

## Grant Assistance Toolkit

# Reading First

Featuring Scholastic's *Fluency Formula*™  
(With Professional Development from *Scholastic Red*)

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

- Funding program information
- Alignment of ***Fluency Formula*** to grant requirements
- Grant writing support

### **Scholastic's *Fluency Formula*™ is the supplemental reading program featured in this Toolkit.**

The Scholastic ***Fluency Formula***™ provides teachers with a complete systematic and explicit yearlong program of fluency instruction for Grades 1-6. ***Fluency Formula*** recognizes that fluent reading requires *speedy* recognition of words, decoding *accuracy*, and oral expressiveness (*prosody*). (Speed + Accuracy + Prosody = Fluency). ***Fluency Formula*** is a solution that helps students bridge the gap between word recognition and understanding.

***Fluency Formula Kits*** focus on:

- Research-based fluency and foundational skills strategies
- Normed, validated assessment for diagnosing and tailoring instruction
- Practice using leveled books, Audio CDs, and other materials

Fluency instruction is also supported through these professional development courses from ***Scholastic Red***.


- *Putting Reading First in Your Classroom*
- *Building Fluency, Grades K-2*
- *Guided Reading: Making It Work In Your Classroom*

### 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.

***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.*

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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.

California  
800-342-5331

Northeast  
800-878-8398

Southeast  
800-221-5312


Southwest  
800-221-5312

West/Midwest  
800-225-4625



## CONTENTS

<b>Funding Program Overview: <i>Reading First</i></b> .....	<b>3</b>
Purpose of <i>Reading First</i> .....	3
Eligibility .....	3
Acceptable Use of Funds .....	3
Coordination of Resources .....	4
<i>Reading First</i> Criteria .....	4
<b>Fluency Formula Alignment to <i>Reading First</i> Criteria</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Customize Your <i>Reading First</i> Application</b> .....	<b>12</b>
1. Summary or Abstract .....	14
2. Needs Assessment .....	14
3. Educational Goals and Objectives .....	16
4. Activities and Timeline .....	17
5. Project Management .....	17
6. Resource Management .....	18
7. Sustainability .....	18
8. Assessment and Evaluation .....	18
9. Budget .....	19
10. Appendix .....	19
<b>Grant Writing Tools and Tips</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Helpful Hints.....	20
Sample Goals, Objectives, and Effectiveness Indicators.....	21
Sample Activities for Goals and Objectives .....	23
<b>About Scholastic Inc.</b> .....	<b>24</b>

 *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.*

## 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 for 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 D: Enhancing Education Through Technology
- Title II, Part A: Improving Teacher Quality
- Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition
- Title V, Part A: Innovative Programs

 Throughout the **Fluency Formula** program, citations from research on fluency are included to provide a rationale for fluency instruction as well as information on the whys and hows of fluency.

 **Scholastic Red** provides high-quality professional development that focuses on the application of scientifically based reading research to improve teacher practices and raise student 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.

There are thirteen different criteria that must be addressed in *Reading First* subgrant applications.


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

- Instructional Assessments
- Instructional Programs and Strategies
- Instructional Materials
- Instructional Leadership
- District and School Based Professional Development
- Access to Print Materials
- Evaluation Strategies


**Fluency Formula Aligns to Reading First Criteria**  
(With Professional Development from *Scholastic Red*)


The following chart details how Scholastic's **Fluency Formula**, with professional development support from **Scholastic Red**, addresses these *Reading First* criteria\* and can enrich and strengthen a comprehensive reading program:


- Instructional Assessments
- Instructional Programs and Strategies
- Instructional Materials
- Instructional Leadership
- District and School Based Professional Development
- Access to Print Materials
- Evaluation Strategies


