



**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333**

**PENNSYLVANIA APPLICATION  
FOR FUNDS UNDER THE  
READING EXCELLENCE ACT**

**MAY 6, 1999**

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### **Introduction to the Narrative**

This introduction has four parts. It begins by highlighting recent accomplishments and new initiatives that demonstrate that Pennsylvania has created a policy and practice environment that will use Reading Excellence funds well. Second, it presents the perspective that Pennsylvania has about how SEAs can influence the ways in which the leadership and staff of LEAs and schools carry out the improvement strategies set forth in the Reading Excellence Act (REA); this perspective has shaped the content of this application. Third, it provides an overview of the structure of the application, which has been developed by members of the Pennsylvania Reading and Literacy Partnership and reflects its interest in developing an application that would provide not only the content needed by the federal review panel, but also the content that would help the eligible LEAs understand the REA and develop their responses to the Requests for Proposals. Finally, the introduction notes where specific topics listed in Section 2253 of the law are addressed in this application.

*A style note: The name, “the Partnership,” is used throughout the application. It refers to the Pennsylvania Reading and Literacy Partnership described fully in Section III and to its members who helped develop this application. Those members included SEA and LEA staff, as well as other resource persons on the Partnership. The phrase “research-based” has been used throughout the application as short-hand for the phrase “scientifically based reading research” found in the law.*

### **Conditions in Pennsylvania supportive of implementing the strategies and achieving the purposes of the Reading Excellence Act**

Last fall, when Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) leadership learned about the Reading Excellence Act (REA), it was excited by the possibilities that it afforded. That excitement was based on the congruence of the direction set forth in the law and the progress that Pennsylvania was making in implementing standards-based reform and in fulfilling the intent of Title I (i.e., to ensure that all students achieve challenging state standards -- particularly, those concerned with reading and mathematics). To be

specific, these are the conditions that exist in Pennsylvania that create an ideal setting for achieving the purposes of the REA.

- Pennsylvania completed adoption of academic standards in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in January 1999 for grades 3, 5, 8, and 12; the reading standards for the third grade reflect current research regarding what students should achieve by third grade and the definition of reading found in the REA.
- Under the auspice of Title I, PDE has supported for the last three years an Early Childhood Assessment Task Force that has identified assessment methods and instruments that can be used to document student progress toward becoming skilled readers between kindergarten and fourth grade, created a resource book summarizing its conclusions, disseminated it to every school in the state, and conducted awareness sessions as Pennsylvania conferences over the past two years. This spring, the Task Force is disseminating a revised resource book across the state and providing models for how to developed teachers' skills at implementing the assessment methods in their classrooms and at using the resulting data to guide instructional planning and improvement.
- Pennsylvania has adopted rules and regulations (i.e., Chapter 4) that will bring the Pennsylvania assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics into alignment with the academic standards.
- Based on evidence gathered during the summer of 1998 by the reviewers of Title I School Performance Reports, Pennsylvania's four-year effort to strengthen the assessments that schools and LEAs are using to document student progress toward achieving reading and writing standards is having a significant impact.
- The Governor has submitted to the legislature a request for funds to develop and implement a state third-grade reading assessment. Funds should be appropriated by June 30, so that this development effort can get underway this summer.

- Pennsylvania has revised its curriculum regulations, so that they are supportive of standards-based reform. Specifically, LEAs are now required to develop six-year strategic plans for implementing standards-based reform. Those plans must address the topics of standards, assessment, instruction, professional development, and the need for both ongoing improvement in practice and for additional instructional opportunities for students not achieving the standards.
- With the support of the PDE, the state's 29 Intermediate Units (IUs) initiated a coordinated effort to increase local educators' and community members' understanding of standards-based reform and to develop training programs that would help LEA staff carry out specific tasks related to strategic planning. In the first year, the IUs reached over 15,000 educators and community members.
- Pennsylvania initiated, in parallel to the revision of the curriculum regulations, revision of regulations governing teacher certification and professional development. Within the next 12 to 18 months, these efforts promise to bring those regulations in alignment with standards-based reform and to increase the requirements and standards that pre-service teachers need to meet to be certified.
- In 1998, the Governor initiated its own Family Literacy Program. It is modeled on Even Start, and in one year, it has doubled the number of family literacy programs in the state. Currently families in 103 LEAs' attendance areas are being served.
- In 1998, the Governor also initiated the Governor's Institutes and Academics for Educators. These summer programs are designed to help participants acquire the content knowledge and pedagogical skills to improve instruction in relation to specific academic standards; they also seek to model exemplary professional development practices. One of the 1998 Institutes addressed the teaching of reading. Currently, three of the Institutes and Academies being planned for the summer of 1999 will address reading, and one is directly aligned with the purposes of the REA.

- In 1999, the Governor requested funds for a four-year program whose aim is to help schools to implement research-based practices that will ensure that all of their students learn to read no later than the end of third grade. The PDE has put this program on a fast track, so that schools selected can initiate their improvement efforts, this September.
- The Pennsylvania Title I program continues to support the work of the State Parent Advisory Committee, which has been facilitating the exchange of information of effective parent involvement practices, developing parent leaders, and managing a mini-grant program aimed at encouraging innovative parent involvement activities at school and LEA levels.
- The Pennsylvania Title I program has also been supporting three networks of LEAs and schools -- specifically, the Big Cities Consortium, which involves the urban LEAs of the state; the Collegial Network for the Ongoing Improvement of the Schools of North-Central Pennsylvania, which involves eleven rural districts; and the Eastern Pennsylvania School Improvement Network, which involves schools from a mix of seven urban, rural, and suburban districts. Each of these networks is sponsoring collaborative improvement activities related to priority needs of their member LEAs and participating schools. All are addressing the challenge of increasing the numbers of children who become skilled and motivated readers.

(A more detailed description of these conditions is found in Appendix C of this narrative.)

In summary, Pennsylvania finds the REA providing directions that are reinforcing of the directions in which the state and its LEAs have been moving. However, from Pennsylvania's perspective, the REA is unique in its vision of the leadership that LEAs need to provide to ensure that all children become skilled and motivated readers. That vision sees LEAs building the school-community partnerships that will ensure that all children, from when they are born until the end of the primary grades, have the research-based literacy/reading activities and experiences that will enable them to achieve that goal. Based on a meeting that the members of the Partnership had on April 20, 1999 with representatives from eligible LEAs, the Partnership is convinced that there are a significant number of LEAs in Pennsylvania ready to realize that vision.

**SEA role**

In Section 2253 of the REA, SEAs are asked to describe how they will influence the ways in which the leadership and staff of LEAs and schools carry out the improvement strategies set forth in the REA. From the perspective of the PDE's leadership and the members of the Partnership, a SEA influences LEAs and their schools by:

- defining clearly in the Request for Proposals (RFP) the improvement strategies to be implemented, the practices that are to result from the improvement efforts, and the learning that is to be demonstrated by children as a result of those practices
- clarifying expectations by stating criteria that will be used to review the contents of local proposals
- offering workshops at which LEA leadership and staff can explore the meaning and implications of the expectations set forth in the RFPs for LEA planning and action
- providing as part of those workshops materials and resource persons who can describe ways in which specific improvement strategies have been successfully implemented in their LEAs or school-communities
- reinforcing the expectations through the ways in which SEA staff and members of the Partnership monitor LEAs and their school-communities, as they implement their reading improvement plans and tutorial assistance programs
- reinforcing the expectations through the design of the evaluation and the feedback that the evaluators provide
- providing or brokering technical assistance aimed at helping LEAs and schools address certain needs and problems identified through the monitoring or the evaluations
- convening the leadership and staff of the participating LEAs and schools to share successes and to explore common problems

- recognizing accomplishments either by providing platforms from which LEAS and schools can share their accomplishments with the professional community or by recommending them to state and federal leaders for formal recognition and awards.

In addition, SEAs can increase the effectiveness of all of these approaches by: (1) forming advisory groups or task forces of local educators (i.e., the Pennsylvania Reading and Literacy Partnership) to help it implement them and (2) accessing technical resource persons who have in-depth experience in helping LEAs and schools implement specific improvement strategies and achieve particular improvement goals and objectives (i.e., Region III Comprehensive Center, the Laboratory for Student Success, the R&D Centers at University of Pittsburgh and the University of Pennsylvania).

In this application, the PDE and the Pennsylvania Reading and Literacy Partnership will describe how they will use these ways of influencing to ensure that LEAs and their school-communities implement the improvement strategies set forth in the REA and, through them, achieve the purposes of that law.

### **Organization of the Pennsylvania narrative**

This narrative is organized into the following eight parts.

Part I presents the Partnership's conception of what the REA requires. This conception begins by considering what current research recommends children should be accomplishing as they develop from age three to approximately age eight (the age of most third grade students) and what kinds of literacy/reading activities and experiences current research recommends that children should be having to help them acquire critical readiness skills and to become skilled and motivated readers. It then relates: (1) the accomplishments recommended by research for young children of different age/grade groups, (2) the literacy/reading activities and experiences that current research suggests help students achieve those accomplishments, and (3) the strategies presented in the REA for improving the quality and quantity of literacy/reading activities and experiences of young children.

Part II provides a framework for school-community reading improvement planning that reflects the conception presented in Section I, but transforms it to facilitate LEA and school-community planning.



This framework recommends that an LEA and school-based reading improvement effort be organized around:

- the strategies that provide the literacy/reading activities and experiences at home and in community settings that will enable children to acquire the readiness skills that they will need to learn to read once they enter school [Section 2251(1) of the REA]
- the strategies that will provide the literacy/reading activities and experiences in school and through additional support that together will teach every child to read as soon as possible, but not later than the third grade [Section 2251(2) of the REA].

Part III describes the Pennsylvania Reading and Literacy Partnership which has been formed and which has helped develop this application. This section responds to Section 2253(d), and Section 2253(b)(2)(A) and (b)(2)(B)(viii) of the REA. It also describes the role that the Partnership will play in providing the participating LEAs and schools information that will help them plan their response to each of the improvement strategies described in Section 2253(b)(2)(B & C).

Part IV discusses the actions that SEA staff will take to increase coordination among the programs that support and improve the literacy/reading activities and experiences that are provided young children. This section responds to Section 2253(b)(2)(E)(i) of the REA.

Part V describes (1) the eligible Pennsylvania LEAs, (2) the plan for disseminating information about the REA and the subgrant competitions and for providing assistance to those LEAs as they develop their proposals, (3) an overview of the content of the RFPs for the two REA subgrants and of the criteria that members of the Partnership will use to review LEA proposals, and (4) PDE's plan for the review of LEA proposals. This section responds respectively to Section 2253(b)(2)(B)(vii), (b)(2)(E)(iii), and (b)(2)(B)(vi) of the REA. . (Note: the RFPs and the review criteria are attachments to this narrative.)

Part VI presents Pennsylvania's assurance that instruction in reading will be provided to children with reading difficulties who are at risk of being referred to special education or who have been evaluated but not identified as a child with a disability. This section responds to Section 2253(b)(2)(D) of the REA.

Part VII provides a general plan for evaluating the extent to which LEA activities have been effective in achieving the purposes of the REA. This section responds to Section 2253(b)(2)(E)(iv) and (b)(2)(F).

Part VIII addresses the “competitive priority.” It describes the current status of Pennsylvania regulations concerning teacher certification and why Pennsylvania believes that within the next 12 to 18 months, it will have increased standards that teachers seeking elementary teacher certification will have to meet and those standards will include knowledge of the findings of reading research and skill in implementing instructional practices that reflect that research in their classrooms. This section responds to Section 2253(c)(2)(C) of the REA.

**Where the topics listed in Section 2253 of the REA are found in this narrative**

Table 1 lists the topics found in Section 2253 of the REA and the sections of the narrative. It notes the pages in the sections where the topics are addressed.

Table 1

Table 1 continued

## **I. Pennsylvania’s Conception of What a Reading Excellence Improvement Effort Involves**

In this section, the Pennsylvania Reading and Literacy Partnership presents its conception of what a Reading Excellence improvement effort involves, given its analysis of the Reading Excellence Act (REA). It begins by describing the foundation that current reading research is providing for local reading improvement efforts. It then presents a conceptual framework that relates: (1) the accomplishments suggested by research for young children of different age/grade groups, (2) the literacy/reading activities and experiences that current research suggests help students achieve those accomplishments, and (3) the strategies presented in the REA for improving the quality and quantity of literacy/reading activities and experiences that young children have.

### **Critical findings from scientifically-based reading research for the design of improvement strategies named in the REA**

The Partnership recognized early in its discussions that the recent syntheses of reading research<sup>1</sup> provide two useful resources for focusing the reading improvement efforts of LEAs and school-communities. The first were the sets of research-based expectations with respect to the “accomplishments that children should ideally be achieving at critical developmental stages.” Second were the research-based recommendations regarding the literacy/reading activities and experiences in which children, from infants into primary school-age, should be regularly involved, if they are to develop into skilled and motivated readers.

The Partnership found these resources so valuable that it developed its own summaries to aid both their planning and the planning of interested LEAs. In Appendix A, the Partnership presents examples of the expectations for what young children should be accomplishing. Those examples are grouped into the following seven clusters: (1) phonemic awareness/phonics; (2) concepts about print; (3) developing

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<sup>1</sup> For example: the two National Research Council publications: Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children and Starting Out Right - A Guide to Promoting Children’s Reading Success Development in Early Reading and Writing, which is found in the joint position statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), “Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children;” the “Every Child a Reader” series of the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement.

speaking, reading, and writing vocabulary; (4) developing grammar; (5) listening, speaking, reading, and writing for meaning; (6) speaking, reading, writing fluency; and (7) responding. (Note: These examples also reflect the content of the Pennsylvania Academic Standards in Reading for third grade.)

In Appendix B, the Partnership presents examples of literacy and reading-related activities and experiences recommended in the syntheses. The Partnership believes that these activities and experiences reflect the REA's purpose that teachers and other appropriate instructional staff will learn to teach reading in ways that are consistent with the findings from research with respect to phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension [Section 2251(3) and Section 2253(b)(2)(iii)].

### **Expectations with respect to student accomplishments and achievement**

The REA presents three general purposes with respect to student accomplishments and achievement [Section 2251]:

1. To provide children with the readiness skills they need to learn to read once they enter school.
2. To teach every child to read in the child's early childhood years -- as soon as the child is ready to read or as soon as possible once the child enters school, but not later than the third grade.
3. To improve the reading skills of students.

