



Grant Assistance Toolkit

## ***Reading First***

Featuring Scholastic Reading Counts!  
With professional development from Scholastic RED™

### **SCHOLASTIC OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

Scholastic Inc. has prepared this Grant Assistance Toolkit to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in the development of a *Reading First* grant project. The Toolkit provides key information in these areas:

- Funding program information
- Alignment of ***Scholastic Reading Counts!*** to grant requirements
- Grant writing support

### **Scholastic Reading Counts! and Scholastic RED are the programs featured in this Toolkit.**

***Scholastic Reading Counts!*** helps educators manage, assess, and encourage independent and curriculum-connected reading for students in Grades K-12. The program, which matches readers to leveled text, has been proven to increase students' reading achievement. ***Reading Counts!*** offers the following components:

- A collection of over 35,000 computerized quizzes that test student comprehension and that can be customized to help all children succeed
- A library of engaging leveled fiction and nonfiction books from over 400 publishers
- Management software that provides administrators and teachers with powerful tools to monitor and evaluate student independent reading, as well as data to guide and differentiate instruction

***Scholastic RED*** is a high-quality professional development program that focuses on the application of scientifically based reading research to improve teacher practice and raise student achievement in reading. ***RED*** courses blend online learning with customized, on-site workshops and coaching for teachers, staff developers, and principals. This integrated system helps districts sustain effective professional development and complements ongoing study groups, mentoring, and other professional development activities.

### **Using the Toolkit**

This Toolkit is designed as a resource to provide information that can be used when completing a local application for grant funds. It only addresses application requirements that are pertinent to Scholastic products and services and does not cover all *Reading First* expectations.

The Toolkit also includes grant writing tips and examples of the types of information needed when applying for a grant. Contact your state department of education for the official application that has all the requirements and guidelines.

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#### **Scholastic's Commitment**

Scholastic is committed to the sustainability of quality programs in order to improve teaching and learning. For more information about the products included in this Toolkit, please contact your Scholastic Regional Office.

Far West  
800-342-5331

Northeast  
800-878-8398

Southeast  
800-348-3750


Southwest  
800-221-5312

Midwest  
800-225-4625



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 *Because every grant project is unique, it is important to adapt the language provided in this Toolkit rather than copy it. Your proposal is more likely to be successful if you **customize** your application. Be sure to incorporate specific information about your project's needs, vision, programs, and design when you write your *Reading First* application.*

**Please note** these symbols throughout the Toolkit to help you write your application:

 **Highlights additional support and suggestions for writing your application**

 **Refers to Scholastic product features**

## Funding Program Overview: *Reading First*

The information in this section of the Toolkit is based on the federal *Guidance for the Reading First Program* (April 2002) and the *Reading First Criteria for Review of State Applications* that are available at these websites:

- <http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/guidance.pdf>
- <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/readingfirst/ReviewCriteriaFINAL.pdf>

### Purpose of *Reading First*

Title I, Part B, of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) is known as *Reading First*. The purpose of the *Reading First* program is to ensure that all students learn to read well by the end of third grade by implementing comprehensive reading programs that are based on scientific research.

### Eligibility

A State Education Agency awards grants to eligible LEAs on a competitive basis, based upon highest need. An LEA that meets both of the following criteria is eligible to apply to its SEA for *Reading First* funds:

1. Among those LEAs with the highest numbers or percentages of K-3 students reading below grade level, based on current data, **and**
2. One of the following:
  - a) A geographic area that includes an area designated as an empowerment zone, or an enterprise community; **or**
  - b) A significant number or percentage of schools that are identified for school improvement under Title I, Part A; **or**
  - c) The highest numbers or percentages of children who are counted for allocations under Title I, Part A, in comparison with other LEAs in the state

### Acceptable Use of Funds


LEA recipients may use *Reading First* funds for a variety of activities, including professional development, provided they are based on scientifically based reading research and align with the LEA's overall *Reading First* plan. However, an eligible LEA that receives a *Reading First* subgrant must use the funds to carry out these activities:


- Instructional assessments
- Reading program
- Instructional materials
- Professional development
- Evaluation strategies
- Reporting
- Access to reading material

## Coordination of Resources

In addition to *Reading First*, other federal programs require the implementation of instructional materials and practices that are grounded in scientifically based research. Funds from these programs could be coordinated and aligned in order to focus activities on improving achievement in reading:

- Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs
- Title II, Part A: Improving Teacher Quality
- Title II, Part D: Enhancing Education Through Technology
- Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition
- Title IV, Part B: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers
- Title V, Part A: Innovative Programs

 ***Scholastic Reading Counts!*** is supported by findings of leading researchers that stress the importance of extensive reading practice, motivation, progress monitoring, and family support for students' growth of reading skills.

 *Scholastic RED* professional development provides teachers with scientifically based content and strategies that improve teacher practices and help raise student reading achievement.

## Reading First Criteria

Federal legislation requires that *Reading First* funds awarded to LEAs must be used to provide a comprehensive reading program for students in Grades K-3 that uses materials, methods, strategies, including professional development, that is based on scientific reading research.

