vi) It shall contain an agreement by the provider that information regarding the identity of any child eligible for, or enrolled in the program, will not be publicly disclosed without the permission of a parent of the child.	
“(vii) It shall include the terms of an agreement between the provider and the local educational agency with respect to the provider’s purchase and maintenance of adequate general liability insurance.	
“(viii) It shall contain provisions with respect to the making of payments to the provider by the local educational agency.	
“(G) The development of procedures under which the local educational agency carrying out this paragraph—	
“(i) will ensure oversight of the quality and effectiveness of the tutorial assistance provided by each tutorial assistance provider that is selected for funding;	
“(ii) will provide for the termination of contracts with ineffective and unsuccessful tutorial assistance providers (as determined by the local educational agency based upon the performance of the provider with respect to the goals and timetables contained in the contract between the agency and the provider under subparagraph (F)); in the contract between the agency and the provider under subparagraph (F));	
“(iii) will provide to each parent of a child identified under subparagraph (D) who requests such information for the purpose of selecting a tutorial assistance provider for the child, in a comprehensible format, information with respect to the quality and effectiveness of the tutorial assistance referred to in clause (i);	

Figure E1. Tutorial Assistance Subgrant Activities	
Title II, Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Part C, Reading and Literacy Grants	Checklist
Section 2256. Tutorial Assistance Subgrants	
“(b) USE OF FUNDS.—	
“(iv) will ensure that each school identifying a child under subparagraph (D) will provide upon request, to a parent of the child, assistance in selecting, from among the tutorial assistance providers who are identified pursuant to subparagraph (B) the provider who is best able to meet the needs of the child;	
“(v) will ensure that parents of a child receiving tutorial assistance pursuant to this section are informed of their child’s progress in the tutorial program; and	
“(vi) will ensure that it does not disclose the name of any child who may be eligible for tutorial assistance pursuant to this section, the name of any parent of such a child, or any other personally identifiable information about such a parent or child, to any tutorial assistance provider (excluding the agency itself), without the prior written consent of such parent.	

Appendix F. Definitions

The following definitions are contained in Section 2252 of the Reading Excellence Act.

- (1) **ELIGIBLE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDER.**—The term ‘eligible professional development provider’ means a provider of professional development in reading instruction to teachers that is based on scientifically based reading research.
- (2) **FAMILY LITERACY SERVICES.**—The term ‘family literacy services’ means services provided to participants on a voluntary basis that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family, and that integrate all of the following activities:
 - (A) Interactive literacy activities between parents and their children.
 - (B) Training for parents regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children.
 - (C) Parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency.
 - (D) An age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences.
- (3) **INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF.**—The term ‘instructional staff’—
 - (A) means individuals who have responsibility for teaching children to read; and
 - (B) includes principals, teachers, supervisors of instruction, librarians, library school media specialists, teachers of academic subjects other than reading, and other individuals who have responsibility for assisting children to learn to read.
- (4) **READING.**—The term ‘reading’ means a complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires all of the following:
 - (A) The skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sounds, are connected to print.
 - (B) The ability to decode unfamiliar words.
 - (C) The ability to read fluently.
 - (D) Sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension.
 - (E) The development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print.
 - (F) The development and maintenance of a motivation to read.
- (5) **SCIENTIFICALLY BASED READING RESEARCH.**—The term ‘scientifically based reading research’—
 - (A) means the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties; and
 - (B) shall include research that—

- (i) employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- (ii) involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
- (iii) relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
- (iv) has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.