Through its definition of reading, the REA further elaborates what it means to read -- namely, reading is the complex process of deriving meaning from print, and it requires all of the following: (a) the skills and knowledge to understand how phonemes, or speech sound, are connected to print, (b) the ability to decode unfamiliar words, (c) the ability to read fluently, (d) sufficient background information and vocabulary to foster reading comprehension, (e) the development of appropriate active strategies to construct meaning from print, and (f) the development and maintenance of a motivation to read [Section 2252(4)]. (Appendix A provides a further elaboration of what readiness to read and becoming a reader means.)

In discussing these expectations, it is important to note the children whom the REA targets. The REA primarily focuses on children of high poverty communities and children who go to schools that have been

identified for Title I school improvement [Section 2255(a)(1)]. It also makes reference to three groups of children for which it has particular concern.

1. Children from families with low literacy skills. By setting as one of its purposes to expand the number of high quality family literacy programs, the REA communicates its concern about children whose parents do not have well-developed literacy skills [Section 2251(4), Section 2253(b)(2)(C)(ii), Section 2255(b)(2)(B) and (d)(1)(E)].
2. Children incorrectly referred to or identified for special education. The REA highlights the problems of children who are incorrectly identified as having a disability and inappropriately referred to special education [Section 2251(5)]. It subsequently describes these children more precisely as ones with reading difficulties who are at risk of being referred to special education based on these difficulties and ones who have actually been referred, but evaluated as not having a disability [Section 2253(b)(2)(D), Section 2255(b)(5) and (d)(1)(I)].
3. Children in kindergarten who are having difficulties with reading. The REA also focuses on kindergarten students who are not ready for the transition to first grade because of difficulty with reading [Section 2253(b)(2)(C)(iii); Section 2255(b)(2)(C) and (d)(1)(G)].

**The daily literacy-related experiences that children have  
between birth and third grade**

From the Partnership's perspective, for the primary purposes of the REA to be achieved, the quality and quantity of literary/reading activities and experiences that children in high poverty communities have between birth and third grade have to be significantly increased. The challenge for the leadership of LEAs applying for Reading Excellence subgrants is to determine how a community working together can ensure that all of its children are involved almost daily in the kinds of activities and experiences outlined in Appendix B in the preceding section. The REA identifies six possible agents that exist in most communities that could develop the capability to provide children such literacy/ reading activities and experiences:

- parents (and the Partnership would add other family members) [Section 2253(b)(2)(B)(v), Section 2255(b)(4) and (d)(1)(D)]
- early childhood education providers (and the Partnership would add daycare providers) [Section 2255(b)(4)]
- K-3 teachers and other instructional staff [Section 2251(3), Section 2253(b)(2)(B)(ii) and (C)(i), Section 2255(b)(1)(A), (b)(2)(A), and (d)(1)(B)]
- members of community organizations, including libraries [Section 2253(b)(2)(E)(ii), Section 2255(b)(2)(D), (b)(4), (d)(1)(C)]
- individuals, including interested parents, and members of community organizations (including institutions of higher education) who are interested in becoming tutors [Section 2253(b)(2)(C)(iv), Section 2255(b)(2)(D), (b)(4), (d)(1)(F&H)]
- current providers of tutorial assistance [Section 2256(a)(2)(B)].

**The strategies that a community implements in order to ensure that each child has developmentally appropriate reading/literacy-related experiences**

The REA identifies the following six strategies for improving the literacy/reading activities and experiences that the above agents can enable young children to have. The Partnership would elaborate them as follows.

- Reach out to parents [Section 2253(b)(2)(B)(v), Section 2255(b)(4) and (d)(1)(D)]. Through the strategy of providing information and various forms of support in personalized ways to parents, LEAs and their partners could help parents understand the important role they play as their child's "first teacher" and actually help them to play that role well. In addition, after their child has entered school, school staff could reach out to parents in ways that enable them to reinforce what is being learned in school and even provide additional opportunities for their children to practice those skills.



- Expand family literacy programs and services [Section 2251(4), Section 2253(b)(2)(C)(ii), Section 2255(b)(2)(B) and (d)(1)(E)]. Through the strategy of expanding the number of high-quality family literacy programs, the LEAs and their partners could simultaneously increase the literacy skills of poor parents who do not have the skills required for many jobs and improve the quality of literacy-related experiences that those parents provide their children at home. (Note: The REA makes expanding family literacy programs one of the REA's five purposes.)
- Implement/improve the program(s) of research-based instructional practices [Section 2251(3) and Section 2255(b)(1)(A&B) and (d)(1)(A)]. Research is providing valuable information about the mix of learning activities and experiences that children need to be having to become skilled readers. It is also providing valuable information about instructional strategies that teachers need to have mastered to design and implement instruction that involves children in such activities and experiences. Through the strategy of partnering with persons or entities that have experience or expertise with the implementation of such programs of practice, a school staff can improve in significant ways the quality of learning activities and experiences they provide their students.
- Provide professional development and related supporting instructional materials [Section 2253(b)(2)(B)(i through iv) and (C)(i), Section 2255(b)(2)(A) and (d)(1)(B)]. Through the strategy of providing professional development for early childhood education providers and current public school teachers and other instructional staff (as well as providing instructional materials for implementing the practices on which the professional development is focused), the LEA and its community partners could improve the quality of literacy/reading activities and experiences that young children have in early childhood programs and in the public school K-3 program(s).
- Promoting library and other community-based literacy/reading activities and experiences [Section 2253(b)(2)(E)(ii)]. Through the strategy of encouraging library and community-based programs, the LEA and its community partners could ensure that young children, prior to entering public

school programs, have access to high-quality community-based literacy/reading activities and experiences.

- Providing additional support. Through the strategy of organizing volunteer tutoring programs and involving supervised individuals who have been appropriately trained to provide additional support to children, the LEA and its community partners could ensure that young children, prior to entering public school programs, have access to high quality community-based literacy experiences [Section 2255(d)(1)(C & F)] and K-3 students who are experiencing reading difficulties have access to additional high quality support before and after school, during non-instructional periods of the school day, on weekends, or during the summer [Section 2253(b)(2)(C)(iv), Section 2255(b)(2)(D), (b)(4), (d)(1)(F and H), and Section 2256(a)(2)(B)].

Given the multiple agents who could help ensure that all children have the quality and quantity of literacy/reading activities and experiences that will enable them to become skilled and motivated readers and given the complex of strategies that need to be implemented to achieve these ends, the REA requires the development of partnerships at both state and local levels [Section 2253(a)(2)(A) & (B)(viii), Section 2253(d), and Section 2255(c)]. In addition, it insists on efforts to increase the coordination and management of the use of available resources from multiple local, state, and federal sources that are aimed at helping young children to become skilled and motivated readers [Section 2253(b)(2)(E)(i), Section 2255(b)(3) and (d)(1)(J)].

### **A framework**

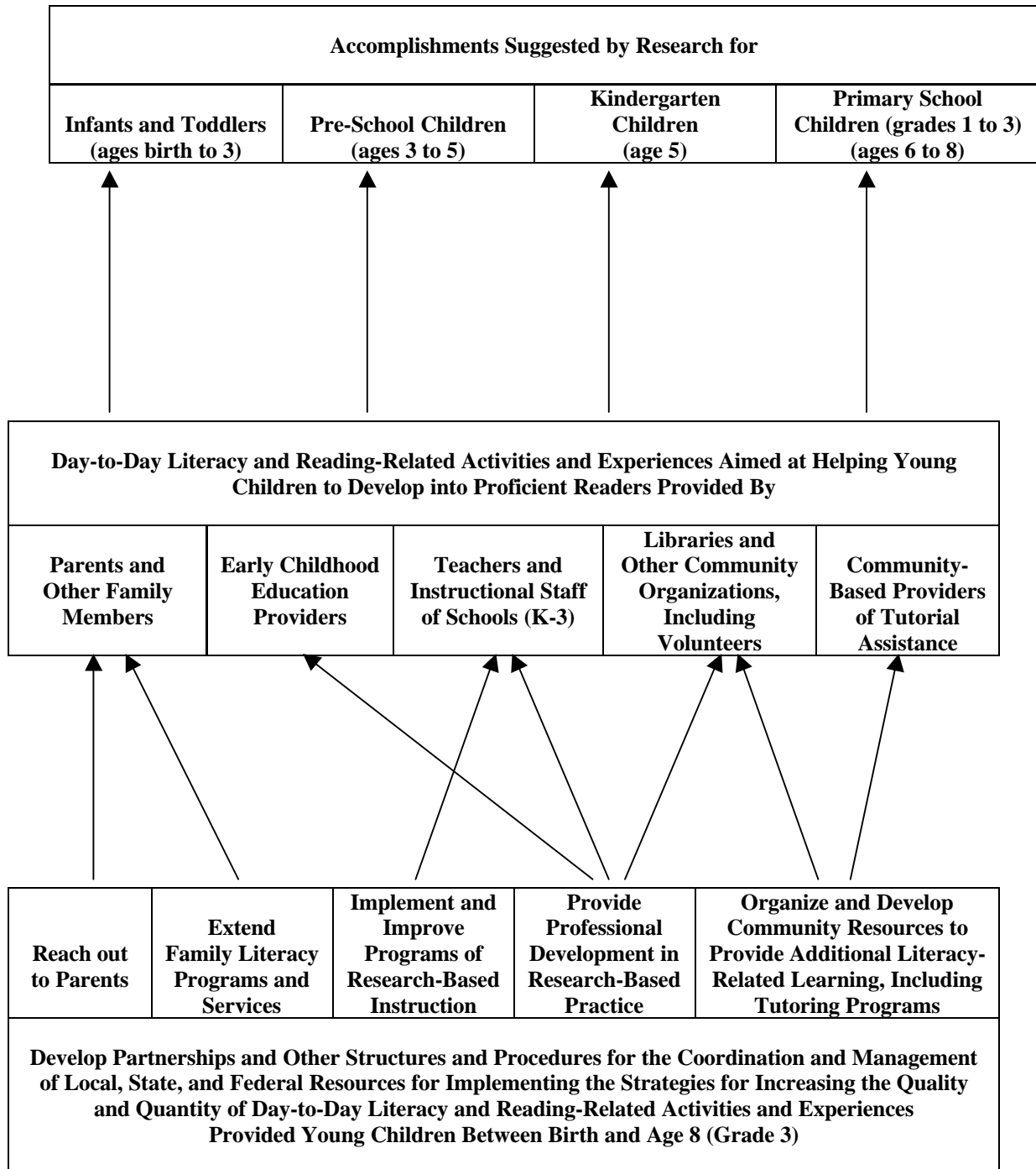
To facilitate communication of the complex effort that states and LEAs will be undertaking when they accept funds under the REA, the Partnership developed the graphic found on the next page.

- At the top of Figure 1 are the accomplishments that current research suggests children should ideally be achieving at different age/grade levels to become skilled and motivated readers (cf. Appendix A).

- In the center of the figure are the day-to-day literacy/reading activities and experiences that children should be having, in order to become skilled and motivated readers (cf. Appendix B), and the kinds of agents who can help provide those experiences.
- Finally, at the bottom of the figure are the principal strategies for helping the agents to provide high-quality and appropriate literacy and related experiences to young children. In addition, the figure notes the need for partnerships and other structures and procedures to ensure the coordination and management of the local, state, and federal resources that could support the implementation of the strategies and the provision of high quality literacy and reading-related experiences to young children.

**Figure 1**

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PENNSYLVANIA READING EXCELLENCE PROGRAM**



## **II. A Framework for School-Community Reading Improvement Planning**

To make the conceptual framework for the Pennsylvania Reading Excellence program most useful to LEA and school staff, members of the Pennsylvania Reading and Literacy Partnership felt that they needed to translate that framework into a school improvement planning framework.

Such a framework is presented on pages 23-26. The framework is presented in two parts. Part I focuses on the first student-oriented purpose of the REA: “To provide children with the readiness skills they need to learn to read once they enter school.” Part II focuses on the second student-oriented purpose as well as the student-oriented part of the third purpose of the Act: “To teach every child to read in the child’s early childhood years - as soon as the child is ready to read or as soon as possible once the child enters school, but not later than the third grade,” and “To improve the reading skills of students.”

This separation of the framework into two parts recognizes the differences in the children that are the focus of the two student-oriented purposes and the differences in who has primary responsibility for the literacy/reading activities and experiences that children have during those two time periods. Prior to age five, parents have primary responsibility for the literacy experiences that their children have, although many will need significant support from the community to fulfill that responsibility. When a child enters school, the teachers and other instructional staff of the school have primary responsibility for providing high-quality literacy reading activities and experiences to the children that they are teaching, although they will need support from parents and community groups to be successful in helping those children to become skilled and motivated readers.

### **Structure of the framework**

The structure of each part of the framework is similar. The first row addresses the research-based expectations with respect to what young children should be accomplishing (cf. Appendix A for examples of these expectations). The planning tasks for LEA staff and their community partners are to:

- assess the extent to which young children are currently meeting those standards
- use the data from the needs assessment to set specific improvement goals and objectives

- determine the instruments and methods that will be used to collect evidence as to the extent to which the goals and the objectives are being achieved.

The second row begins with the literacy/reading activities and experiences recommended by current research for children at different developmental stages and in different age/grade groups (cf. Appendix B for examples of the learning activities and experiences). It then lists in the second column the principal strategies to be pursued to increase the extent to which young children are engaged in such learning activities and experiences and receive such instructional support. The strategies for Part I (“provide

- A. provide parents information and support on how to give their young children at home literacy experiences that reflect the findings of current reading research
- B. expand family literacy programs/services
- C. provide professional development and other forms of support to early childhood education providers and, if feasible, daycare providers
- D. promote the availability to young children of research-based literacy activities in libraries and other community organizations
- E. promote additional support for children experiencing reading difficulties prior to entering school through the organization and development of community-based tutors who are both well trained and well-supervised.

The strategies for Part II (“teach every child to rea

- F. implement program(s) of research-based instructional practices in the school
- G. provide professional development and other forms of support to the school’s teachers and staff
- H. reach out to parents and help them both to reinforce what is being learned in school and to provide their children additional opportunities to practice reading and reading-related skills
- I. promote the development and organization of additional support for students before and after school, during non-instructional periods at school, on weekends, and during the summer through tutoring assistance programs at the school or at other appropriate sites in the community.