 ***This Toolkit provides information and examples that relate to these Reading First criteria:***

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • <b><i>Instructional Assessments</i></b>             | • <b><i>Access to Print Materials</i></b> |
| • <b><i>Instructional Programs and Strategies</i></b> | • <b><i>Instructional Leadership</i></b>  |
| • <b><i>Instructional Materials</i></b>               | • <b><i>Professional Development</i></b>  |


**Scholastic Reading Counts! Aligns to Reading First**


The following chart details how **Scholastic Reading Counts!**, with professional development support from *Scholastic RED*, addresses these *Reading First* criteria\* and can enrich and strengthen a comprehensive reading program:


- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Instructional Assessments</li> <li>▪ Instructional Programs and Strategies</li> <li>▪ Instructional Materials</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to Print Materials</li> <li>▪ Instructional Leadership</li> <li>▪ Professional Development</li> </ul> |
|---|---|


| <b>Reading First Criteria</b>  | <b>Scholastic Products</b>   |
|--|--|
| <b>Instructional Assessments</b>   | <b>Scholastic Reading Counts!</b>  |
| <p>Valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessments</p> | <p>Students in the <b>Scholastic Reading Counts!</b> program take computerized quizzes that test their reading comprehension of books they have read. If a student does not pass a quiz, he or she may retake it with a new set of questions. Students and teachers receive instant feedback on quiz results.</p> <p>Over 30 reports track individual and class accomplishments for teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student progress can be tracked by points earned or by the number of books or words read.</li> <li>▪ Student progress can be evaluated by Lexile<sup>®</sup>, Guided Reading, or grade-equivalent reading levels.</li> <li>▪ Children work toward quantifiable reading goals that are automatically recorded in <b>Reading Counts!</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading Counts!</b> provides teachers with actionable data to help students who are not meeting expectations. <i>Alert Reports</i> indicate those students who have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not taken a quiz in 14 days</li> <li>▪ Required three or more attempts to pass a quiz</li> <li>▪ Scored below 70% on the last three quizzes</li> </ul> <p>Other available reports include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Award Progress Report</i>, which enables a teacher to determine whether a student has achieved his/her reading goal within a specified time period</li> <li>▪ <i>Graph: Average Quiz Score</i>, which shows average quiz results for an individual student over a period of time</li> <li>▪ <i>Reading Report Card</i>, which is a comprehensive summary of quiz results and other important information for individual students</li> </ul> |


\* From the *Guidance for the Reading First Program* and the *Reading First Criteria for Review of State Applications*, United States Department of Education


| <b>Reading First Criteria</b>  | <b> Scholastic Products</b>  |
|--|---|
| <p>Assessments that are aligned with the instructional program and that measure progress in the five essential elements of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension)</p> | <p><b>Reading Counts!</b> quizzes measure student comprehension, based on an understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cause and effect</li> <li>▪ Sequencing</li> <li>▪ Main idea and detail</li> <li>▪ Summarizing</li> <li>▪ Vocabulary</li> </ul> <p>Students receive valuable test-taking practice that prepares them for standardized tests.</p>   |
| <b>Instructional Programs and Strategies/ Instructional Materials</b>  | <b>Scholastic Reading Counts!</b>   |
| <p>Instructional strategies and programs based on scientifically based reading research</p>  | <p><b>Scholastic Reading Counts!</b> is based on eight findings from research that have shown to improve student academic achievement:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reading achievement is positively related to the amount of time spent reading.</li> <li>2. Vocabulary and concept knowledge are developed through extensive reading.</li> <li>3. Reading practice that is carefully selected and matched to students' reading levels is the best way to strengthen reading skills and foster the reading habit.</li> <li>4. Motivation is essential for maintaining students' sustained attention on reading.</li> <li>5. Comprehension requires wide reading, responding to questions, and talking and writing about what is read.</li> <li>6. Helping struggling readers requires a supportive literacy environment as part of a carefully planned intervention program.</li> <li>7. Families and communities have an important role in helping students become successful readers.</li> <li>8. Assessment and evaluation are necessary in order to monitor student progress and adjust instruction.</li> </ol> <p>Results from a recent study revealed that third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students using <b>Reading Counts!</b> scored significantly higher on the SAT-9 vocabulary and reading comprehension tests than the control group. This was true for all students regardless of ability level, ethnicity, or gender (Block &amp; Mangieri, 2004).</p> <p>Outcomes in case studies prepared by schools using <i>The Electronic Bookshelf (EBS)</i>, the predecessor to <b>Scholastic Reading Counts!</b>, showed that EBS students outperformed others on achievement tests, increased the time they spent reading, and developed a more positive attitude about reading.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p> |


| Reading First Criteria   |  Scholastic Products  |
|--|--|
| Instructional Programs and Strategies, Continued   | <p>The Lexile Framework® for Reading, developed by MetaMetrics, Inc., is the result of nearly two decades of research by measurement and testing scientists at Duke University, the University of Chicago, Stanford University, and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Through a series of grants from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the team successfully tested the Lexile Framework with over 500,000 students.</p> <p>Please contact a Scholastic Representative to receive the <i>Scholastic Reading Counts! Research and Results Report</i>®.</p>   |
| Materials and programs that offer ample practice opportunities   | <p><b>Reading Counts!</b> encourages children to independently read books in the classroom and at home. Students are motivated to increase their reading practice because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ They enjoy choosing books in a variety of genres and in their interest areas.</li> <li>▪ <b>Reading Counts!</b> books are leveled for the appropriate amount of reading challenge.</li> <li>▪ Instant feedback on quiz results, personalized congratulations screens, and incentive items build excitement.</li> </ul>   |
| Materials and strategies that are aligned with the instructional program and to state standards                | <p>The use of <b>Reading Counts!</b>, and extension activities stemming from the program, helps students meet state standards in these aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students enjoy reading, read more, and become better readers.</li> <li>▪ Book discussions and reading groups provide students with practice in listening and speaking.</li> <li>▪ Students increase their writing skills by writing about the books they have read.</li> <li>▪ By reading nonfiction books in an area they are studying, students improve their researching skills.</li> <li>▪ Computerized reports guide instruction.</li> </ul> |
| Materials and programs that are integrated with and connect meaningfully to the comprehensive reading program. | <p><b>Scholastic Reading Counts!</b> can effectively supplement a comprehensive reading program and raise student achievement. Quizzes encourage students to think about literary elements, such as characterization, setting, plot, and perspective. Students read books from a variety of genres, including science fiction, biography, historical fiction, mystery, drama, and poetry. Because <b>Reading Counts!</b> motivates children to read, it supports their skills development in fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.</p>   |