<b>Reading First Criteria</b>	 <b>Scholastic Products</b>
<b>Instructional Assessments</b>	<b>Fluency Formula</b>
<p>Valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessments</p>	<p>The <i>Fluency Formula Assessment System</i> features an Oral Fluency Assessment (OFA) that was developed, normed, and validated by Edformation, an independent research and development organization. In creating the OFA, Edformation carefully selected only those reading passages that correlated to other commonly accepted readability formulas, had appropriate Lexile® scores, and had high alternate-form reliability.</p> <p>Using the system, teachers can accurately do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assess student fluency</li> <li>▪ Identify students who need fluency intervention</li> <li>▪ Tailor instruction</li> <li>▪ Track student progress</li> </ul> <p>Teachers assess all students at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Students who are struggling significantly with fluency can be assessed weekly to inform instruction as they move toward achieving grade-level proficiency.</p>
<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>The <i>Fluency Formula Assessment System</i> can be coordinated and aligned with any reading program. It allows teachers to fill the assessment gap in basal readers, as well as in textbook programs and yearly testing plans.</p> <p>The <i>Fluency Formula Assessment System</i> measures the number of words read correctly per minute (WCPM) and provides specific suggestions for building <b>fluency</b> based on a student's proficiency level. This assessment system also includes <b>comprehension</b> questions that help teachers gauge the fuller picture of whether students understand what they read.</p>

\*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>
<b>Instructional Programs and Strategies/ Instructional Materials</b>	<b>Fluency Formula</b>
<p>Instructional strategies and programs based on scientifically based reading research</p>	<p>Scholastic's <b>Fluency Formula</b>, which was developed by a team of leading fluency experts, is a supplemental reading program based on the scientific research reviewed by the National Reading Panel. According to the Panel, fluency instruction, practice and assessment are essential for bridging the gap between word recognition and comprehension.</p> <p>The <b>Fluency Formula</b> Professional Guide includes citations from research that provide a rationale for fluency instruction, as well as information on the whys and hows of fluency.</p> <p>The <b>Fluency Formula Kits</b> provide teachers with complete systematic and explicit yearlong fluency instruction for all students, including those that need intervention. The program focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Modeling fluency strategies</li> <li>▪ Building foundational reading skills</li> <li>▪ Daily student practice</li> </ul>
<p>Instructional strategies and programs that provide explicit and systematic instruction in the five essential components of reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Phonemic awareness</li> <li>▪ Phonics</li> <li>▪ Vocabulary development</li> <li>▪ Fluency</li> <li>▪ Comprehension</li> </ul>	<p>The <b>Fluency Formula</b> program provides teachers with the tools to integrate explicit and systematic fluency instruction into their daily lesson plans. Students in Grades 1-6 are taught how to speedily recognize words, decode with accuracy, and read aloud with oral expressiveness (prosody). Teachers model skills throughout the week, monitor student practice, and modify instruction based on student assessments.</p> <p><u>Phonics.</u> The program builds phonics skills through direct instruction, modeling, and student practice. Teachers review skills during the week.</p> <p><u>Vocabulary.</u> Teachers present key vocabulary words in each lesson using the Vocabulary Instructional Routine. They introduce sight words using the Fluency FlipChart. <b>Fluency Formula</b> provides for a review of targeted words through direct instruction and student practice.</p> <p><u>Fluency.</u> Students learn fluency skills, including punctuation fluency, pacing, phrasing, and intonation, through direct instruction and modeling. Students practice skills with teacher guidance, practice independently, read phrase-cued text, and do phonics speed drills.</p> <p><u>Comprehension.</u> Students read curriculum-related Student Workbook selections and answer comprehension questions. Teachers ask comprehension questions after modeling fluent reading.</p>