With respect to each strategy, school staff, supported by LEA staff, are asked to undertake the following four planning tasks:

- assess the extent to which the strategy has been implemented and is having the desired effects on the literacy activities and experiences that students are having (Note: This task is irrelevant in communities and schools that have not initiated any activity consistent with the strategy)
- use the data from the needs assessment to set specific improvement goals and objectives (Note: In those cases where it was not appropriate to do a needs assessment, improvement goals and objectives would be set solely on the basis of the practice standards)
- plan the actual activities that will be implemented to achieve the goals and objectives and that reflect the content and focus of the strategy
- determine the instruments and methods that will be used to collect evidence as to the extent to which the improvement activities were well-implemented and whether the goals and the objectives are being achieved.

### **Use of this framework**

This framework has been used by the Partnership to help it prepare four parts of this Application. First, it provides the structure for the Request for Proposals for Local Reading Improvement Subgrants. To be specific, LEAs are asked to describe:

- how they will work with their community partners to implement the five strategies aimed at providing all children the kinds of early literacy/reading activities and experiences that will ensure that they have the readiness skills that they will need to learn to read once they enter school
- how they will work with school staff and community partners to implement the four strategies aimed at providing all K-3 students the kinds of literacy/reading activities and experiences that will ensure that they read as soon as possible, but not later than the third grade.

Second, the framework has been used to identify the criteria that will be used to review the quality of LEA proposals. Third, the framework has been used to guide the responses to the requirements for states found in Section 2253 of the REA. And, fourth, the framework has been used to identify the questions that will structure the state's evaluation of the Reading Excellence program -- specifically, its implementation and impact in each participating school-community.



Table 2

Table 2

Table 2

Table 2

### **III. The Pennsylvania Reading and Literacy Partnership**

This section responds to Section 2253(d) and Section 2253(b)(2)(A) and (B)(viii). Specifically, it provides information on the participants in the Pennsylvania Reading and Literacy Partnership and on the roles that the Partnership played in the development of the Pennsylvania plan and will play in the selection of subgrantees and in the oversight and evaluation of the subgrantees. In addition, it addresses topics suggested in section D3 of the Non-Regulatory Guidance: the mission of the partnership, its proposed activities with respect to the improvement strategies set forth in Section 2253, and the resources that will be available for those activities.

#### **Participants [Section 2253(d)]**

The Pennsylvania Reading and Literacy Partnership is composed of the mix of persons listed in the REA -- that is, (1) governmental leaders and policymakers, (2) state staff responsible for the administration of programs related to reading and literacy-related practices, and (3) representatives of the practitioner community who have been providing leadership in reading-related practice, professional development, and school reform. The members of these groups and their affiliations are listed in Table 3 (pp. 26-7) by the categories found in the REA.

#### **Process used to establish the Partnership [Section 2253(b)(2)(B)(viii)]**

Recognizing the importance of the development of a state-level Reading and Literacy Partnership to achieve the purposes of the REA and, indeed, the purposes of Pennsylvania's reading-related initiatives, Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) leadership began by considering extant groups that could fulfill the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Act. To meet the requirements for policymakers, the natural choice was the Pennsylvania State Board of Education, as the Board brings together state policymakers and representatives of Pennsylvania's citizenry, and it has overseen and is overseeing the continuing development of the Pennsylvania Academic Standards, has provided the policy framework for the strengthening of the alignment of the state assessments to those academic standards, and is currently working to align teacher certification and the requirements for continuing professional development to the standards and current research on teaching and learning.

The leadership of the Board agreed that the Board could play the role set forth in the Act, if it has the assistance of an advisory committee that brought together state administrators responsible for reading-related programs, and practitioners and community members who either are or potentially would be implementing programs that reflected the strategies listed in the REA.

The Pennsylvania Secretary of Education conferred with the Governor's Office to determine the membership of such an advisory committee. The membership listed in Table 3 reflects the results of those discussions.

**Role that the Partnership played in the development of the Pennsylvania application for Reading Excellence funds [Section 2253(b)(2)(A)(i)]**

The leadership of the PDE asked members of the Partnership to develop in-depth understanding of the REA and identify possible ways in which Pennsylvania could achieve the law's purposes. It further asked those members to develop draft content for a possible Pennsylvania application for Reading Excellence funds. They responded to the request by generating draft content for all of the sections of the application. Department leadership reviewed and refined the draft content provided by the members of the Partnership.

**Mission of the PA Reading and Literacy Partnership  
[Section D3 of the Non-Regulatory Guidance]**

The mission of the Partnership is to build shared understanding among educators, parents, and community leaders and members about what is known from scientifically-based reading research about how children learn to read and about the kinds of activities and experiences that can help every child become a skilled and motivated reader. Its mission is also to encourage educators, parents, and community leaders and members to act on that understanding by implementing improvement strategies that ensure that all children will have the kinds of literacy/reading experiences in homes, schools, and other community settings that will enable them to become skilled and motivated readers as soon as possible, but not later than the third grade. More specifically, the Partnership will help the LEAs and schools participating in the Pennsylvania Reading Excellence program achieve that program's purposes.

It will work to ensure that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provides a policy environment and that the PDE provides the administrative support that will facilitate the work of the participating LEAs and school-communities. It will facilitate the exchange of information about effective improvement activities among the participating LEAs and school-communities that helps them all to successful.

**Role that the Partnership will play in the  
selection of subgrantees [Section 2253(b)(2)(A)(ii)]**

As noted above, the Partnership contributed to the content of this application, including the section on selection of subgrantees.

In addition, members of the Partnership, primarily from the Advisory Committee, have agreed to play the following roles with respect to the selection of subgrantees. First, several members have agreed to help PDE staff provide orientation and training to teams from the eligible districts, in order to ensure that they understand:

- the purposes of the Act
- the research that is to inform local plans and activities
- the leadership role that the Act is asking LEAs to play
- the alternative strategies that the funds can support
- the need to demonstrate how the activities funded under the REA will fit with other activities aimed at providing young children the kinds of reading and literacy-related experiences that will enable them to become skilled and motivated readers
- the requirements to document and evaluate activities and their impact.

Second, several other members of the Partnership have agreed to serve as members of the teams that will review LEA proposals and provide feedback to PDE on how well each of the sections of those proposals met the criteria established by the Partnership for high quality proposals.

**Role that the Partnership will play in the design and conduct of the evaluation of the program [Section 2253(b)(2)(A)(iii)]**

Through the application development process, the Partnership has influenced the general design of the evaluation of the program. The Department will ask the Partnership to help it develop the Request for proposals (RFP) for an evaluation contractor. It will also ask members of the Partnership to participate in the review and evaluation of proposals submitted by potential evaluation contractors in response to the RFP.

As part of the evaluation contract, the contractor will be expected to make regular reports and presentations to the Partnership regarding the progress that is being made by the subgrantees toward achieving the Act's purposes. The Partnership will use the information from those reports to identify steps that it could take to strengthen the performance of the subgrantees and to strengthen other reading-related initiatives. The Partnership will also provide the evaluation contractor with suggestions on how to make the information being collected by the contractor most useful to local grantees and the Partnership.

**Additional activities of the Pennsylvania Partnership  
[Section D3 of the Non-Regulatory Guidance]**

To fulfill its mission, the Partnership will assemble a knowledge-base that addresses every element of the REA and transforms it into materials and resources that will facilitate the work of the LEAs and the school-communities. The ability of the Partnership to play such a role is illustrated by the content that the Partnership developed for the next three sections of this application. The first is a summary from recent research syntheses of what children should be accomplishing at specific age/grade levels in order to become skilled and motivated readers, along with examples of the literacy/reading activities and experiences that can help them achieve those accomplishments. The second is an integrated conception of what a Reading Excellence Improvement effort involves. The third is a framework for Local Reading Improvement planning. From the perspective of the Partnership, the development of each of these sections has furthered the development of the Partnership and, based on a meeting with eligible LEAs in mid-April, provided those LEAs with a useful set of resources for their own development efforts.



The Partnership, either through the members who have been chosen or through outreach to sources of useful information, has begun assembling the additional knowledge base that will be required for the success of the Pennsylvania Reading Excellence effort. The following illustrates the Partnership's current efforts in this regard.

- Appropriate literacy/reading activities and experiences for use at home, and strategies for helping parents and other family members to provide them [Section 2253(2)(B)(v)]. By having as a member of the Partnership the chairperson of the State Parent Advisory Committee (SPAC), the Partnership has access to the information, materials, and experiences of that group. The SPAC has, for more than a decade, been helping parents become their children's first and most important teacher and helping LEAs and schools implement more effective parent involvement activities, including most recently, parent-school compacts. In addition, by having as a member of the Partnership staff of the Region III Comprehensive Center (R3CC), the Partnership has easy access to the parent and community involvement knowledge base that it and the network of Comprehensive Centers have developed.
- Characteristics of effective family literacy programs and strategies for developing and/or expanding them [Section 2253(b)(2)(C)(ii) and (b)(2)(E)(ii)]. By having as members of the Partnership state staff responsible for the administration of Even Start and the Pennsylvania Family Literacy Program and one of the most effective Even Start contractors, the Partnership has access to the knowledge and experience that they have accumulated in designing, implementing, documenting, and administering such programs. Of particular value is their experience of the past year in expanding family literacy programs in Pennsylvania, as a result of a substantial appropriation by the Pennsylvania legislature in 1998 for such programs. In addition, these members have been involved in a multi-year effort to more effectively document both the services that the family literacy programs are providing and the impact that those services are having on parent literacy skills and children's readiness skills. It is clear that the documentation system that has evolved will serve as the foundation for the state evaluation design for

documenting and evaluating the community-based literacy services provided to young children by LEAs and their school-communities as a result of the REA.

- Characteristics of effective professional development programs for teachers and other instructional staff, and strategies for designing and implementing them [Section 2253(b)(2)(B)(i-iii) and (b)(2)(C)(i)]. The Partnership believes that the implementation of research-based instructional practices that provide K-3 students the kinds of literacy/reading activities and experiences that will enable them to become skilled and motivated readers presents every teacher of young students an extraordinary set of challenges. To be specific, those teachers need to develop deep understanding of the mix of practices that help children develop into skilled and motivated readers, they need to develop the specific skills required for successful implementation of those practices in their classrooms, they need to integrate the individual skills and practices into an effective instructional repertoire, and they, then, need to learn how to orchestrate the mix in ways that are responsive to how each of their students learns. To support such professional learning requires professional development that is ongoing and intensive. It has to involve small group study and discussion, opportunities to observe master teachers demonstrating each practice, personalized support in their initial implementation of each practice both through in-class modeling and coaching, opportunities to reflect and plan how they will use the practice in conjunction with the others that they have been learning, and continuous feedback on how well they are implementing the mix of practices and adapting them to the needs of their students. Though both leadership and teachers know what is required for effective professional development (this is well summarized in the standards of the National Association for Staff Development and Training), most LEAs continue to find it challenging to provide intensive and sustained professional development. From the Partnership's perspective, there are some promising developments in Pennsylvania with respect to this challenge.

- ◇ First, the Governor's Institutes and Academies are focusing on the research that is the foundation for the REA improvement strategies and experimenting with ways to help teachers explore its implications for practice.
- ◇ Second, the Pennsylvania legislature is considering legislation that will require teachers to take 180 hours of high quality professional development every five years, in order to keep their license. This legislation seeks to communicate the expectation that for teachers to keep their license, they will need to continue to develop their knowledge of their field and their skills at applying that knowledge in their work with students.
- ◇ Third, the Pennsylvania/Title I Big Cities Consortium has been focusing on helping its members to improve literacy instruction. Recently, it has been investigating the ten-year literacy improvement effort of Community District #2 in New York City. Its members have been challenged by what Community District #2 has accomplished (e.g., developing a clear definition of the daily literacy/reading experiences that their students should be having, providing ongoing school-based professional development that ensure that all teachers have the skills to provide their students such experiences, close monitoring of classroom practices to confirm that they reflect the agreed-upon practices, and demonstrating on assessments like the New Standards Reference Examination that the District is increasing the numbers of students who are becoming skilled and motivated readers). Fortunately for Pennsylvania's Reading Excellence effort, there is the current work of the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh to document the Community District #2 effort and to develop resources that will help other LEAs to benefit from it.
- ◇ Fourth, there is what members of the Partnership are learning from early adopters of externally-developed models of whole school reform. Specifically, the models which appear to be having the most impact have these characteristics: (1) They are very clear regarding the instructional practices that needs to be provided, the time and effort that a staff must make to successfully implement those practices, the nature of the professional development that needs

to be provided, and the support that school and LEA leadership need to provide, (2) they closely monitor the implementation of the professional development and the instructional practices, and (3) they refuse to enter into or to stay in a technical assistance relationship with a school or LEA that is unable to meet their requirements.

The Partnership has among its members staff of LEAs and Intermediate Units who strive in their daily work to implement more effective models of professional development. It also has members from LEAs that are extensively involved in implementing whole school reform models. The Partnership is drawing on these members' experiences to formulate concrete models that LEAs can consider as they plan how they will respond to the REA requirement that professional development be provided teachers and other instructional staff that increases their understanding of the major components of reading instruction and their ability to implement a program of instructional practices that reflects the findings of scientifically-based reading research.

- Characteristics of effective school-based programs of literacy/reading instruction and potential sources of technical assistance [Section 2255(b)(1)(A & B) and (d)(1)]. Though not addressed explicitly in Section 2253, the Partnership believes that it has the responsibility to help LEAs access technical assistance that will, indeed, help its school staffs implement programs of reading instruction. To this end, the Partnership will collect information on programs of reading instruction that reportably are based on current reading research and will seek evidence regarding their effectiveness both in general and in relationship to specific types of student populations. It will make this information and evidence available to the LEAs and will suggest the kinds of criteria that should be used to assess both the program and the technical assistance being offered. The Partnership will use, to the extent possible, extant sources of such information (e.g., those programs and practices identified by the regional educational laboratories, the comprehensive centers, and the National Institute for Literacy).
- Characteristics of effective tutoring programs, and strategies for developing and delivering them [Section 2253(b)(2)(B)(i-iv) and (b)(2)(C)(iv)]. Among the members of the Partnership are:

- ◇ LEA staff who have been intimately involved in the implementation of Reading Recovery in their schools. They not only bring to the Partnership knowledge of one of the most effective models of tutoring, but also a deep understanding of what is involved in developing a professional tutor
- ◇ state staff who are responsible for encouraging service learning in the schools and who have in-depth knowledge of the ways in which schools have successfully involved and trained students to help younger students practice critical skills like reading
- ◇ a staff member from the Pennsylvania Campus Compact, which is a non-profit established by the Pennsylvania Association of Institutions of Higher Education and which has as one of its priorities to help the public IHEs of Pennsylvania establish high quality tutoring programs as one of their work-study options
- ◇ the director of one of the largest community-based tutoring programs in the state, Philadelphia Reads, who has experience in addressing all of the challenges that one can encounter in developing a community-based tutorial program in a large city
- ◇ a R3CC staff member who has made available to the Partnership Judy Blankenship Cheatham's resource, Help a Child to Learn to Read, a joint product of the Center and Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. and a number of America Reads publications, as an example of kinds of resources that are available to help LEAs to develop a local tutoring program. This member of the Partnership will help the Partnership access the knowledge base of exemplary tutoring programs and practices that the network of Comprehensive Centers has developed.