| Reading First Criteria   |  Scholastic Products  |
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| <p>Strategies to meet the needs of all students, including those that are below grade level, limited English proficient, and students with disabilities.</p> | <p><b>Reading Counts!</b> helps improve the reading achievement of all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing immediate feedback on quiz results</li> <li>▪ Generating reports that allow teachers to assess student progress and adjust reading instruction</li> <li>▪ Making available high interest/intervention books and other books in a variety of topics and genres</li> <li>▪ Offering leveled books that give the appropriate amount of reading challenge</li> </ul> <p>Spanish-speaking students also can benefit from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Spanish books</li> <li>▪ Administration of Spanish and English quizzes for the same book</li> </ul> <p>Students with disabilities may benefit from the option to take quizzes on audio books. Teachers can customize the length of quizzes to accommodate students with attention deficits and those with other special needs.</p>   |
| <p>Strategies that accelerate performance and monitor progress of students who are reading below grade level.</p>  | <p><b>Scholastic Reading Counts!</b> reports keep teachers updated on how every student is performing throughout the year and give them actionable data to differentiate instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Auto-Alerts</i>, which pop up onscreen each time teachers log onto the software, notify them when a student requires intervention, such as if the child is failing multiple quizzes, is reading books at an inappropriate level, or is not meeting personal goals.</li> <li>▪ The <i>Reading Progress Update</i> is a cumulative summary of student progress during a specific time period. Teachers use the report to create reading groups, guide instruction, and plan incentives and select books with students.</li> <li>▪ The <i>Reading Report Card</i> is a comprehensive summary of a student’s work with the <b>Reading Counts!</b> program. The information included is the student’s reading goal, quiz results, total number of words read, and other data.</li> </ul> <p>Teachers can use the reports to help students select appropriately challenging books so they will be encouraged to increase their reading time and improve their fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. The more students read, the better readers they become.</p> |

| <b>Reading First Criteria</b>   | <b> Scholastic Products</b>  |
|---|---|
| <b>Access to Print Materials</b>  | <b><i>Scholastic Reading Counts!</i></b>  |
| <p>Variety of engaging reading materials including expository and narrative</p> | <p><b><i>Reading Counts!</i></b> offers books from more than 400 publishers in a variety of fiction and nonfiction genres and topics, including history, science, social studies, science fiction, poetry, drama, and mysteries.</p> <p>The software's <i>Book Expert</i> allows educators to search the database by genre, theme, topic, comprehension skill, interest level, reading level, culture, award, language, or series/program. They can also read a synopsis of every book to help them pick out appropriate books for their school or classroom library.</p> <p>Teachers can choose books that tie into cross-curricular units, including geography, math, art, and foreign language. Trade books are available for core reading programs.</p> <p>Books are available in paperback, hardcover, and rebound, which has a lifetime guarantee.</p>  |
| <p>Materials to promote reading and library programs</p>                        | <p>Educators using <b><i>Reading Counts!</i></b> may order motivational incentives that help promote reading and maintain student interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Certificates and medals recognize student achievement.</li> <li>▪ Theme ideas and awards create excitement.</li> <li>▪ Posters and T-shirts promote reading throughout the school.</li> <li>▪ By rating books using the Read-O-Meter, students can take satisfaction that their opinion counts.</li> </ul> <p>Students in the <b><i>Reading Counts!</i></b> program are also motivated to read because they can self-select books in their interest areas, experience success by reading leveled books, enjoy taking computerized quizzes that provide instant feedback, and be rewarded with congratulations screens.</p> <p>Students enjoy participating in discussion groups and book clubs that are natural extensions of the <b><i>Reading Counts!</i></b> program.</p> |

| Reading First Criteria   |  Scholastic Products  |
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| <p><b>Instructional Leadership</b></p> <p>Training for principals and building leaders in the essential components of reading and the specific instructional programs and materials in use in their buildings, including the scientific base, implementation process and progress monitoring related to those programs and materials</p> | <p><b>Scholastic RED</b></p> <p><i>Scholastic RED</i> helps ensure that principals, reading coaches, and building leaders have all the resources they need to implement a scientifically based reading program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On-site training helps principals understand their role in the professional development taking place in their school. The training also supports them as instructional leaders. For each <i>RED</i> course, they receive a Principal’s Guide, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A review of reading research</li> <li>○ Content overview of the <i>RED</i> course</li> <li>○ Learning snapshots to guide principals as they conduct classroom observations of research-based teaching strategies</li> <li>○ Tools for coaching teachers</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ District Facilitators are trained to use effective techniques for observing, coaching, and mentoring in order to provide effective ongoing support for teachers.</li> <li>▪ Building leaders receive intensive instruction on the essential components of reading instruction through <i>Scholastic RED</i> courses and services.</li> </ul> <p>These training sessions are designed to foster a strong sense of shared leadership.</p> |
| <p><b>Professional Development</b></p> <p>Use of a variety of delivery methods to carry out intensive and focused professional development in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Essential components of reading instruction</li> </ol>  | <p><b>Reading Counts! and Scholastic RED</b></p> <p><i>RED</i> provides professional development designed to meet the requirements of <i>Reading First</i>. <i>RED</i> offers these research-based, facilitated online courses that specifically address the essential elements of reading instruction for Grades K-3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Putting Reading First in Your Classroom, K-2</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Building Fluency, Grades K-2</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Building Vocabulary for Reading Success, Grades K-3</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Reading Success for English Language Learners, Grades K-3</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Guided Reading: Making It Work in Your Classroom, Grades K-6</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Building Decoding Skills and Strategies, 3-5</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Improving Reading Comprehension, 3-5</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Improving Fluency, 3-8</i></li> </ul> <p><i>RED</i>’s interactive online courses train teachers in the five essential components of reading instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Fluency</i>—Teachers learn how to assess fluency, build it, and incorporate independent and small-group activities into classroom routines.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(continued)</i></p>                           |