Reading First Criteria	 Scholastic Products
<p>Materials and programs that provide explicit instructional strategies, have a coordinated instructional sequence, and offer ample practice opportunities</p>	<p>Teachers are provided with explicit instructional strategies in the following materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Professional Guide</i>, which provides direct-instruction lessons on fluency-building strategies</li> <li>▪ Fluency FlipChart, which reinforces foundational phonics and sight word skills</li> <li>▪ <i>Building Fluency</i>, a professional book that is a resource of fluency-building materials by program academic advisor Wiley Blevins</li> <li>▪ Read Aloud Focus and Steps to Purposeful Daily Read Alouds provided with the Read Aloud Anthology</li> </ul> <p>Students have ample opportunities for targeted independent fluency-building practice using these materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Independent reading using leveled books that are part of the Scholastic Fluency Library</li> <li>▪ Audio-Assisted Reading CDs for each book that provide a model of fluent reading and motivate students to read along at practice and expert speeds</li> <li>▪ Student Workbooks for extended and at-home practice</li> <li>▪ Leveled Passage Reproducibles for extra reading practice</li> <li>▪ Fluency Activity Cards, which present engaging ideas for a fluency learning center and small-group work</li> <li>▪ Repeated guided reading</li> <li>▪ Choral reading, partner reading, and reader's theater</li> </ul>
<p>Materials and strategies that are aligned with the instructional program and to state standards</p>	<p>In the <i>Fluency Formula Assessment System</i>, teachers conduct one-minute oral fluency readings that are measured in words read correctly per minute (WCPM) as required by many state and local reading curriculum standards. Results can be reported to the district and the state, if required.</p> <p>Textbook correlations with <i>Fluency Formula</i> are available.</p>
<p>Materials and programs that are integrated with and connect meaningfully to the comprehensive reading program</p>	<p>The <i>Fluency Formula Kit</i> provides all the components needed to integrate fluency instruction into a comprehensive reading program for Grades 1-6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Daily lessons, which are designed for 10-15 minute increments, can easily augment or modify existing reading lessons.</li> <li>▪ Flexible weekly plans, which include time for teachers to assess student progress, provide strategic instruction for all students plus intervention plans for struggling readers.</li> <li>▪ The Fluency Library is an essential resource for independent reading practice that contains high-interest fiction and nonfiction books.</li> </ul>

<b>Reading First Criteria</b>	 <b>Scholastic Products</b>
<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>The <b>Fluency Formula</b> program is designed to assess and diagnose student proficiency levels and to provide strategies to modify instruction to meet individual student needs, including those who are below grade level, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The <i>Fluency Formula Assessment System</i> allows teachers to determine whether a student is reading below, on, or above grade level, and then to set instructional goals.</li> <li>▪ Teachers use the Oral Fluency Norm Chart to calculate the weekly gain in WCPM that is necessary to achieve a target rate.</li> <li>▪ Lesson plans provide weekly notes that assist teachers in modifying instruction and setting realistic goals for ELL students.</li> <li>▪ Teachers can readily see which lessons in the <i>Professional Guide</i> are recommended for basic or below basic readers and can group students by proficiency level for targeted instruction.</li> <li>▪ Level Passage Reproducibles, which begin at level 1.0, contain high-interest readings that are ideal for students reading significantly below level.</li> </ul>
<p>Strategies that accelerate performance and monitor progress of students who are reading below grade level</p>	<p>Using the <i>Fluency Formula Assessment System</i>, teachers test below-basic and basic-level students every two to four weeks in order to monitor their WCPM, set fluency goals, and help them reach grade-level proficiency.</p> <p>Tools to accelerate student achievement in fluency that are provided in the <i>Fluency Formula Kit</i> include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leveled passages for repeated and easier reading practice</li> <li>▪ Phonics review using the Fluency FlipChart</li> <li>▪ Sight word review from previous lessons</li> <li>▪ Phrase-cued text passages</li> <li>▪ Charts to show students' progress in WCPM</li> <li>▪ Accountable independent reading</li> <li>▪ Fluency Library Audio CDs at practice speed</li> <li>▪ Workbook comprehension activities</li> <li>▪ Small-group time</li> </ul>
<b>Access to Print Materials</b>	<b>Fluency Formula</b>
<p>Variety of engaging reading materials including expository and narrative</p>	<p>The carefully leveled books that are a part of the Scholastic Fluency Library contain high-interest fiction and nonfiction in an easy-to-read format. The <i>Fluency Formula Kit's Professional Guide</i> provides suggestions on which books complement which lesson units. The Read Aloud Anthology, part of the <i>Professional Guide</i>, contains award-winning stories, nonfiction, and stories that enhance students' cultural literacy.</p>

<b>Reading First Criteria</b>	 <b>Scholastic Products</b>
<p>Materials to promote reading and library programs</p>	<p><b>Fluency Formula</b> promotes the creation of a Fluency Corner, which is an established place in the classroom in which all fluency materials are located. A Fluency Corner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Allows students to engage in independent reading outside of classroom instructional time</li> <li>▪ Helps to establish fluency routines</li> <li>▪ Highlights the importance of fluency as a major reading goal</li> <li>▪ Contains easy-to-find books from the Fluency Library and other Scholastic fluency collections that are organized by level, genre, and interest</li> </ul>
<b>Instructional Leadership</b>	<b>Scholastic Red</b>
<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> 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>