Together, these members bring information, resources, model training programs, management systems, and documentation systems that will be valuable to LEAs and their school-communities when they initiate the planning of community- and school-based tutoring programs that will help young children make progress toward becoming skilled and motivated readers.

- Characteristics of effective library-based literacy programs for young children, and strategies for developing and promoting them [Section 2253(2)(E)(ii)]. By having as a member of the Partnership staff from the Bureau of Library Development, Office of Commonwealth Libraries, the Partnership has access to information about the roles that community libraries are playing in providing early literacy experiences for young children and their families, and in being a setting for after-school programs. The Partnership will assemble information about libraries that are successfully playing these roles and the challenges that were involved in developing the capacity to play them. The Partnership will make this information available to the LEAs to help them develop their plans for promoting such programs in their school-communities.
- Appropriate literacy/reading activities and experiences for use by early childhood education providers and daycare providers, and strategies for helping those providers to offer them to the children in their care [Section 2255(b)(4)]. Though not addressed explicitly in Section 2253, the Partnership believes that it has a responsibility to assemble information that will help LEAs, who have not, to reach out and form partnerships with early childhood education providers (i.e., Head Start) and, if possible, daycare providers. The purpose of these partnerships is to improve the literacy/reading activities and experiences that these programs provide the children in their care. By having as members of the Partnership LEA staff who have initiated and operated effective early childhood education programs for 3 and 4 year old children (including both locally-sponsored programs and Head Start programs), the Partnership has access to rich experiences with the design, implementation, and evaluation of such programs. The Partnership is committed to making this experience available to the LEAs to help them develop plans for this particular improvement strategy.
- Programs to assist those kindergarten students who are not ready for the transition to first grade, particularly students experiencing difficulties with reading skills. [Section 2253(b)(2)(C)(iii)]. The Partnership struggles with how to approach this specific requirement. It found it addressing a concern that could be raised about children not ready at every transition point the educational

system has constructed: transition from home and, if fortunate, a Head Start/pre-school program to kindergarten, from first grade to second, and from second grade to third. In contrast to proposing some new set of strategies, the Partnership proposes to use this concern as a test for the power of the strategies already described. Specifically, it asks in the Request for Proposals for Local Reading Improvement that LEAs describe how the improvement strategies described in the RFP will assist those kindergarten students who are experiencing difficulty with reading skills and, therefore, are at risk of not being ready for the transition to first grade. More specifically, the review criteria for that item ask how:

- ◇ the improvements in the program of instructional practices of kindergarten teachers will help kindergarten students experiencing reading difficulties
- ◇ the improvements in the knowledge and skills of kindergarten teachers of research-based reading practices will help kindergarten students experiencing reading difficulties
- ◇ the parent outreach activities will help kindergarten students experiencing reading difficulties
- ◇ the extended opportunities for kindergarten students to participate in research-based literacy and reading activities before and after school, during non-instructional periods, on weekends and during the summer either before or after kindergarten will help kindergarten students experiencing reading difficulties.
- ◇ the provision of tutoring assistance will help kindergarten students experiencing reading difficulties.

It is the belief of the Partnership that if school staff, parents, and all other helpers have a research-based vision of the literacy/reading activities that kindergarten students need to continue their journey of becoming skilled and motivated readers, if the kindergarten staff have in place a program of instruction that reflects the findings of research, if teachers are involved in ongoing professional development that is helping them to strengthen their instruction, if parents are involved as partners with the school in helping their children to develop their skills, if extended day and year activities and experiences are provided to kindergarten students who need more

time, and if tutorial assistance is provided to those kindergarten students who need it, this problem will be dramatically reduced over the three year period that LEAs and schools have to use REA resources.

- Appropriate use of technology [Section 2253(b)(2)(B)(iv)]. Pennsylvania has been exploring possible ways of using technology to enhance not only professional development, but also other tasks related to the conduct of comprehensive improvement efforts -- for example: information dissemination and exchange, documentation and evaluation, and communication. Here are some examples of PDE's use of technology:
  - ◇ examples of the use of technology in support of professional development. PDE has supported: (1) the development of interactive CDs to help teachers explore different uses of the Internet in their classroom, learn strategies for designing classroom lessons and tasks that are aligned with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards, and learn how to use the Pennsylvania Writing Rubric to score reliably student work, and (2) the development of videotapes that model for school staff the use of specific assessment methods in the classroom.
  - ◇ examples of the use of technology for information dissemination. PDE is supporting: (1) the design and conduct of statewide video conferences for disseminating information about the Academic Standards and about standards-based reform, and even, information about changes in federal programs; and (2) the development of web sites to facilitate access of information - - for example, the PDE's web site disseminates state assessment results, program information, and information about effective practice.
  - ◇ examples of the use of technology for documentation and evaluation. PDE is encouraging LEAs to submit project reports electronically and it is experimenting this spring with the conduct of reviews of LEA applications electronically.
  - ◇ examples of the use of technology for communication. PDE is now routinely using e-mail to communicate with local educational leaders, technical assistance staff, and state staff about



both program and administrative issues, and a listserv was used by the Partnership to facilitate its work on this application.

As appropriate, the Partnership will use and will encourage LEAs to use technology in ways that enhance not only professional development, but the entire reading improvement effort. Given the time period for the Reading Excellence subgrants, PDE and the Partnership will focus on using technology in well-tested ways and in ways for which there exists software relative to the REA tasks.

**Resources to be made available for the activities of the PA Reading and Literacy Partnership [Section D3 of the Non-Regulatory Guidance]**

The PDE will allocate a significant part of the resources allocated for state administrative expenses for use by the Partnership. These resources will primarily be used to cover the costs of assembling relevant information; disseminating it either electronically or in print form; designing and conducting video conferences; convening meetings at which participating LEAs and schools exchange experiences, engage in collaborative problem-solving, or access assistance from selected resource persons; and making presentations at state conferences that shares with colleagues from other LEAs what is being learned by the participating LEAs and the Partnership.

**Table 3**

**Members of the Pennsylvania Reading and Literacy Partnership**

<b>Required Participants</b>	<b>Name, Title, and Affiliations</b>
A. Governor	Tom Ridge, Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
B. Chief State School Officer	Eugene Hickok, Secretary of Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education. Also Chief Executive Officer of the State Board of Education
C. Chairperson and Ranking Member of Educational Policy Committees of Pennsylvania State Legislature	Representative Jess M. Stairs, Chair, House Education Committee Also State Board of Education Representative Nicholas A. Colafella, House Education Committee Also State Board of Education Senator James J. Rhoades, Chair, Senate Education Committee Also State Board of Education Senator Allyson Y. Schwartz, Senate Education Committee Also State Board of Education
D. Representative of LEA eligible to receive a Local Reading Improvement Grant	Kay Lovelace, Associate Superintendent, Office of Leadership and Learning, School District of Philadelphia Mary Helen Spiri, Office of Leadership and Learning, School District of Philadelphia Philip B. Parr, Director, Office of Strategic Planning and Development Pittsburgh School District Georgeann E. Rettberg, Unit of School Support Services Pittsburgh School District
E. Representative of community-based organization working with children to improve their reading skills	Marciene F. Mattleman, Executive Director, Philadelphia Reads
F. State directors of appropriate Federal or state programs with a strong reading component	Nancy Neil, Chief, Division of Communications and Mathematics & Arts and Sciences, Bureau of Curriculum and Academic Services Jim Sheffer, Chief, Division of Federal Programs, Bureau of Curriculum and Academic Services Julie Yuda, Division of Federal Programs, Bureau of Curriculum and Academic Services Don Paquette, Even Start and Family Literacy Programs, Division of Special Programs and Project, Division of Adult Basic and Literacy Education Rick Price, Chief, Division of Early Intervention, Bureau of Special Education Betty Ann Funk, Advisory Services and Continuing Education Division Bureau of Library Development, Office of Commonwealth Libraries Dorothy Hershey, Bureau of Community and Student Services
G. Parent of public or private school students or a parent of a home-schooled student	Valerie McElvy, Chairperson, State Parent Advisory Committee

**Table 3 (continued)**

<b>Required Participants</b>	<b>Name, Title, and Affiliations</b>
H. Teacher who successfully teaches reading and instructional staff member	Sandra Jones, Teacher and Reading Specialist, Hempfield Area School District Joyce Wells, Principal, Toby Farms Elementary School, Chester-Upland School District. Also a reading specialist
I. Family literacy service provider	Sandy Strunk, Southeast Professional Development Center
<b>Others:</b> Institutions of Higher Education and Related Organizations	David Warren Saxe, Associate Professor, Pennsylvania State University School of Education. Also State Board of Education James Birge, Pennsylvania Campus Compact
Local Education Agencies	Constance H. Davis, President, Bellefonte Area School Board Also State Board of Education Jane Smart, Early Childhood Programs and Title I, Lancaster City School District Gretchen McFarland, Associate Superintendent, York Central School District
Consultants in areas of reading, professional development, and school improvement	Julianne Gehman, Consultant for the Early Childhood Assessment Framework Kay Meyers, Curriculum Coordinator, Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 Richard A. McCann, Region III Comprehensive Center/Research for Better Schools
Other members of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education	Edward Donley, chairman of the Pennsylvania Business Education Partnership and Lehigh Valley Business Partnership Karl R. Girton, Consultant to Girton Sales Corporation; former school board member and intermediate unit board president Samuel E. Hayes, Jr., Secretary of Agriculture Edith W. Isacke, retired director of the Altoona Area Vocational-Technical School Thomas J. O'Donnell, graduate instructor at the University of Scranton and lecturer in education at Marywood College; retired superintendent of the School District of the City of Scranton Mollie O'Connell Philips, school counselor, Wyoming Valley West School District James Gallagher, President, Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science James R. Agras, Triangle Tech, Inc., owner of six private degree-granting career schools in western Pennsylvania Richard L. Bunn, President and CEO, UGI Utilities Inc.; Trustee of Wilkes College Helen S. Caffrey, Director of Commonwealth Relations of The Pennsylvania State University Francis J. Michelini, former President of Wilkes Colleges and former President of the Commission of Independent Colleges and Universities Wallace H. Nunn, Member, Delaware County Council and senior executive of Smith, Barney, Inc. George H. Seidel, Jr., Executive Director of Associated Petroleum Industries of Pennsylvania; former teacher

**IV. Pennsylvania's Promotion of Coordination Among Literacy Programs  
in the State [Section 2253(b)(2)(E)(i)]**

This section responds to Section 2253(b)(2)(E)(i), which asks for the assurance that the SEA will build on and promote coordination among literacy programs.

As the Partnership demonstrated in Sections I and II of this application, it reads the REA as challenging:

- the targeted school-communities to organize themselves in ways that ensure that young children have the kinds of research-based literacy/reading activities and experiences from early in their lives until the end of the primary years that enable them to become skilled and motivated readers
- the LEA to build the local partnerships and provide the kinds of assistance that will facilitate the work of the targeted school-communities
- the state to build the state-level partnership that will facilitate the work of both the LEAs and the targeted school-communities selected to participate in the Reading Excellence program, and that may influence the reading-related improvement efforts of schools and LEAs across the state.

To meet this challenge, it is critical that, early in the process of planning a local reading improvement effort, the LEA identify:

- the current programs/providers of literacy/reading activities and experiences
- the current federal, state, and local funds being used to cover the costs of those programs/providers, or could be used for that purpose
- the actual children served by the programs/providers
- any assessment data that those programs/providers have regarding the progress that the children participating in the programs are achieving
- those programs'/providers' capacity to expand the numbers of children that they serve
- the extent to which those literacy/reading activities and experiences reflect the current findings of reading research.

The need for LEAs and their partners to know current providers and their capability is emphasized in the Local Partnership item of the Local Reading Improvement RFP (#2). This need to know is further emphasized in the description of the needs assessment activity for each REA improvement strategy that is found in the planning framework (Section II), as well as in the review criteria for evaluating the local plan with respect to each REA improvement strategy. The need to know what local, state, and federal resources are being used or could be used for literacy/reading activities and experiences is emphasized in the coordination item in the RFP (#3) and in the criteria that will be used to evaluate LEA responses to that item. With this knowledge, the Partnership expects the LEA and the local partnership to be in a position to explore different ways in which they might coordinate the use of those resources to achieve the purposes of the REA.

However, PDE and the Partnership recognize that without PDE leadership, it will be difficult for the LEAs to achieve significant coordination of resources. To provide such leadership, the Governor and Secretary of Education have included in the Partnership state staff responsible for the major literacy/reading-related programs administered by PDE. Currently, state administrators for the following programs are members of the Partnership: Title I; Pennsylvania's Read to Succeed Initiative; Even Start and the Pennsylvania Family Literacy Program; IDEA, Parts B and C; Adult Basic and Literacy programs; Eisenhower Professional Development (Title II); Educate America Act; Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program; Educational Innovations Title VI; and Class Size Reduction.

In addition, in the future, it is anticipated that other early childhood programs will be added, for at this time, PDE is advertising two early childhood education positions, and it is initiating discussions with the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare about creating "an early childhood task force" that will help facilitate the coordination at county and LEA levels of the use of resources for early childhood programs.

To provide leadership for coordination of resources, the PDE staff serving as members of the Partnership are committed to undertake the following activities:

- to develop an integrated Reading Excellence database that draws information from the individual program databases that documents federal and state funds for literacy-related activities going to

each of the selected LEAs and, to the extent that information is available at the state level, to each of the targeted school-communities

- to use the database to generate reports to help LEAs' coordination efforts and PDE's monitoring activities
- to review the content and structure of the LEA applications for each of the literacy-related programs, in order to identify ways in which they could be modified to encourage increased coordination of resources that can be used to provide the kinds of research-based literacy experiences needed by young children at LEA and school-community levels
- to involve state staff from the various programs to collaboratively monitor Reading Excellence LEAs and the targeted school-communities, in order to determine the extent to which local staffs are successfully coordinating the use of federal, state and local funds for literacy-related activities
- to use the results of such monitoring to identify coordination problems that SEA staff or the Partnership could help the LEAs and school-community staff address.