| Reading First Criteria  |  Scholastic Products  |
|---|--|
| <p>Professional Development in the essential components of reading instruction, Continued</p> <p>2. Implementing scientifically based instructional materials, programs, and strategies</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Phonemic Awareness</i>—Oral blending, oral segmentation and phonemic manipulation are modeled on video and audio; users practice via online simulation.</li> <li>▪ <i>Phonics</i>—<i>RED</i> defines alphabet recognition, phonics, and decoding and shows how to apply them in classroom practice.</li> <li>▪ <i>Vocabulary Development</i>—Training covers the role of vocabulary in early reading instruction is covered, with attention paid to building students’ oral vocabularies.</li> <li>▪ <i>Comprehension</i>—Topics covered include teaching children techniques for previewing text, building and activating background knowledge, and matching children to text.</li> </ul> <p><b>Scholastic Reading Counts!</b> is based on research findings that have been shown to improve student academic achievement. The <b>Reading Counts! Educator’s Guide</b> provides strategies to implement the program, incorporate it into the language arts curriculum, and use the research-based Lexile Framework leveling system to help match readers to books at an appropriate level.</p> <p>The <i>Educator’s Guide</i> includes ideas for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Motivating students to read</li> <li>▪ Managing <b>Reading Counts!</b> in the classroom</li> <li>▪ Incorporating the program throughout the year</li> <li>▪ Using Lexiles to select books</li> <li>▪ Using <b>Reading Counts!</b> with a core reading program</li> <li>▪ Using <b>Reading Counts!</b> across the curriculum</li> <li>▪ Involving families in the child’s reading development</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading Counts!</b> offers customized on-site, hands-on software training to give educators the tools and knowledge to effectively manage the program and integrate it into the curriculum.</p> <p>All professional development from <i>Scholastic RED</i> is grounded in research-based, validated practices that result in teachers learning and applying new strategies that directly influence student performance. <i>Scholastic RED</i> courses incorporate the characteristics that research confirms are key for effective professional development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research-based content and strategies</li> <li>▪ Modeling and presentations by skilled practitioners</li> <li>▪ Practice in a controlled risk-free environment</li> <li>▪ Coaching, feedback and reflection</li> <li>▪ Coherence and alignment to academic standards and core reading programs</li> <li>▪ Promotion of strong, shared leadership by principals and district leaders</li> </ul> |

| Reading First Criteria   |  Scholastic Products   |
|--|---|
| <p>Professional Development in Implementing scientifically based instructional materials, programs, and strategies, Continued</p> <p>3. Screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional assessments</p> | <p>More than 10,000 teachers in over 150 school districts have participated in <i>Scholastic RED</i> professional development. Teachers, district Facilitators, and principals report that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Scholastic RED</i> courses helped them learn about research-based methods and strategies.</li> <li>▪ <i>Scholastic RED</i> materials can be implemented immediately into classroom activities.</li> <li>▪ The modeling of effective strategies helped teachers apply the skills in their classrooms.</li> <li>▪ Local Facilitator-led meetings provide valuable opportunities for additional instruction and support.</li> </ul> <p>In the <b>Reading Counts!</b> training that the program offers, educators learn how to use quizzes and reports to assess student reading achievement and guide instruction.</p> <p><i>Scholastic RED</i> courses include assessment skills and strategies for working with different student populations, including special education students, ELD/ELL, and advanced learners. Subsequent to modeling and practice of such assessments, teachers receive ideas and resources for targeting instruction based on diagnostic data. In ongoing professional development, <i>RED</i>-trained Facilitators can instruct teachers on how to use data and diagnostic assessments to inform instruction.</p> |
| <p>Professional development that is ongoing, continuous, and includes the use of coaches and other teachers of reading who provide feedback as instructional strategies are put in place.</p>                    | <p>District reading coaches and staff developers receive special training to become <i>RED</i> Facilitators, who provide teachers with ongoing, continuous support. Facilitators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Become familiar with the online courses, including all research-based content and accompanying materials</li> <li>▪ Receive tools and training for observing and coaching teachers who are implementing newly learned strategies</li> <li>▪ Learn how to demonstrate course strategies in Facilitator workshops and in teachers' classrooms</li> </ul> <p><i>RED</i> Facilitators receive ongoing support through the Facilitator Care Program, which offers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An online discussion board guided by <i>RED</i> Reading Consultants.</li> <li>▪ Offline guidance from <i>RED</i> Reading Consultants</li> <li>▪ A toll-free hotline for technical support</li> <li>▪ A Facilitators Handbook, which contains:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Explicit plans, activities, and agendas to conduct workshops</li> <li>○ Management tools, including observation and evaluation forms</li> <li>○ Guidelines for conducting classroom demonstration lessons</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Recommended professional reading and web links</li> </ul>   |

## Customize Your *Reading First* Application

This section of the Toolkit provides basic information for those preparing to write a *Reading First* grant. It is *not* intended to fully explain every part of the application, but it should help you organize the information that describes your grant project.

### Common Elements of a Grant Application

While state applications do vary, there are common elements that remain fairly consistent. Knowing how to address each of these elements will help you understand how to respond to the different *Reading First* criteria. This Toolkit provides information and examples to help you make sure all components are thoroughly addressed.

 **Be sure to obtain the application for *Reading First* from your state’s Department of Education as it contains the official instructions, schedules, and requirements.**


These are the 10 components that are commonly addressed in grant applications. Remember to customize responses to each area so your proposal reflects your unique situation.