Reading First Criteria	 Scholastic Products
<p>Professional Development, 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 <b>Scholastic Red</b> 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, collaboration, and personalized support.</li> </ul> <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 can provide teachers with ongoing, continuous support. Through this training, 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> <li>▪ Receive 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> </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>▪ 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 grant application, but should help you understand how to include information related to these *Reading First* criteria:

- Instructional Assessments
- Instructional Programs and Strategies
- Instructional Materials
- Instructional Leadership
- District and School Based Professional Development
- Access to Print Materials
- Evaluation Strategies

 The following chart shows how Scholastic’s Fluency Formula supports Reading First criteria and addresses specific areas of need.

Fluency Formula	Instructional Assessments	Instructional Programs, Materials, and Strategies				Professional Development
		Essential Reading Skills*	Print Materials / Technology	School-to-Home Connection	Intervention Strategies	
Fluency Formula Kits (1-6)	Fluency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnosis</li> <li>• Progress monitoring</li> </ul>	Instruction and practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Fluency</u></li> <li>• Phonics</li> <li>• Vocab.</li> <li>• Comp.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print</li> <li>• Audio CDs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books</li> <li>• Workbook</li> <li>• Level passages</li> </ul>	Recommends strategies based on proficiency level	Supported by <i>Scholastic Red</i> courses
Fluency Formula Libraries (1-6)		Practice: Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books</li> <li>• Audio CDs</li> </ul>	• Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice</li> <li>• Audio CD modeling</li> </ul>	Supported by <i>Scholastic Red</i> courses

\* Instructional focus is underlined


Scholastic Red Professional Development	Instructional Assessments	Training in the Application of Research-based Instructional Programs, Materials, and Strategies			
		Essential Reading Skills	Print Materials / Technology	School-to-Home Connection	Intervention Strategies
Scholastic Red Course: “Putting Reading First in Your Classroom”	Training in the type and use of assessments to inform instruction	Instruction, practice, and application of scientifically research-based strategies to teach essential reading skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online courses</li> <li>• Teacher materials</li> </ul>	Provides teachers with ideas and resources to involve parents in their child’s education	Instruction, practice, and application of strategies to teach reading through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated online courses</li> <li>• Teacher materials</li> <li>• Modeling</li> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• Workshops</li> </ul>
Scholastic Red Course: “Building Fluency, Grades K-2”	Training in the type and use of assessments to inform instruction	Instruction, practice, and application of scientifically research based strategies to teach fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online courses</li> <li>• Teacher materials</li> </ul>	Provides teachers with ideas and resources to involve parents in their child’s education	Instruction, practice, and application of strategies to teach reading through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated online courses</li> <li>• Teacher materials</li> <li>• Modeling</li> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• Workshops</li> </ul>

Reading First Grant Assistance Toolkit

Scholastic Red Professional Development	Instructional Assessments	Training in the Application of Research-based Instructional Programs, Materials, and Strategies			
		Essential Reading Skills	Print Materials / Technology	School-to-Home Connection	Intervention Strategies
Scholastic Red Course: "Guided Reading: Making It Work In Your Classroom"	Training in the type and use of assessments to inform instruction	Instruction, practice, and application of scientifically research-based strategies to teach essential reading skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online courses</li> <li>• Teacher materials</li> </ul>	Provides teachers with ideas and resources to involve parents in their child's education	Instruction, practice, and application of strategies to teach reading through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated online courses</li> <li>• Teacher materials</li> <li>• Modeling</li> <li>• Coaching</li> <li>• Workshops</li> </ul>

## 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. Information and examples are provided to help you make sure all components are thoroughly addressed. Remember to incorporate specific information that is unique to your project.