In addition, as stated in Section I, the Partnership, including the PDE staff noted above, will be closely monitoring the results of the evaluations that are conducted. The Partnership expects that those evaluations will, in part, identify barriers to the development of the kind of coordinated community-wide effort that would ensure that all children have the kinds of research-based literacy/reading activities and experiences envisioned by the REA. When those barriers relate to state policy, regulations, and administrative procedures, the Partnership is committed to identifying ways that they can address them.

**V. Eligible Pennsylvania Districts, the Plan for Disseminating Information,  
Providing Assistance, and Reviewing LEA Proposals**

This section responds to Section 2253(b)(2)(B)(vii), (2)(E)(iii), and (2)(B)(vi). Specifically, it provides information on the Pennsylvania LEAs that are eligible to receive Reading Excellence funds and their character. It describes how PDE's Division of Federal Programs will disseminate information about the requirements of the program to the eligible LEAs and provide, with the help of the Partnership, professional development and technical assistance in support of the development of the local applications. It provides an overview of the structure of the Pennsylvania RFPs and the criteria that will be used to review them. It concludes by summarizing the process by which the LEA proposals will be reviewed.

**Pennsylvania LEAs eligible to participate in the  
Reading Excellence program [Section 2253(b)(2)(B)(vii)]**

Twenty-five Pennsylvania LEAs are eligible to apply for Reading Excellence funds. These LEAs are listed in Table 4. In addition, Table 4 also shows the eligibility criteria that each LEA meets. To summarize, there are 19 LEAs that are eligible to apply for both the Local Reading Improvement Subgrants and the Tutorial Assistance Subgrants:

- the School District of Philadelphia meets three of the criteria: the highest number of students in poverty (based on census data), schools in school improvement, and schools served by an Empowerment Zone
- the Pittsburgh School District meets two of the criteria: the second highest number of students in poverty (based on census data), schools in an Enterprise Community
- the two districts that meet the criteria of first and second highest percentage of students in poverty (based on census data) are: Aliquippa School District and Farrell School District.
- the Harrisburg School meets two criteria: schools in school improvement and schools in an Enterprise Community

**Table 4**

**Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) in Pennsylvania and the Criteria Under Which They Are Eligible**

<b>LEA</b>	<b>Number of Students in Poverty Criteria</b>	<b>Percentage of Students in Poverty Criteria</b>	<b>Schools in School Improvement Criteria (# of Schools)</b>	<b>Enterprise Community or Empowerment Zone</b>
Aliquippa (urban)		X		
Altoona (urban)			2	
Bethlehem (urban)			1	
Chester Upland (urban)			3	
Clairton City (urban)				X
Duquesne (urban)				X
Farrell (rural)		X		
Harrisburg City (urban)			3	X
Keystone Central (rural)				X
Lebanon (urban)			3	
McKeesport (urban)				X
Montrose (rural)			1	
Pequea Valley (rural)			1	
Perkiomen Valley (urban)			2	
Philadelphia (urban)	X		174	(Empowerment)
Pittsburgh (urban)	X			X
Punxsutawney (rural)			2	
Redbank (rural)			1	
Rochester (rural)			2	
Somerset Area (rural)			3	
Steel Valley (urban)				X
Tussey Mountain (rural)			1	
Valley Grove (rural)			1	
Woodland Hills (urban)				X
Wyoming Valley West (urban)			1	
Number of LEAs Meeting Each Criteria Out of 25	2	2	16	9



- 14 school districts only meet the criteria of having one or more public schools in Title I school improvement.

In addition, there are six LEAs that only meet the criterion of being part of an Enterprise Community and, therefore, are only eligible to apply for Tutorial Assistance grants. They are: Clairton School District, Duquesne School District, Keystone Central School District, McKeesport School District, Steel Valley School District, and Woodland Hills School District.

As noted in the Table 4, 15 (60 percent) of the eligible LEAs serve urban communities and 10 (40 percent) serve rural communities. This distribution and the interest in participating in the Reading Excellence program that has been expressed by these LEAs suggest that Pennsylvania will make subgrants to both urban and rural LEAs.

**Dissemination information regarding the Reading Excellence Act and its requirements and assistance with the proposal development process**

**[Section 2253(b)(2)(E)(iii)]**

PDE's Division of Federal Programs (DFP) will be responsible for managing the competitive grants process for Reading Excellence funds. It is and will use the following dissemination strategies to inform eligible LEAs about the REA.

- The DFP made representatives of the School District of Philadelphia and the Pittsburgh School District members of the Partnership, because those LEAs have the largest number of children in poverty and the most schools eligible to receive Reading Excellence funds. By involving them in the process of drafting the Pennsylvania application, DFP hopes to ensure that they would have full knowledge of the program and its requirements, and that they would use that knowledge to initiate their own planning early in the process.
- At the Pennsylvania Association of Federal Program Coordinators Conference in mid-April 1999, members of the Pennsylvania Reading and Literacy Partnership and DFP staff met with representatives from the eligible LEAs. At the meeting, they provided the LEA representatives information about the Reading Excellence program and copies of the Non-Regulatory Guidance

and the mid-April draft of the Pennsylvania Reading Excellence Application. They answered questions raised by the representatives and encouraged them to provide feedback on clarity of the draft Application and its responsiveness to the Reading Excellence law.

- Upon receiving notification of a Reading Excellence grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the DFP will notify all eligible LEAs about the award and their eligibility by way of PDE's electronic bulletin board, Penn-Link. In addition, it will provide the LEAs copy of a notice to be placed in local newspapers that will enable them to fulfill the requirement in Section 2256(a)(2)(B) to provide notice to potential providers of tutorial assistance and to parents.
- The DFP, with the assistance of the Partnership and the Region III Comprehensive Center, will plan and conduct workshops for interested LEA teams at a time that is convenient for them, but as soon after notification as is feasible. These workshops will be aimed at making sure that the members of those LEA teams understand:
  - ◊ what a Reading Excellence improvement effort involves and the research upon which it is based (cf. Section I)
  - ◊ the planning framework and how it is reflected in the structure of the Local Reading Improvement RFP and in the criteria that will be used to review it (cf. Section II and the next part of this section)
  - ◊ the knowledge base that the Partnership has developed to help LEAs plan its design for implementing each Reading Excellence improvement strategy (cf. Section III), including LEAs and schools within Pennsylvania that have experience in successfully implementing one or more of the strategies
  - ◊ possible strategies for doing the needs assessment for each strategy, including gathering information on the "capacity" of the various agents that are the target of each strategy (cf. Section IV)

- ◇ possible strategies for identifying local, state, and federal resources that are being used or that are available to help cover the costs of providing literacy/reading activities and experiences (cf. Section IV)
- ◇ strategies for addressing the concern about special education referral because of reading difficulties (cf. Section VI)
- ◇ the requirements for evaluation and for providing information to Pennsylvania's evaluation contractor (cf. Section VII).

Basically, the design of the workshop will cover the content of this application and of the RFPs but elaborate significantly upon them.

Following the workshops, the DFP will encourage interested LEAs to keep the DFP informed about their schedule for the development of their proposal and to ask the DFP for assistance when they encounter problems during their proposal development effort. Depending on the problem, the DFP staff will either provide direct assistance or broker the needed assistance.

### **The content of LEA proposals and the criteria for reviewing their quality**

One of the primary ways in which the SEA and the Partnership can influence local planning is through the design of the Requests for Proposals and the criteria used to evaluate LEA responses to each section of the RFPs. The RFPs and criteria are attachments to this narrative as requested by the U.S. Department of Education. This section provides an orientation to the structure of the RFPs and the content of the criteria that will be used to review them.

#### Orientation to the structure of the Local Reading Improvement RFP and review criteria

The Local Reading Improvement Subgrant RFP begins with three general items which ask, respectively, for information on:

- the schools that will be targeted by the LEA, the eligibility criteria that each meets, and the rationale for their selection
- the local partnership that the LEA have formed to help design and implement school-community based literacy/reading improvement efforts

- the strategies that will be implemented to coordinate the use of local, state, and federal funds for early literacy and reading improvement activities.

These items correspond to the request for information from SEAs on: (1) the LEAs that could receive Reading Excellence subgrants, (2) the Partnership that the state was required to form, and (3) the coordination of early literacy/reading improvement programs that it administers.

The major block of items in the Local Reading Improvement RFP directly reflects the Planning Framework presented in Section II.

- The items are organized in two sets: one set for the early childhood improvement strategies that are aimed at ensuring that parents and community provide the kinds of literacy/reading activities and experiences that enable young children to develop the “readiness skills” and one set for the K-3 improvement strategies that are aimed at ensuring that school staff, parents, and community provide the kinds of literacy/reading activities and experiences that enable K-3 students to become skilled and motivated readers.
- In both sets, LEAs are asked to address the following topics: (1) the goals that the LEA is seeking to achieve with respect to children’s learning and achievement; (2) the literacy/reading experiences that should be provided; (3) the improvement strategies for obtaining parental support; (4) the strategies for helping educators improve their instructional practices -- that is, the provision of professional development and technical assistance to early childhood education providers, K-3 teachers, and other instructional staff; and (5) the provision of additional support through tutoring programs.
- In addition to these common strategies, the early childhood section includes the strategies of: (1) expanding family literacy and (2) promoting library and other community-based literacy/reading programs, while the K-3 section includes the topics of: (1) addressing reading difficulties of kindergarten students, (2) addressing the problem of students being incorrectly identified as

children with a disability and inappropriately referred to special education because of reading difficulties, and (3) parental need for information about teacher qualifications to teach reading.

- The RFP concludes with an item concerned with the need for ongoing evaluations of: (1) the implementation of each improvement strategy and its effects on the literacy/reading activities and experiences provided by the different agents and (2) the relationship between the actual literacy/reading activities and experiences individual children have and the progress that they make toward becoming skilled and motivated readers.

For each item in the Local Reading Improvement RFP, PDE has listed review criteria that describe the content that needs to be provided for the LEA response to be considered a high quality one. PDE's intent is to only fund LEAs that present a high quality response to each item in the RFP.

In general, the following kinds of criteria have been developed for each of the REA improvement strategies:

- criteria that ask for the research base for the improvement strategy
- criteria that reflect the results of each task in the improvement process presented in the improvement planning framework: (1) evidence from needs assessment, (2) improvement goals, (3) improvement activities, and (4) plans to evaluate the implementation of the improvement activities and the extent to which they achieve their goals
- criteria that ask for information about how the improvement activity reflects findings from current research and evaluations
- criteria that ask for information about the LEAs, the roles partners and members of the school-community played or will play in the design and implementation of the improvement activities and about efforts to coordinate the use of resources.

#### Orientation to the structure of the Tutorial Assistance RFP and review criteria

The Tutorial Assistance RFP directly reflects the planning framework (Section II) and requirements in the law. To summarize, it asks LEAs to describe how they will undertake the following tasks: (1)

determining the need for tutorial assistance before and after school, on weekends, and during the summer; (2) identifying eligible tutorial providers; (3) selecting students for tutorial assistance; (4) informing parents of the choices that they will have in tutorial assistance and helping them to make those choices; (5) contracting for the tutorial services; and (6) setting goals for the tutorial assistance, overseeing the performance of the contractors, evaluating the achievement of the goals, and taking appropriate corrective action.

The criteria for the review of the LEA responses to each of the items in the RFP reflect: (1) that the response addresses the requirements found in the REA, (2) the responses demonstrate knowledge of the structures and procedures of the demonstrably effective tutorial programs that have been developed over the course of the past decade, (3) the responses, where appropriate, demonstrate knowledge of the research into the literacy/reading activities and experiences that should be part of a tutorial session and into the role of the tutor in the conduct of each of those activities, and (4) the responses, where appropriate, ensure that the tutorial assistance is aligned with the instructional program and practices of the school and is responsive to the identified needs.

#### **Proposed process for selecting subgrantees [Section 2253(b) (2)(B)(vi)]**

The review process will involve the following elements.

- Due date for the proposals. The DFP will set a due date for the submission of the proposals for Reading Excellence funds in consultation with the eligible and interested LEAs. At this time, there appears to be growing consensus to setting a November date, if Pennsylvania receives notification in June, before many school staff go on vacation.
- Reviewers. To the extent possible, the DFP will use members of the Pennsylvania Reading and Literacy Partnership as reviewers of the proposals. Where individuals cannot serve, DFP will recruit persons with similar expertise.
- Review process. The proposals will be reviewed using the following four-step process.
  1. Proposals will be submitted to DFP by the due date and will be appropriately logged in.

2. The DFP staff will review each proposal for completeness; incomplete proposals will be returned to the proposing LEA and will not be considered further.
3. The DFP staff will randomly interview the leadership of the LEA and members of the local Partnership to determine their understanding and commitment to the implementation of the plan set forth in the proposal. If a number of interviewees fail to demonstrate understanding and commitment, the DFP will terminate further review of a proposal.
4. The DFP will then submit the proposal to the Review Panel for its assessment of the quality of the proposal, using the review criteria. The Panel will determine the extent to which each section of the proposal meets the criteria, and it will summarize its assessment using the following three-point scale:
  - 2 The section represents a high-quality response to the request.
  - 1 The section presents a quality response to the request; however, the Panel recommends that the DFP and the leadership of the LEA address certain questions before the proposal is funded.
  - 0 The section presents a response of insufficient quality.

This design for the review process seeks to ensure that every proposal funded will be complete, supported by a highly committed LEA and local partnership, and is of high quality in all aspects (i.e., received from the Review Panel a rating of 2 or 1 on each of its sections, and adequately addressed questions raised about sections that were rated a “1” by the Panel).

## **VI. Pennsylvania's Assurances Regarding Special Education and Children Experiencing Reading Difficulties**

This section responds to the fifth purpose for the Act (Section 2251(5) and Section 2253(b)(2)(D)) that requests an assurance that instruction in reading will be provided to children with reading difficulties who – (i) are at risk of being referred to special education based on these difficulties; and (ii) have been evaluated under section 614 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act but, in accordance with section 614 (b)(5) of that Act, have not been identified as being a child with a disability (as defined in section 602 of the such Act).