1. Summary or Abstract
2. Needs Assessment
3. Educational Goals and Objectives
4. Activities and Timeline
5. Project Management
6. Resource Management
7. Sustainability
8. Assessment and Evaluation
9. Budget
10. Appendix

#### 1. Summary or Abstract

The *summary* or *abstract* encapsulates all the components of the proposal and gives an overview of the proposed project; it is basically, the project “in a nutshell.” The summary/abstract includes the following information:

- The audience—Who will the project directly impact?
- The need/problem—What need will the project address?
- The educational goals—What does the project strive to ultimately accomplish?
- The objectives and effectiveness indicators—Who will do what by when?
- The activities—How will the project be carried out?

 **Because the abstract is essentially a summary of the project, you should write it after the grant proposal is completed. It can be summarized from other parts of the proposal.**

## 2. Needs Assessment

The *needs assessment* is one of the most critical parts of the proposal as it specifies the educational needs that the project addresses and indicates how they were identified. Relevant data, such as standardized test scores or survey results, are used to substantiate the educational needs of the targeted population, which should include students, teachers, and parents. The focal point of the needs assessment should be *acquisition of services* for the targeted population, and *not acquisition of funds*.

### **Step One: Gather the Data**

Before any writing can begin, you will need to gather all of the relevant data for the targeted population. A successful grant project will reflect data-driven decision making, so it is important to gather objective data at the onset of a project and use it to determine goals, objectives, and activities.

Use school and district records as well as customized surveys and evaluation tools for gathering data related to specific areas of need. Examples of the types of data to gather might include, but not be limited to:

#### School and District Records

- Student Achievement Scores
- Student Performance Levels for Specific Reading Skills
- Socioeconomic Data
- Demographic Data

#### Surveys & Evaluation Tools

- Need for Instructional Material
- Identified Gaps in Instructional Program
- Professional Development Needs
- Technology Needs
- Book Needs for Classroom and Library
- Parental Involvement Needs

### **Step Two: Review the Data**


Have several people, such as classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, and special education teachers, review the data. Look at the student performance data as a whole set, but then disaggregate the data into subsets by demographic focus groups.


### **Step Three: Determine Needs Based Upon the Data**

Based upon the disaggregated data, determine the specific needs for students, teachers, and parents. The educational goals, objectives, and activities, will be based upon these specific needs.

### **Step Four: Write the Needs Assessment**


Using the data gathered in Step One and the needs established in Step Three, develop a clear and detailed statement that specifies needs for academic achievement, professional development, and parental involvement.

 ***Scholastic Reading Counts!*** can enhance a language arts program by providing students with additional reading practice. The program supports the development of fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills.

 ***Scholastic RED*** is a professional development solution that is grounded in research-based, validated best practices. Through facilitated online courses, teachers learn new strategies that can be immediately applied in the classroom.

### 3. Educational Goals and Objectives

First and foremost, your *educational goals* must be aligned with the project’s assessed educational needs and consistent with the goals of the state’s *Reading First* plan. An educational goal states the planned outcome that will solve the problems addressed in the needs assessment. Project goals must be *educational* goals and not merely the acquisition of funds.

 **Be sure to develop goals and activities within each of the following four areas, as these are areas most frequently addressed in grant requirements. (Sample goals for each of these areas can be found on pages 21-23.)**


1. **Instructional Design & Content**
2. **Professional Development**
3. **School-to-Home Connection**
4. **Assessment and Evaluation**

*Objectives* help meet the educational goals. They clearly define the *performance targets* that must be measurable and related to a specific time. A series of objectives, or performance targets, should increase in expectation as they progress on a timeline, culminating in an overall performance or educational goal. The expectation is that at the end of the grant project calendar, the applicant meets the goals.

*Objectives* should be **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely (SMART)**.

*Effectiveness indicators* detail the type of information used to measure whether or not an objective is reached. These indicators should be objective and quantifiable. Effectiveness indicators may include, but are not limited to:

- Number of teachers and administrators trained
- Number, types, and frequency of staff development sessions
- Student achievement scores in specific skill areas
- Number of Reading Coaches trained
- Number and types of books added to classroom or school libraries

 **The following chart is one example of a way to organize your goals, objectives, and effectiveness indicators.**

| Objective<br>(Performance Target)  | Timeline                         | Effectiveness Indicator   |
|--|----------------------------------|---|
| Beginning in September <YEAR>, all K-3 teachers will apply research-based instructional strategies, addressing the five essential components of Reading  | Sept. <YEAR>to June <YEAR>       | Teacher lesson plans  |
| By June of <YEAR>, all K-3 teachers in the district will have completed one online professional development course that focuses on the application of scientifically based methods and strategies to teach the five essential components of Reading. | Sept. <YEAR> through June <YEAR> | Number of K-3 teachers completing online professional development courses |

#### 4. Activities and Timeline


*Activities* are even more specific than goals. They explain *who will do what, when, where, and for how long*. For each goal, list the activities to be conducted. The activities include the methods, steps, actions or strategies taken to achieve the stated goal.

 **Identify specific activities that will be conducted during the project period.**

 **Be sure your activities:**

- **Relate directly to the program goals, as well as to the project description and project requirements as outlined in your local application**
- **Address the identified needs of the targeted population that should include students, teachers, and parents**
- **Are clearly stated and sufficient to carry out the proposed program**
- **Are designed to provide measurable outcomes**


Proposals should include a *timeline* indicating when project activities will occur. The timeline should indicate the anticipated starting and ending dates (i.e., month and year) for each major activity.

 **Rather than creating a separate timeline document, applicants are encouraged to indicate timelines with each activity. Please see examples of activities and timelines on page 24 of this Toolkit.**

#### 5. Project Management


A *project management* plan specifies how grant activities will be managed and monitored on a day-to-day basis to ensure successful implementation.