 *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

 *The needs you identify should align with the allowable uses for Reading First funds. Conduct an evaluation of the comprehensive reading program that will be used by the school in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program, including professional development. Fill the fluency gap with these targeted materials and programs from Scholastic:*

- *Fluency Formula Kits*
- *Fluency Formula Libraries*
- *Professional Development Courses from Scholastic Red*
  - *Putting Reading First in Your Classroom*
  - *Building Fluency, Grades K-2*
  - *Guided Reading: Making It Work In Your Classroom*

 **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.

 *The Fluency Formula Assessment System is a reliability- and validity-tested assessment that can be used to establish a baseline of data for identifying specific needs at the beginning a grant project, then used periodically to monitor progress and inform instruction throughout the grant period.*

### 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 page 21-22.)*


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 (Performance Target)	Timeline	Effectiveness Indicator
In June of 2005, all teachers provide concrete examples of how they applied research-based methods and strategies to teach fluency	June 2005	Percentage of teachers reporting specific examples of methods and strategies used to teach fluency
In August of 2004, all K-3 teachers will be enrolled in an online professional development course that will expand their understanding of how to apply effective research based methods and strategies to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.	August 2004	Percent of teachers completing an online professional development course that focuses on fluency instruction.

#### 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 23 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’s scientifically-research based products and professional development courses, including those that target fluency, can be effectively integrated with school activities that are being funded by other federal, state or local sources. The federal programs for which Scholastic products qualify include, but are not limited to, the following:*

- *Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs*
- *Title II, Part A: Improving Teacher Quality*
- *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

 *To accurately measure student growth in fluency over the period of the grant project, repeat the administration of Scholastic’s reliability- and validity-tested assessment that is part of the Fluency Formula Assessment System.*

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.*

## 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 Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Research-based, and Timely (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

 *Scholastic's Fluency Formula Kits systematically and explicitly teach students to become more fluent readers.*

<b>Educational Goal:</b> All K-3 teachers will use scientifically research based materials, methods, and strategies to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.			
<b>Objectives</b> (Performance Targets)	<b>Positions Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Effectiveness Indicator</b>
Beginning in September 2004, all K-3 teachers will include specific fluency lessons into their weekly lesson plans.	Language Arts Teachers	Sept. 2004 to June 2005	Percentage of K-3 teachers using materials that provide systematic and explicit methods to teach fluency as measured by class lesson plans and observations by administrators

**Professional Development**

- 📖 *Three facilitated online courses from **Scholastic Red** provide teachers with research-based training so they can more effectively teach fluency lessons in the classroom.*
  - *Putting Reading First in Your Classroom*
  - *Building Fluency, Grades K-2*
  - *Guided Reading: Making It Work In Your Classroom*

<b>Educational Goal:</b> 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.			
Objective (Performance Target)	Positions Responsible	Timeline	Effectiveness Indicator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By June of 2005, 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</li> </ul>	Teachers	Sept. 2004 through June 2005	Percentage of K-3 teachers completing one course improving fluency instruction in the classroom

**School-to-Home Connection**

- 📖 *Specific At-Home Practice suggestions are provided that are related to every lesson.*

<b>Educational Goal:</b> Parents will be regularly informed about the effectiveness of the program at raising their child's achievement in reading.			
Objective (Performance Target)	Positions Responsible	Timeline	Effectiveness Indicator
For the 2004 school year, Teachers will send parents weekly student progress reports regarding the growth being made in reading achievement along with specific suggestions about how support can be given at home.	K-3 Teachers	September 2004 through June 2005	Frequency of parent communication as measured by teacher records


**Assessment/Evaluation**

- 📖 *Scholastic's Fluency Formula Assessment System is a valid and reliable instrument to accurately measure student achievement in fluency.*

<b>Educational Goal:</b> The district will determine the effectiveness of the fluency program at raising student achievement over the period of the grant project.			
Objective (Performance Target)	Positions Responsible	Timeline	Effectiveness Indicator
Beginning in September 2004, all K-3 teachers will conduct a valid and reliable fluency assessment to establish a baseline of student scores, then conduct progress monitoring assessments periodically throughout the school year.	K-3 Teachers	September 2004 through June 2005	Type of assessment and schedule of testing dates

### 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.*

<b>Goal:</b> 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.			
<b>Objective:</b> (Performance Target) By June of 2005, 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.			
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 2004	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 2004 Spring 2005	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 2004-2005	Training calendar Schedule of Classes
4. Identify and track teachers and administrators who complete the <i>Scholastic Red</i> training program.	LEA Curriculum Leaders	Spring 2005	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 2004-2005	Number of teachers who systematically and explicitly teach fluency as measured by class lesson plans and observations by administrators.

**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 84-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.