This response is organized into two parts. The first demonstrates that Pennsylvania has in place the regulations and the procedures that address the two concerns. The second describes the item in the Pennsylvania Local Reading Improvement RFP that addresses this concern.

Before proceeding, it is important to note the following. First, the Partnership believes that the extent to which an LEA implements all of the REA improvement strategies and actually ensures that all young children are being involved regularly in high quality, research-based literacy/reading activities and experiences will greatly affect the extent to which it successfully address these concerns. Second, the Partnership will be proactive in assembling and communicating information to LEA leadership and staff about LEAs that have been successful in designing and implementing practices that address these concerns well. Third, the Pennsylvania and LEA evaluation contractors, as part of their work, will be providing the LEAs, PDE, and the Partnership regular reports regarding the extent to which this purpose is being achieved. The Partnership and PDE are committed to using this information to guide the continuing improvement efforts of the individual LEAs, as well as the support that the Partnership itself provides them.

### **Current Pennsylvania regulations and procedures**

#### Children at risk of being referred

Pennsylvania's special education regulations (§14.24 and §42.24) and standards stipulate that each elementary-aged student who experiences academic, social-emotional, behavioral, and/or communication



difficulties will have access to instructional support in regular education. The instructional support process is composed of assessment and intervention procedures that are used to assure that students receive an effective instructional program, as well as other school services, that will meet their learning needs prior to referral for multidisciplinary (special education) evaluation. The instructional support process represents a systematic search for what works for the student.

The vehicle for instructional support is the Instructional Support Team (IST), whose purpose is to help classroom teachers in planning and implementing strategies that will help the referred students to be successful learners in the regular classroom. The composition of the IST for a given student includes the principal or designee, the student's teacher in all cases, a support teacher, and other school personnel as needed. Most schools involve Title I specialists, school psychologists, guidance counselors, other school personnel depending on the particular student's needs, and parents; thus, membership of the IST is flexible. To help the student's teacher implement the strategies recommended by the IST, the team assigns a support teacher who is specially trained to assist teachers in meeting the goals set by the team.

In the process of providing instructional support to identified students, the IST engages in a collaborative problem-solving process that incorporates the following actions. (1) The IST precisely identifies the problem, based on assessment information and sets measurable goals. (2) The IST designs interventions for use in the classroom based on initial assessments of the student. (3) The IST assigns a support teacher to help the student's teacher implement the interventions and, if necessary, to modify them based on the student's response. (4) The IST monitors the implementation of the intervention and evaluates its effectiveness in helping the student make adequate progress. (5) If suggested by the evaluation, the IST may modify the intervention, design new or additional interventions, or decide that the student needs to be evaluated by a multidisciplinary team.

When confronted with a student who has an academic skill deficit (including reading difficulties), the IST, in general terms, recommends that the student be systematically taught at the instructional level in areas of concern throughout the intervention period, that instructional materials be adapted to accommodate student learning needs, and that teachers even consider adapting homework, testing, and

grading procedures to accommodate the students. In other words, teachers are helped to adjust the difficulty level of learning activities and materials to conform to the margin of challenge necessary to motivate students to learn.

Children who have been evaluated, but have not been identified

Pennsylvania's Special Education Regulations (§14.25 (j) require that the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) be used to determine whether a student is "exceptional." The MDT is required to do a comprehensive evaluation of the child's educational needs and present performance levels to make that determination. The MDT is further required to prepare a comprehensive written report that presents its findings, indicates the bases for those findings, and provides recommendations for the educational program of the student, irrespective of whether the student is found to be "exceptional." In those cases where a student is found not to be exceptional, classroom teachers, with the help of the IST, are expected to implement practices that reflect the MDT's recommendations.

**Local Reading Improvement RFP and review criteria**

To both communicate the importance of this purpose and ensure that only LEAs that are prepared to address this concern in a comprehensive manner are funded, the Partnership has crafted an item for the RFP that specifically asks for information about how an LEA and its partners will achieve this purpose. In addition, to provide additional direction, the Partnership has developed review criteria that communicate the need for the LEA to work collaboratively with Special Education program staff, including Early Intervention staff, at every critical point in a child's development. Those criteria ask:

- how the LEA and the school staff will work with Early Intervention staff to determine how REA activities aimed at increasing the quality and quantity of literacy/reading activities and experiences provided young children can be supportive of young children involved in Early Intervention programs
- how the LEA and school staff will work with the staff of preschool Early Intervention programs administered by the local intermediate unit or the district itself to facilitate the transition of children from those programs to the school's kindergarten program

- how the LEA and school staff will work with early childhood providers, including Head Start, to facilitate the transition of children from those programs to the school's kindergarten program
- how the LEA implements levels I, II, and III screening in the primary grades and how it employs the instructional support team concept to address reading difficulties in young children
- how the LEA ensures that the teachers of young children who refer one or more students for evaluation to the multi-disciplinary team (MDT) as required by Chapter §14.25 (j) of the Pennsylvania Special Education Regulations, receive: (1) "recommendations for the educational program of the student, regardless of whether the student is found to be exceptional" from the MDT and (2) the kinds of support that enables them to implement those recommendations effectively.

**VII. Plan for Evaluating the Impact of Activities Supported by  
the Reading Excellence Act [Section 2253(b)(2)(E)(iv) and (2)(F)]**

This section responds to Section 2253(b)(2)(E)(iv) which asks for a description of how the SEA will assess and evaluate on a regular basis the extent to which LEA activities are achieving the purposes of the REA, and Section 2253(b)(2)(F), which asks for a description of the evaluation instrument the SEA will use for purposes of those assessments and evaluations.

This section begins with a discussion of the purposes for the evaluation. It presents how Pennsylvania plans to organize resources to conduct the evaluation. It, then, sets forth the general questions that the evaluation should address and the general approach that will be implemented to answer those questions. It discusses the types of instruments that will be needed to collect data to answer the questions. It describes the initial steps that Pennsylvania will take to develop the detailed evaluation plan that will guide the work of both the state's evaluation contractor and the evaluation activities that will need to be carried out at school-community and LEA levels. It concludes with a discussion of topics listed in section D6 of the U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance.

**The purposes of the evaluation**

The focus of the evaluation requirements of the law is on information that the U.S. Department of Education needs to determine the extent to which the purposes of the law are being achieved. Three of the purposes address student learning and accomplishments (#1, #2, and the first part of #3), one addresses the instructional practices used by teachers to provide the research-based literacy experiences that students need to become skilled readers (the second part of #3), one addresses one of the improvement strategies (#4 - expand family literacy programs), and one addresses a particular problem (#5 - the incorrect identification and inappropriate referral of children to special education due to difficulties that they are having in learning to read).

In Section I, the Partnership presented a conceptual framework that identified all of the improvement strategies found in the law and related those strategies to the various agents named in the law who could provide research-based literacy/reading activities and experiences (i.e., parents and other family members;

early childhood education providers and, if possible daycare providers; school teachers and other instructional staff; staff and volunteers associated with libraries and other community organizations; and private providers of tutorial assistance). The improvement strategies that the Partnership found in the law, besides family literacy programs, are: parent outreach activities, implementation of programs of research-based instructional practices with the help of external technical assistance, professional development programs, activities that promote library and other community-based literacy/reading programs, activities aimed at helping community groups organize and manage tutorial programs, and expansion of the services of “providers of tutorial assistance.”

Given this framework (cf. Figure 1), the Partnership believes that the evaluation should not only provide the information needed by federal decision-makers, but also provide information that will help school, LEA, and state-based decision-makers. Therefore, the purposes of the evaluation are to evaluate:

1. the impact of the full array of improvement strategies set forth in the law on the quality and quantity of literacy activities and experiences provided by the various agents named in the law (the second part of purpose 3 and purpose 4)
2. the impact of the mix of literacy activities and experiences that children actually have on their progress toward becoming skilled and motivated readers (purpose 1, 2 and the first part of purpose 3)
3. the impact of children’s involvement in early literacy activities and experiences on the problem of the incorrect identification and inappropriate referral of children to special education due to difficulties that they are having in learning to read (purpose 5).

In summary, the Partnership believes the evaluation needs to address all of the purposes of the law, not just the five found in Section 2251 -- that is, it needs to address the entire conception presented in Section I and summarized in Figure 1.

### **Organization of the evaluation effort**

In Section II, the Partnership translated the conceptual framework into a planning framework that would help structure the Pennsylvania Requests for Proposals (RFP) and LEAs’ efforts to develop a

competitive response to the RFP. The framework made explicit the Partnership's expectations that the improvement activities supported by the REA should be guided by data from targeted needs assessments and that LEAs should conduct ongoing evaluations of those improvement activities and their effects on the literacy/reading activities and experiences provided by the targeted agents and on the learning and achievement of young children.

In order to ensure that LEAs carry out the evaluations in ways that provide useful data to local, state, and federal decision-makers, the Partnership recognizes that there will need to be strong evaluation leadership from the state evaluation contractor. Given the constraint on the funds that the state can use for the state evaluation (i.e., two percent, which the Partnership believes will cover, at best, the costs of an equivalence of two highly-skilled evaluators and support staff for approximately three years), the Partnership has concluded that the burden of data collection, storage, and analysis must be assigned to the LEA evaluators and that leadership for the entire evaluation effort needs to be the primary role of the state evaluation contractor. To fulfill this leadership role, the Partnership expects the state evaluation contractor to work with LEA evaluators to: (1) develop the detailed design, (2) determine the actual instrumentation that will be used, (3) provide the training that everyone involved in or affected by the evaluation work will need to carry out the evaluation tasks in a high quality way, (4) actively monitor the conduct of evaluation tasks by LEA evaluators to ensure that each contractor is collecting, storing, analyzing, and summarizing data in the agreed-upon ways, and (5) address the myriad of practical problems that will be encountered by the local evaluators as they implement the design.

Secondarily, the state evaluation contractor will be expected to summarize the results of LEA evaluations for the required reports to the U.S. Department of Education, and to help the Partnership explore the implications of the results of the evaluations for their activities.

### **The general evaluation questions and the general approach to addressing them**

The Partnership proposes to organize the evaluation around two general questions: (1) To what extent do the REA improvement strategies result in an improvement in the quality and quantity of literacy/reading activities and experiences that specific agents provide and (2) what is the impact of the

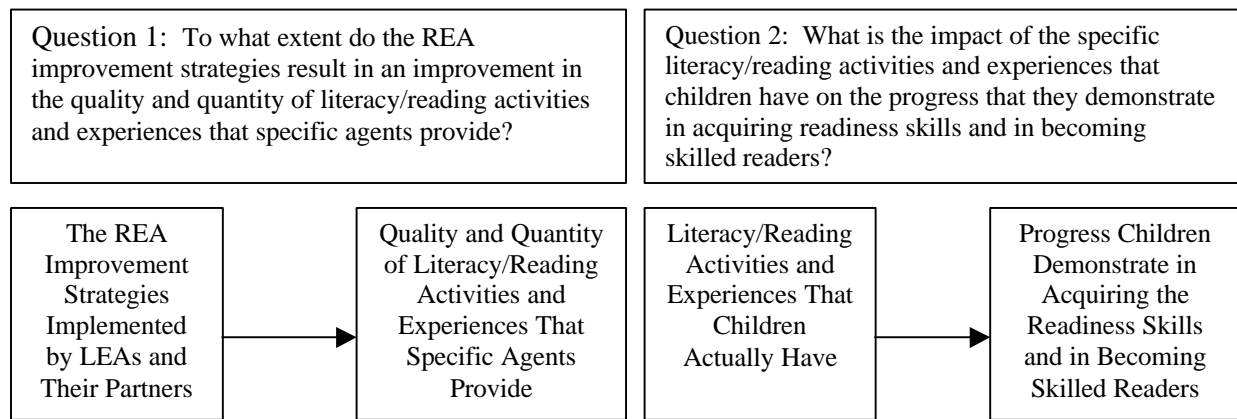
specific literacy/reading activities and experiences that children have on the progress that they demonstrate in acquiring readiness skills and in becoming skilled readers?

Question 1: Impact of improvement strategies on literacy/reading activities and experiences provided

As suggested by Figure 2, this question is concerned about the relationship between the quality and quantity of the literacy/reading activities and experiences provided by the specific agents named and the activities that the LEA and its partners design and implement for each of the improvement strategies.

Figure 2

Evaluation Framework



This general question can, then, be used to generate more specific questions such as:

- To what extent do parent outreach activities of the LEA and its partners improve the quality and quantity of literacy/reading activities and experiences provided by the targeted parents to their children?
- To what extent do the expanded family literacy programs of the LEA and its partners improve the quality and quantity of literacy/reading activities and experiences provided by the targeted parents to their young children?
- To what extent do professional development activities of the LEA and its partners improve the quality and quantity of literacy/reading activities and experiences provided by the targeted early childhood education providers and targeted daycare providers to the children in their care?

- To what extent do the technical assistance provided by the external developer selected by the LEA and its partners improve the program of instructional practices offered by the school and thus, the quality and quantity of literacy/reading activities and experiences provided by teachers and other instructional staff to their students?
- To what extent do professional development activities of the LEA and its partners improve the quality and quantity of literacy/reading activities and experiences provided by teachers and other instructional staff who participated in those activities?
- To what extent do activities of the LEA and its partners to promote library and other community-based literacy/reading activities and experiences improve the quality and quantity of community-based literacy/reading activities and experiences available to young children and their families?
- To what extent do activities of the LEA and its partners to facilitate the development of community-based tutorial assistance programs or to expand the tutorial assistance available from current providers improve the quality and quantity of tutorial assistance available to young children?

To answer such questions, LEA evaluators will need to further refine the questions, so that they name the actual REA improvement activity designed and conducted, the agents targeted by each REA improvement activity, and the specific kinds of research-based literacy/reading activities that were addressed during the activity. They will need to document what improvement activities were conducted and which agents were actually reached by them. They will then have to follow up with those agents and collect information about the literacy/reading activities and experiences that they actually provide over time and about the extent to which those activities and experiences reflect those actually presented through the improvement activity.