In a grant proposal, describe the members of the *project management* team, indicating the responsibilities of each member and the credentials that support their selection. Include the background training, experience, and qualifications of the grant project director, who is responsible for the day-to-day activities.

 **You may refer to each member's credentials, but include résumés in the appendix only, and only if the instructions in the application allow for them.**

## 6. Resource Management

Applications require an explanation about how existing resources will be managed so that grant funds are maximized. Provide an explanation of the relationship and coordination of the proposed project with other programs in the district or on a school's campus and with other community, state, and federal resources.


 ***The purpose of a resource management description is to illustrate the cost-effectiveness of the project. Keep the “cost per pupil” aligned to the local or state “per pupil expenditure” for the LEA.***

 ***Scholastic Reading Counts! and Scholastic RED can be effectively integrated with other school or district activities that are being funded from sources other than Reading First. The federal funding programs for which **Scholastic Reading Counts!** and Scholastic RED qualify include:***

- *Title I, Part A – Improving Basic Programs*
- *Title I, Part F – Comprehensive School Reform*
- *Title II, Part A – Improving Teacher Quality*
- *Title II, Part D – Enhancing Education Through Technology*
- *Title III – English Language Acquisition*
- *Title IV, Part B – 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers*
- *Title V, Part A – Innovative Programs*

## 7. Sustainability

*Sustainability* refers to how the program will continue when grant funds expire. Describe the commitment to continuing the project in subsequent years with reduced levels of funding and the support from the administration in terms of financial resources, space/facility resources, and personnel dedicated to the project.

 ***Scholastic is committed to ensuring the sustainability of quality reading programs beyond the period funded by a Reading First grant. To this end, Scholastic RED trains teachers in the use of effective, research-based instructional methodologies and offers a variety of scientifically research-based instructional materials to ensure the continued development of the skills and strategies students need to succeed in school.***

## 8. Assessment and Evaluation

The *Evaluation Strategies* section in a *Reading First* application must focus on student achievement. This section should detail a comprehensive evaluation plan with specific accountability measures and procedures that identify and assess the effectiveness of *Reading First* activities, including professional development, at raising student achievement in reading.

*Reading First* requires that LEAs report reading achievement data to measure the program's effectiveness at raising reading scores. The assessment measures used must be:

- Valid and reliable
- Disaggregated by low-income, major racial/ethnic groups, LEP, and special education for K-3 students


A comprehensive evaluation plan should include both process and product data. This data is then used to guide future decisions related to *Reading First* programs.

**Process Evaluation** is used to gather information about how successfully the project was implemented as planned and to assess its impact on the targeted population.


- Site visits or administrative observations
- Integration surveys
- External evaluation of long-term impact
- Professional development training

**Product Evaluation** focuses on measuring final outcomes against project goals and performance targets.


- Pre- and post-staff needs assessment surveys
- Evaluation of professional development activities
- Standardized or benchmark tests of student achievement.

 **Repeat the administration of the surveys used for the needs assessment at the beginning of the grant period. Compare the results to determine growth and use the data to evaluate the success of the grant project and determine next steps.**

 **A sample evaluation plan can be found on pages 25-27 of the Toolkit.**




 The **Reading Counts!** software management system continually monitors student achievement and progress. Computer-generated reports include these assessment data:

- Student progress by points earned or by the number of books or words read
- Student reading level using Lexile<sup>®</sup>, Guided Reading, or grade-equivalent measures
- Student reading achievement disaggregated by individual student, reading group, class, teacher, grade level, or by all the **Reading Counts!** participants in the school.

 Scholastic RED courses include assessment skills and strategies for working with different student populations, including special education students, ELD/ELL, and advanced learners.

## 9. Budget

When preparing a *budget*, keep in mind that *Reading First* funds can only be used to implement comprehensive reading programs, including professional development, that are based on scientific reading research. Comprehensive reading programs also include the effective integration and use of supplemental and intervention materials that are based on scientific research.

-  ***The budget is an estimate of the project costs, but the project budget should be as accurate as possible at the time of submission. It should not include any “padded” amounts for expenditures.***
-  ***The budget and narrative should align directly. It is best to make a list of all budgetary costs, based upon the narrative sections. Make sure that the budget includes a line item for every cost that the narrative describes.***
-  ***It is advisable to consult with your business office prior to submitting the application.***

## 10. Appendix

The *appendix* will vary depending on what the application allows. Some do not allow an appendix while others require that such documents as letters of support, résumés of key personnel, job descriptions, and schematics of technology networks be included.

-  ***The applicant should submit only what the application allows.***

## Grant Writing Tools and Tips

### Helpful Hints

Grant writing is a challenge for both novice and experienced writers. Grants are highly competitive, and rejection is disappointing. To avoid undue stress, realize that your proposal may be funded or *it may not*. A grant proposal is similar to a personal résumé; you have only one chance to make a good impression and grab the reviewers' attention. Here are some helpful hints to ensure that your proposal is effective and competitive.

- FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS! Carefully read the RFA/RFP to ensure that you include all of the required information and forms.
- Disaggregate student achievement data and identify your needs.
- Write concisely and in the active voice.
- Write to communicate, not to impress.
- Write, rewrite, and then ask an objective reader to comment and edit.
- Use a simple document design—Times New Roman or Arial, 10- or 12-point font.
- Note the application deadline. Send or deliver your proposal *prior* to the deadline.
- If your proposal is not funded, be sure to request copies of the reviewers' comments and use them to improve the proposal before the next submission.
- Be persistent. Consider the grants that are not funded as valuable practice and choose to learn from the experience.
- If you do not qualify, do not apply!
- Start early, plan ahead, and allow plenty of time for writing, revising, and editing.
- Remember that a deadline is a deadline.

## Sample Goals, Objectives, and Effectiveness Indicators

Writing clear and precise goals and performance targets (objectives) with related effectiveness indicators is crucial to implementing and evaluating an effective, research-based grant project.

*Goals* state the planned outcome that will solve the problem addressed in the needs statement.

*Performance targets* are a series of clearly defined *objectives* that increase in expectation as they progress on a timeline, culminating at an overall performance or educational goal. *Performance targets* are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**esearch-based, and **T**imely (SMART).

*Effectiveness indicators* detail the type of specific information used to measure whether or not an objective is reached.


The following charts provide examples of how goals, objectives, and effectiveness indicators are related and can be identified for these areas:

- Instructional Design/Content
- Professional Development
- School-to-Home Connection
- Assessment and Evaluation

 ***Be sure to develop your own goals, objectives, and effectiveness indicators that relate specifically to your project's needs.***


**Instructional Design/Content**


| <p><b>Educational Goal:</b><br/>All K-3 teachers will use scientifically research based materials, methods, and strategies to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.</p> |                          |                                      |                         |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Objective<br>(Performance Target)   | Positions<br>Responsible | Timeline                             | Effectiveness Indicator |
| Beginning in September <YEAR>, all K-3 teachers will apply research-based instructional strategies, addressing the five essential components of Reading.  | Language Arts Teachers   | September <YEAR> through June <YEAR> | Teacher lesson plans    |

 *Children in the research-based **Scholastic Reading Counts!** program independently read leveled books in the classroom and at home, which provides them with valuable skills practice in fluency, vocabulary development, and comprehension.*

**Professional Development**

| <p><b>Educational Goal:</b><br/>All K-3 teachers will receive training in the application of scientifically based methods and strategies to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.</p>                        |                          |                                      |   |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Objective<br>(Performance Target)   | Positions<br>Responsible | Timeline                             | Effectiveness Indicator   |
| By June <YEAR>, all K-3 teachers in the district will have completed one online professional development course that focuses on the application of scientifically based methods and strategies to teach the five essential components of Reading. | Teachers                 | September <YEAR> through June <YEAR> | Number of K-3 teachers completing online professional development courses |


 ***Scholastic Reading Counts!** offers customized training to give staff the tools they need to effectively implement the program and integrate the technology across the curriculum. Professional Papers deepen teachers' understanding of how extensive reading of leveled books increase children's reading achievement.*

 *These facilitated online courses from Scholastic RED provide teachers with research-based training so they can more effectively teach reading skills in Grades K-3:*

- *Putting Reading First in Your Classroom, Grades K-2*
- *Building Fluency, Grades K-2*
- *Guided Reading: Making It Work in Your Classroom*
- *Reading Success for English Language Learners, Grades K-3*
- *Building Vocabulary for Reading Success, Grades K-3*


**School-to-Home Connection**

| <p><b>Educational Goal:</b><br/>Parents will be regularly informed about the effectiveness of the program at raising their child’s achievement in reading.</p>   |                          |                                      |                             |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Objective<br>(Performance Target)  | Positions<br>Responsible | Timeline                             | Effectiveness Indicator     |
| For the <YEAR> academic year, teachers will share results of benchmark reports and classroom activities with parents to communicate students’ progress, strengths, weaknesses, and suggest ways to build content skills at home. | K-3 Teachers             | September <YEAR> through June <YEAR> | Quarterly benchmark Reports |

 *Teachers can print out and share test results and progress reports with parents throughout the year. Parents receive a letter that describes the **Scholastic Reading Counts!** program and ways to encourage reading at home.*

**Assessment/Evaluation**

| <p><b>Educational Goal:</b><br/>All K-3 teachers will continually collect and use meaningful information to measure students’ academic progress and inform instruction.</p>  |                          |                                      |  |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Objective<br>(Performance Target)  | Positions<br>Responsible | Timeline                             | Effectiveness Indicator                          |
| For the <YEAR> academic year, all K-3 teachers will use quarterly benchmark assessments as diagnostic, progress monitoring, and evaluative tools to assess student progress. | K-3 Teachers             | September <YEAR> through June <YEAR> | Type of assessment and schedule of testing dates |

 ***Reading Counts!** reports help teachers match students to appropriately challenging books and monitor students’ progress. Teachers can generate more than 30 reports, including:*

- The Reading Progress Update, which is a cumulative summary of student progress during a specific time period*
- The Reading Report Card, which is a comprehensive summary of a student’s work*
- The Award Progress Report, which enables a teacher to determine whether a student has reached his/her reading goal within a specified time period*
- Bar graphs, which show the average quiz score for an individual student over a period of time; the total number of books that an individual student, group, or class has read; a timeline of the books read by an individual student, group, or class; or student, group, or class progress toward an annual reading goal.*

## Sample Activities for Goals and Objectives

*Activities* explain *who* will do *what*, *when*, *where*, and for *how long*. You need to include detailed activities for each goal and objective. The table below gives specific examples and shows the alignment of the goal, objective, and effectiveness indicators to the activities.