To illustrate: LEAs could include local hospitals and pediatricians as members of the local partnership. Together, they could decide to initiate a parent outreach activity whose purpose is to provide parents with information and materials that describe the kinds of literacy experiences that they can



provide their children that will further their language development, along with some incentives for undertaking such activities. The task for the local evaluator will be to participate in the design of such activities to ensure that: (1) the design of the activity is informed by a needs assessment, (2) the design includes clear goals and objectives, as well as indicators that could be used to evaluate the extent to which those goals and objectives are achieved, (3) the design specifies what activities will be conducted to achieve the goals and objectives (e.g., the materials that will be provided, the ways in which they will be disseminated to parents, and which parents will actually received them) and the ways in which those activities will be documented, and (4) the design will describe how information will be collected from the parents who are reached to determine the extent to which they recall the information provided and the extent to which they do what the materials suggested. Thus, the evaluator seeks to ensure that each improvement activity is so designed that its implementation and effects can be documented.

Question 2: What is the impact of the specific literacy/reading activities and experiences that children have on the progress that they demonstrate in acquiring readiness skills and in becoming skilled readers?

The second question asks about the impact of the literacy/reading activities and experiences that children actually have. Specifically, it is concerned with documenting the extent to which individual students actually are involved in research-based literacy/reading activities and experiences (cf. Appendix B for examples of these) and making progress on acquiring the kinds of skills suggested by the recent research syntheses (cf. Appendix A for examples of these). It is also concerned with exploring the relationship between the progress that students are demonstrating and the literacy/reading activities and experiences that they have.

Both evaluation questions are concerned about literacy/reading activities and experiences; however, the unit of analysis is different. In question 1, the concern is with the activities and experiences provided by the agents who are reached by specific improvement activities. In question 2, the concern is with the actual activities and experiences that children have. This distinction is made because the Partnership finds within the REA the vision of a school-community striving to provide their children with research-

based literacy/reading activities and experiences of a quality and at a frequency that enables their children to become skilled readers. If this vision is realized, individual children prior to their going to school may find themselves engaged in literacy/reading activities with their parents, their daycare provider, and with the staff of the local library, while individual children going to school may find themselves engaged in literacy/reading activities with their teachers, an after-school tutor, and their parents or other family members.

To answer the second question, the local evaluation will need to develop two sets of data. First, there is the need for records of the literacy/reading activities and experiences that individual children actually have. Second, there is the need for data regarding the progress that students are making in acquiring specific readiness and reading skills and in using those skills to construct meaning from age/grade appropriate texts.

To develop these data sets, the evaluators will face three major challenges. The first is the challenge of instrumentation, which is discussed in the next section. The second is the challenge of developing the capability and commitment of the multiple agents to systematically document the literacy/reading experiences that children actually have. The third is the challenge of developing the capability and commitment of the multiple agents to document changes in children's performance with respect to specific skills/standards. With respect to the third challenge, it should be noted that as a result of Pennsylvania's Title I requirements, school staffs in Pennsylvania have been developing the capability to administer multiple performance assessments to document both the extent to which students are demonstrating a proficient or higher level of achievement with respect to specific standards and the progress that they have made over a year toward achieving specific standards. LEAs have also been developing systems for collecting data about what students can do on literacy/reading related tasks and summarizing that data for reports to PDE.

To illustrate the use of these data sets to inform the ongoing improvement work of school-communities and LEAs, let us consider the concern expressed in the REA about kindergarten students' transition to first grade. Though not a stated purpose, the REA communicates great concern for

kindergarten students who are unprepared for making the transition to first grade. From an evaluation perspective, this concern might be expressed in terms of the following question. To what extent do kindergarten students receive the quality and quantity of literacy/reading activities and experiences that enable them to achieve the expectations for kindergarten and make a successful transition to first grade?

To address this question, evaluators will need to do a sub-analysis of the relationship between the kinds of literacy/reading activities and experiences that kindergarten students actually have and the progress that those students make toward meeting the expectations for kindergarten students by the end of that year of schooling. If the vision embedded in the REA is being achieved, the school with their community's and with their LEA's support will be providing the variety of literacy/reading activities and experiences that will enable each kindergarten student to achieve the expectations at a level that will enable them to make the transition to first grade. This analysis will provide information to decision-makers at all levels to help them understand the extent to which they are achieving this vision. (Note: To fully achieve the REA vision, such analyses will be routinely run for each age/grade group of young children/students and the resulting information would be provided to the appropriate local decision-makers.)

Evaluating the extent to which the number of children who are incorrectly identified as children with a disability and inappropriately referred to special education is reduced.

Based on the assurance presented in Section VI, this evaluation task can be broken down into the following questions.

- To what extent do teachers refer students to the Instructional Support Team (IST) for “difficulties related to reading” and have their reasons for the referral confirmed by the IST?
- To what extent do those students receive, as the result of the IST process, higher quality and/or more frequent literacy/reading activities and experiences?
- To what extent do these students make significant progress toward becoming skilled and motivated readers, or to what extent do they subsequently become referrals to the Multi-Discipline Team (MDT)?

- To what extent are the students referred to by the IST identified by the MDT as children with a disability?
- To what extent is there a reduction over time in the numbers of students who both received higher quality and or more frequent literacy/reading activities and experiences (as a result of the IST process), and yet, are subsequently referred by the IST to the MDT?

To develop answers to these questions will require the analysis of the records of students referred to the IST as well as the records of students who are subsequently referred to the MDT, and relating the information in those records with the data sets developed to address Question 2. To answer the last question, evaluators will do a trend analysis of the number of referrals by the IST to the MDT of students who receive higher quality and more frequent literacy/reading activities and experiences as a result of the IST process. For such analysis to provide useful conclusions about the impact of REA improvement activities, the Partnership believes that these kinds of data will need to be collected and analyzed for an extended period beyond the life of the Reading Excellence subgrant.

### **Instruments**

The Partnership recognizes that the potential for the evaluation to yield valuable information will be significantly facilitated by the use of common instruments across LEAs to document the progress that young children are making in acquiring critical readiness and reading skills and in becoming skilled and motivated readers, as well as to document the quality of literacy activities and experiences provided young children by specific agents. The Partnership believes that a number of activities that are underway in the state will make it feasible to use common instruments across the participating LEAs, but that the final decision as to which instruments should be made collaboratively by the state, its evaluation contractor, and the participating LEAs.

To be specific, the Partnership believes the following conditions make the use of common instruments to document student progress most feasible.

- The Even Start and Pennsylvania Family Literacy Programs are now requiring their contractors to use one of three instruments to document children's progress: (a) the Child Observation Record

developed by High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, which is appropriate for children from 2 years and 6 months to 6 years and 0 months; (b) the Work Sampling System developed by Samuel Meisels of the University of Michigan, which can be used with children from 3 to 11 years old, or (c) the Early Learning Accomplishment Profile and the Learning Accomplishment Profile - Revised, developed by the Chapel Hill Training-Outreach project and are respectively designed for children from birth to age 3 and from age 3 to age 6.

- The Pennsylvania Title I Early Childhood Assessment Task Force has been at work over the past three years assembling instruments and methods that could be used to document student progress toward achieving Pennsylvania Academic Standards in reading, writing, speaking, and listening; disseminating the results of its work to every Title I LEA and school in the state; and making presentations on the methods at the Annual Pennsylvania/Title I Assessment Congress and other state meetings. That work, plus the Title I requirement that LEAs administer performance assessment tasks as part of the local system for documenting Title I students' progress, has been having an impact. Specifically, LEAs and school staffs have been learning to administer performance tasks like retellings, various forms of fluency assessments (e.g., running records), and "reader response," and they have been learning to use the results of their analyses and scoring of student work on those tasks as evidence of what students have learned to do and as information to help them plan instruction.
- The decision of Governor Ridge to request funds for the development of a state reading assessment for third grade students that could be used to assess the impact of his proposed "Read to Succeed Initiative" should reinforce and support the need for the use of common instruments to assess the progress that students make under the Reading Excellence program. Assuming the funding of this development effort this spring, the Partnership expects that the new assessment will provide some useful data on what third-grade students of Reading Excellence schools can do toward the end of school year 2001-2002.

In addition, the Partnership recognizes the need for common instruments to document both the provision of research-based literacy/reading activities and experiences by the various agents and the actual literacy/reading activities and experiences that students have. The Partnership is confident that a set of observation and self-report instruments can be adapted for this task from existing instruments. For example, the following are examples of instruments currently being used in the state for this purpose:

- instruments that are currently used to document services provided families by Family Literacy contractors
- instruments used to monitor teacher implementation of Reading Recovery strategies in tutorial, small group, and classroom setting
- instruments that are being used to monitor instructional practices that are components of Comprehensive School Models now being implemented in Pennsylvania
- the literacy-related “work-throughs” being designed collaboratively by staff of the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh and Community District #2 of New York City.

### **Initial steps to elaborating and implementing the evaluation**

As a start, the Partnership has:

- included in the Local Reading Improvement and Tutorial Assistance RFPs an item that asks for: Assurance that the LEA and school-communities participating in the Pennsylvania Reading Excellence program will collaborate with the state evaluation contractor in the evaluation of the extent to which the improvement activities actually improve the literacy/reading activities and experiences that young children have at home, in early childhood education programs and, if possible, daycare programs, in libraries and other community settings, in school, and as a result of community and school-based tutoring programs.

- made explicit what information needs to be provided by the LEA by providing criteria for a high quality response to the evaluation item. To be specific, a high quality LEA response should include:
  - ◊ the selection of a local evaluator that has the capability to perform the required evaluation tasks well
  - ◊ the use of agreed-upon instruments and methods to document the REA improvement activities implemented and their effects on the literacy/reading activities and experiences provided by parents, early childhood education providers, daycare providers, libraries and community organizations, K-3 teachers, other instructional staff, and school and community-based tutorial assistance providers
  - ◊ the use of agreed-upon instruments and methods to document young children's progress in acquiring readiness skills prior to their entering school and in becoming skilled readers by the end of third grade
  - ◊ the use of agreed-upon methods to document the extent to which students are involved in research-based literacy and reading activities and experiences at home, in early childhood programs, in libraries and other community settings, in school, and as a result of community and school-based tutoring programs
  - ◊ the development of compatible data-bases and data collection and storage procedures that insure the availability of records that can be used to address the evaluation questions that the state contractor will be seeking to answer within the constraints of local reading improvement efforts and the time period for which Reading Excellence funds can be used

Upon notification of an award, PDE plans to take the following steps:

- invite evaluators from the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh, the Laboratory for Student Success at Temple University, and the Region III Comprehensive Center and its Associate Partner, Research for Better Schools, as well as from groups currently involved in evaluations of related federal programs in the state (e.g., Even Start,

Head Start, Adult Literacy) and interested members of the Partnership to help it set specifications for the state evaluation contractor

- solicit proposals from qualified persons and groups who could perform the state evaluation contractor role
- include as part of the workshops for LEA teams a strand on the evaluation. That strand will be conducted by the state evaluation contractor and will make clear the specific evaluation tasks that will need to be undertaken (e.g., data collection, storage, analysis, and reporting) that each LEA will be responsible for and the evaluation capability that LEAs will need to employ
- involve the state evaluation contractor in the review of LEA proposals to ensure that those proposals include an adequate response to the evaluation responsibilities.

### **Responses to Guidance questions**

The Non-Regulatory Guidance raised a number of topics that have not yet been addressed. The following addresses those questions.

- Collection of information from sites. To the extent possible, information from project sites will be sent electronically to the state contractor in a form that facilitates the contractor's work of summarizing and aggregating data for required reports and for reports to the Partnership. As noted above, the contractor through its design, training, and monitoring tasks will proactively work with LEA evaluators to ensure that the information that is sent is of high quality.
- Time period over which student progress in reading will be measured. Pennsylvania hopes to complete the LEA proposal development and review process within four to five months of the receipt of the funds. This would enable data to be collected on student progress over two and one-half school years or approximately 28 months from January 2000 to June 2002. With the State's commitment to develop a third-grade reading assessment, data could continue to be provided for the LEAs and schools that received Reading Excellence subgrants well after the end of the grant in September 2002.



- Assessing the impact of teacher professional development. Professional development is one of the improvement strategies specified in the law. The impact of professional development on classroom practice will be assessed through the use of a variety of proven methodologies, including direct observation, “work-throughs,” teacher logs, teacher plans, student work, and other documentary methods. The choice of method will be aligned with the nature of the practice that will be the focus of specific professional development efforts.

With respect to impact of professional development on student outcomes, one must begin with the vision underlying the REA. It calls for children to be involved in high-quality, research-based literacy/reading activities and experiences provided by many possible agents (e.g., teachers, other instructional staff, parents and other family members, members of libraries and other community organizations, and volunteer or contract tutors). If LEAs succeeded in achieving this vision, it will be difficult to attribute a child’s progress to a specific strategy. Of course, when a child’s literacy/reading activities and experiences are provided by only one agent, it will be more easy to attribute the progress observed or not observed to the literacy experiences provided by that agent. Part II of the design will collect data that will enable the exploration of the relationship between literacy experiences that students have and their achievement.

- Assessing the impact of tutoring. Development of community-based tutoring programs or contracting for tutorial services is another improvement strategy. The first level of assessment will focus on whether the children identified through the needs assessment actually obtained such services. The second level will focus on the quality of the services, using a combination of documentary evidence and direct observation. The third level would be to explore progress made by the student during the period in which tutoring is provided. (Note: Such explorations may be constrained by the numbers of agents that are providing individual children with high-quality, research-based experiences, as discussed in the previous item.)
- Determining the educational significance of the improvements in student reading observed. The performance assessments that are being used in Pennsylvania come with rubrics that define

identifiable levels of improvement and with anchors that provide concrete examples of each level of performance. In terms of these instruments, educational significance can be defined as moving from one level of performance to another and sustaining that level of performance over subsequent performance tasks. Many performance tasks also involve the use of texts of different levels of difficulty. In those cases, a significant improvement could be defined as being able to read both fluently and with comprehension a text that has been identified as at a higher instructional level.

- Determining whether or not REA program activities enable students to learn more than they would have with no REA program activities. This topic asks the state evaluation to make comparisons that would suggest the value of REA program activities. The U.S. Department of Education's Guidance suggests that states could try to relate growth rates of students before and after REA improvement activities have been implemented. One approach for documenting the relative progress that students are making over time and for relating that to the teachers they have and the schools that they attend is being exemplified by the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System. Another type of comparison could involve the use of a comparison group design. By establishing a control group, the evaluation could make comparisons between the achievement of students who are enrolled in classes and schools that are targeted by the REA program activities and the achievement of a similar group of students who are enrolled in classrooms and schools unaffected by REA activities.