 **These are provided as examples or suggestions. You should develop your own activities specific to your needs.**

| <p><b>Goal:</b><br/>All K-3 teachers will receive training in the application of scientifically based methods and strategies to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.</p>   |                        |                              |  |
|--|------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| <p><b>Objective:</b> (Performance Target)<br/>By June &lt;YEAR&gt;, all K-3 teachers in the district will have completed one online professional development course that focuses on the application of scientifically based methods and strategies to teach fluency.</p> |                        |                              |  |
| Specific Activities  | Positions Responsible  | Timeline                     | Effectiveness Indicator  |
| 1. Purchase the <i>Scholastic Red</i> program to train teachers in the five essential components of an effective reading program.  | LEA Technology Leaders | Fall <YEAR>                  | Purchase orders  |
| 2. Implement teacher and administrator surveys to determine knowledge of, skill levels within, application of, the five essential components of reading instruction  | Campus Administrators  | Fall <YEAR><br>Spring <YEAR> | Tabulated results of surveys for Fall & Spring   |
| 3. Develop and conduct a yearlong calendar of training sessions, using the <i>Scholastic Red</i> online and on-site courses.   | LEA Curriculum Leaders | Academic Year <YEAR>         | Training calendar<br>Schedule of Classes   |
| 4. Identify and track teachers and administrators who complete the <i>Scholastic Red</i> training program.   | LEA Curriculum Leaders | Spring <YEAR>                | Numbers of teachers/administrators certified   |
| 5. Conduct a survey to identify the scientifically based methods and strategies being used to teach fluency.   | Campus Administrators  | Academic Year <YEAR>         | Number of teachers who systematically and explicitly teach fluency as measured by class lesson plans and observations by administrators. |

## Sample Evaluation Plan

- The evaluation plan is one of the most critical elements of your proposal. Because every grant project is unique, it is important to adapt this sample plan to reflect your specific project names, goals, objectives, and activities, rather than copy it.***

### Evaluation Design

(*Project Name*) includes a comprehensive evaluation plan developed to determine success in meeting aggressive goals for improving the language and literacy development of all (*grade level*) students. (*District Name*) and (*Name of external evaluator*) will conduct the final evaluation of (*Project Name*.) The Project Director will collect information, collect the data, and provide the progress reports throughout the project period to (*Name of funding agency*) as per the grant requirements.

The evaluation design includes both process and product evaluation. The Project Executive Committee will gather information during the implementation process and evaluation activities to recommend modifications for improving the project. Questions to be answered in this evaluation include the following:

- ◆ *To what extent were the activities of the project implemented as planned? If not, what barriers or obstacles prevented parts or all of the activities from being executed?*
- ◆ *How effective were the activities of the project in achieving the goals of the project?*
- ◆ *What is the impact of the activities of the project on the participants?*

### Product Evaluation

Product evaluation will focus on measuring final outcomes against project goals, objectives, and benchmarks. Changes that have occurred will be identified and analyzed to determine whether the program is effective for students and teachers. Like the process evaluation, the product evaluation will be collected both formatively and summatively. The product performance measures will focus on:

- ◆ *Improvement in teacher knowledge and qualifications*
- ◆ *Improvement in outcomes for children's reading, language, cognitive, and literature skills*

The following product evaluative data will be collected:

### **Benchmark Tests to measure student achievement**

- Specify the methods and instruments the proposed project will use to evaluate the achievement of each of the proposed project goals.***
- Include screening reading assessments, progress monitoring assessments, and child outcome data in your evaluation plan.***

## Student Work Samples

- ✎ Specify how and when these samples will be collected.*

## Evaluation of Professional Development

- ✎ In addition to teachers' evaluation of the professional development, applicants are encouraged to use lesson plans or administrative walk-through forms as a means to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development.*

## End-of-Project Survey

- ✎ An end-of-project survey distributed to all parents of targeted students can be used to provide the opportunity for parents to evaluate the effectiveness of the program for their children.*

## Process Evaluation

Process evaluation will gather information about how successfully the strategies of the project were implemented as planned, and assess their impact on the target populations. Process evaluation data is both quantitative and qualitative in nature, and is intended to assess the outcome of the project. This data, collected formatively and summatively, will describe how students and teachers are affected by the project. The process evaluative data will focus on:

- ◆ *Improvement in classroom environment*
- ◆ *Improvement in teacher instruction and planning*

The following process evaluative data will be collected:

## School/District Records

- ✎ The Project Evaluator can track project objectives through quantitative data such as purchase orders, numbers of students/teachers served, and inventory records.*

## Project Meetings

- ✎ Specify how often the Project Executive Committee will meet and on what the meetings will focus.*

## Classroom Observations

- ✎ Administrators can visit classrooms randomly to acquire information on how teachers have adapted the program to student needs. Evaluative information can be drawn from observations of classroom applications, in the form of administrative walk-through forms.*

## **Anecdotal Records**

 **To address the “So what?” question, anecdotal records from students and teachers can be collected. The following questions will be addressed:**

- *How effective have the instructional strategies and measurement methods been in ensuring that the targeted student population learns to read well by the end of third grade?*
- *How has the Reading First Program enhanced the phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills of the targeted student population?*

## Final Evaluative Report

The Project Director and External Evaluator will use the data gathered in the product and process evaluation activities to prepare and present an annual Project Summary Report, to be shared with the local Board of Trustees and (*Funding Agency*). The product and process evaluative data will be analyzed in the final report to answer the following questions:

- ◆ *What improvements has the project made in how we teach our students and prepare them for future reading and school success?*
- ◆ *To what extent, by (Date), are all students ready to transition to the next grade level?*
- ◆ *To what extent, by (Date), do all teachers have increased knowledge, skill, and instructional methodologies in the literacy development of students?*
- ◆ *To what extent, by (Date), do 100% of parents of participating students show increased involvement in their children’s reading success and school activities?*

### **About Scholastic Inc.**

Scholastic is committed to providing teachers with effective materials for every stage of reading instruction to ensure that students develop the skills and strategies needed to succeed in school. Our reputation is built on an 85-year history of helping foster and support effective learning for all students. For years, we have worked with leading researchers to develop scientifically based products that produce significant results in student achievement, as well as meaningful changes in teacher effectiveness.

We look forward to partnering with you to improve reading achievement, and would like the opportunity to talk with you about how we can best support your efforts to implement ***No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*** over the next several years.