PDE will ask the state evaluator contractor to work with LEAs that have the kinds of assessment data files that would enable such comparisons to be made. PDE explored this possibility with the Assessment Office of the School District of Philadelphia, and its director agreed to collaborate in such exploratory comparisons.

(Note: When the Partnership reflects on this topic in the light of its evaluation framework (cf. Figure 2), it sees the U.S. Department of Education as asking for comparisons that bridge the two evaluation questions, seeking to directly relate data on the REA improvement activities to student

progress data. The Partnership considered this option when it was developing the framework. However, it concluded that more useful information would be provided to decision-makers at all levels, if the evaluation separated the question of the immediate impact of the REA improvement activities on agents who either provide or could provide research-based literacy/reading activities and experiences from the question of the progress that students were making and the relationship of that progress to literacy/reading experiences that students actually have. This decision also reflects the Partnership's discussions of what improvements LEAs can reasonably achieve in the time period for the REA subgrants.)

### **VIII. Competitive Priority**

In Section 2253(c)(2)(C), it says that the review panel "...shall give priority to applications from state educational agencies that not later than 18 months after receiving a grant under this section the State educational agencies will increase the training and the methods of teaching reading required for the certification as an elementary teacher to reflect scientifically based reading research."

Pennsylvania has revised its regulations regarding teacher and the State Board "moved to adopt" them in September, 1997. Since that time the regulations have moved through a regulatory review process. Currently they are in the Governor's office for review and then will be sent to the Attorney General.

The Chapter 49 regulations provided policies for strengthening teacher education programs in ways that will prepare students to teach in a standards-based system. Section 49.18 requires the Secretary to institute a testing program for certification candidates designed to assess: (1) basic skills, (2) general knowledge, (3) professional knowledge and (4) knowledge of the subject(s) in which they seek certification.

Chapter 49.13 charges the PDE with these responsibilities: (1) develop standards for the guidance of preparing institutions in educating professional personnel; (2) develop guidelines for the certification of professional personnel including designation of professional titles, procedures for issuing certificates, registration of certified persons, review and investigation of alleged violations, and handling certification appeal process; (3) verify that the candidate has completed an approved program and is recommended by the preparing institution; and (4) review the approved programs at any time or not later than every five years and withdraw approval of the program if necessary.

The PDE will have an ongoing responsibility in the professional development of teachers in two ways: (1) approval of an induction plan for first-year teachers involving a mentor program and (2) a continuing professional development plan for all teachers planned by teachers and administrators submitted to the state for a two-year period.

Currently the Department is developing the standards for each subject area through focus groups made up of teachers, administrators, higher education representatives, and Department curriculum

advisors. Two focus groups will impact the teaching of reading/language arts and literacy development. The early childhood group is developing a standard that will ensure that all early childhood teachers receive preparation in child development, strategies for building literacy skills, importance of phonemic awareness and the direct teaching of alphabetic principles, and methods of instruction suitable for various student learning styles. The second focus group that will impact teacher certification of reading will be the Elementary Certification and the Reading Specialist Certification. Understanding of the reading process and strategies for developing reading proficiency by grade three will be a primary element of the certification. The standards developed by these groups will become the basis for the teacher preparation program and will ensure the proper emphasis on reading/writing instruction in that program. The standards for the teacher preparation will be aligned with the PA academic standards for Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. These standards will be ready for implementation when the regulations receive final approval.

Pennsylvania has proposed some additional teacher preparation requirements that will ensure more qualified teacher candidates. Program admission qualifications have been strengthened. The education student must maintain a B average in courses in the area of certification (elementary education, science, health, mathematics, reading specialist). The “passing” score on the testing instrument has been raised to a higher score. These proposed regulations will help to ensure the quality of teacher candidates. Pennsylvania believes the regulations and Departmental actions to date demonstrate that Pennsylvania is strengthening the requirements for certification of elementary teachers and that the process is in place that will ensure that within 18 months, the regulations, standards, and assessments will reflect "scientifically-based reading research" and will “increase the training and the methods related to the teaching of reading

## **APPENDICES**

- A. Examples of Accomplishments of Young Children
- B. Examples of Reading and Literacy-Related Learning Experiences that Young Children Should be Having According to Current Research
- C. Pennsylvania Context: Policies and Programs Consistent With and Supportive of the Purposes of the Reading Excellence Act

**APPENDIX A**

**Examples of Accomplishments of Young Children**

**Examples of Accomplishments of Young Children**

Clusters of Accomplishments	Accomplishments Suggested by Research	
	Infant and Toddlers (ages birth to 3)	Pre-School Children (ages 3 to 5)
1. Phonemic awareness/ phonics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing with sounds and language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knows letters are a special category of visual graphics that can be individually named</li> <li>• Participates in rhyming games</li> <li>• May begin to attend to beginning or rhyming sounds</li> <li>• Identifies some letters and makes some letter-sound matches</li> <li>• Pays attention to separable and repeating sounds in language</li> </ul>
2. Concepts about print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands that books are handled in particular ways</li> <li>• Looks at picture and realizes it as a symbol for an object</li> <li>• May begin attending to specific print such as letters in names</li> <li>• May distinguish between drawing and writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes front and back of book, top and bottom</li> <li>• Understands that different text forms are used for different functions of print</li> <li>• Knows that it is the print that is read in stories</li> <li>• Recognizes the title/name is generally on the front of the book</li> </ul>
3. Developing speaking, reading, writing vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labels objects in books</li> <li>• Listens to stories</li> <li>• Participates in conversations with adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes print in the environment</li> <li>• Uses new vocabulary in own speech</li> <li>• Uses descriptive language to explain and explore</li> <li>• Uses new vocabulary in own speech</li> <li>• Recognizes some words by sight</li> </ul>
4. Developing grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listens to stories</li> <li>• Participates in conversations with adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses new grammatical constructions in own speech</li> <li>• Notices when syntax in simple sentences fails to “sound right”</li> </ul>
5. Listening/ speaking/ reading/ writing for meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands that print carries a message</li> <li>• Listens to stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands that print carries a message</li> <li>• Is sensitive to some sequences of events in stories</li> <li>• Understands and follows oral directions</li> <li>• Notices when simple sentences fail to make sense</li> <li>• Questions and comments demonstrating literal understanding of story being told/read to</li> <li>• Scribbles messages, part of playful activity</li> </ul>
6. Speaking/ reading/ writing fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses increasingly purposeful scribbling</li> <li>• Pretends to read</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses known letters or approximations to represent written language</li> <li>• Displays reading and writing attempts, calling attention to self</li> </ul>
7. Responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments on characters in books</li> <li>• Recognizes specific books by cover</li> <li>• Enters into a book-sharing routine with primary caregivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When being read to, connects information and events to real-life experiences</li> <li>• Requests read aloud, especially of favorite stories/books</li> </ul>



Clusters of Accomplishments	Accomplishments Suggested by Research	
	Kindergarten Children (age 5)	Primary School Children (grades 1-3) (ages 6 to 8)
1. Phonemic awareness/phonics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizes and names all upper and lower case letters; independently writes many</li> <li>Uses phonological awareness and letter knowledge to spell independently</li> <li>Learns many, though not all, letter-sounds</li> <li>Demonstrates understanding that spoken words consist of a sequence of phonemes</li> <li>Understands that the sequence of letters in a written word represents the sequence of sounds in a spoken word</li> <li>Given spoken segments, can blend them into a meaningful target word</li> <li>Given a spoken word, can provide a rhyming word</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses letter-sound correspondence knowledge to sound out unknown words when reading text</li> <li>Accurately decodes orthographically regular, one-syllable words</li> <li>Can name the number of syllables in a word</li> <li>Can blend or segment the phonemes of most one-syllable words</li> <li>Uses invented spelling or phonics-based knowledge to spell independently</li> <li>Accurately reads many irregularly spelled words and such spelling patterns as diphthongs, special vowel spellings, and common word endings</li> <li>Uses knowledge of print-sound mapping to sound out unknown words</li> <li>Accurately decodes orthographically regular, multi-syllable words</li> <li>Correctly spells previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing</li> <li>Represents the complete sound of a word when spelling independently</li> <li>Uses letter-sound knowledge and structural analysis to decode and encode words</li> </ul>
2. Concepts about print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begins word by word matching</li> <li>Distinguishes capital from lower case letters</li> <li>Recognizes period, question mark and their functions</li> <li>Knows reading begins generally upper left</li> <li>Recognizes title page</li> <li>Knows the parts of a book and their functions</li> <li>Demonstrates familiarity with a number of genres of text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can locate and employ: table of contents, index, subtitles, captions</li> <li>Recognizes comma, quotes, exclamation mark and their functions</li> <li>Can locate and consider dedication, copyright date</li> <li>Uses basic capitalization and punctuation</li> <li>Demonstrates familiarity with an increasing number of genres of text</li> </ul>
3. Developing speaking, reading, writing vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses new vocabulary in own speech</li> <li>Builds a repertoire of some conventionally spelled words</li> <li>Shows awareness of distinction between “kid writing” and conventional orthography</li> <li>Recognizes own name and some of family/friends</li> <li>Begins to recognize some high frequency words in text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows evidence of expanding vocabulary in own speech</li> <li>Spells correctly three and four-letter short vowel words</li> <li>Shows spelling consciousness or sensitivity to conventional spelling</li> <li>Recognizes common irregularly spelled words by sight</li> <li>Has a reading vocabulary of 300-500 sight words and easily sounded out words by the of grade one</li> <li>Infers word meaning from taught roots, prefixes and suffixes</li> <li>Begins to incorporate literacy words in own writing (descriptive, figurative)</li> </ul>

Clusters of Accomplishments	Accomplishments Suggested by Research	
	Kindergarten Children (age 5)	Primary School Children (grades 1-3) (ages 6 to 8)
4. Developing grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses new grammatical constructions in own speech</li> <li>• Makes appropriate switches from oral to written language styles</li> <li>• Can sometimes identify when speech does not “sound right” because of poor grammar</li> <li>• Recognizes when simple text being read does not “sound like book talk” because of grammatical miscues</li> <li>• Can sometimes self-correct grammar in own speech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows evidence of increasingly appropriate use of standard, more formal language</li> <li>• Shows evidence of expanding language repertory including increasing use of more formal registers</li> <li>• Is increasingly able to identify poor grammar in speech</li> <li>• Recognizes own grammatical miscues in reading or in dialogue in text being read</li> <li>• Is able to self-correct grammar in own speech</li> <li>• Increasingly demonstrates understanding of correct grammar in writing</li> <li>• Shows sensitivity to using formal language patterns in place of oral language patterns at appropriate spots in own writing (e.g., de-contextualizing sentences, conventions for quoted speech, literary language forms, proper verb forms)</li> <li>• Begins to incorporate literacy language patterns in own writing</li> </ul>
5. Listening/ speaking/ reading/ writing for meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is able to engage in meaningful conversation with teacher and peers</li> <li>• Can tell about experiences in some detail</li> <li>• Can retell simple stories in proper sequence</li> <li>• Writes (unconventionally) to express own meaning</li> <li>• “Reads” familiar text emergently, not necessarily verbatim</li> <li>• begins to track print when listening to a familiar story being read or when rereading own writing</li> <li>• makes predictions based on illustrations or portions of stories</li> <li>• notices when simple text fails to make sense</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes transition from emergent to “real” reading</li> <li>• Reads aloud with accuracy and comprehension grade level appropriate text</li> <li>• Monitors own reading and self-corrects when miscue does not fit letters in the word or context</li> <li>• Reads and comprehends fiction and non-fiction designated for grade level</li> <li>• Reads and understands simple written directions</li> <li>• Predicts and justifies what will happen next in stories</li> <li>• Discusses prior knowledge of topics in text</li> <li>• Uses how, why and what-if questions to discuss texts</li> <li>• Distinguishes whether simple sentences are incomplete or fail to make sense; notices when grade level text fails to make sense</li> <li>• Rereads when meaning is not clear</li> <li>• Can answer simple comprehension questions based on material read</li> <li>• Can relate material read to own life and experiences</li> <li>• Begins to think critically about material read</li> <li>• Rereads own writing to affirm intended meaning</li> <li>• Uses appropriate parts of the writing process: some planning, drafting, rereading for meaning, some self-correction</li> <li>• Writes own texts for others to read</li> </ul>

Clusters of Accomplishments	Accomplishments Suggested by Research	
	Kindergarten Children (age 5)	Primary School Children (grades 1-3) (ages 6 to 8)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes reasonable judgements about what to include in written products</li> <li>• Reads non-fiction for answers to specific questions or for specific purposes</li> <li>• Connects and compares information across texts</li> <li>• Recalls facts and details of text</li> <li>• Interprets information from diagrams, charts, and graphs</li> <li>• Productively discusses ways to clarify and refine own writing and that of others</li> <li>• With assistance, adds use of conferencing, revision, and editing processes to clarify and refine own writing</li> <li>• Given organizational help, writes informative, well-structured reports</li> <li>• Produces a variety of types of compositions (e.g., stories, correspondence, persuasive pieces, reports)</li> <li>• Attends to spelling, mechanics, and presentation for final products</li> <li>• Generates who, what, when, where, why, and what-if questions to guide own reading and writing</li> <li>• Poses possible answers to who, what, when, where, why, and what-if questions</li> <li>• In interpreting non-fiction, distinguishes cause and effect, fact and opinion, main idea and supporting detail</li> <li>• Uses information and reasoning to examine bases of hypotheses and opinions</li> <li>• In interpreting fiction, discusses underlying theme or message</li> <li>• Summarizes major points from fiction and non-fiction texts</li> <li>• Can point to or clearly identify specific words or wordings that are causing comprehension difficulties</li> <li>• Combines information from sources in reports</li> </ul>
6. Speaking/reading/writing fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writes own name (first and last) and first names of some others</li> <li>• Can write most letters and some words when they are dictated</li> <li>• Can write fluently in unconventional form</li> <li>• Can read some simple text fluently after repeated rereadings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writes first draft using a combination of conventional and invented spellings</li> <li>• Has strategies for getting a first draft down as quickly as possible</li> <li>• Given time and opportunity to practice, can read grade level material fluently (with good phrasing, observation of punctuation, appropriate pace)</li> <li>• Reads aloud with fluency and comprehension any text appropriately designed for the grade level</li> </ul>

Clusters of Accomplishments	Accomplishments Suggested by Research	
	Kindergarten Children (age 5)	Primary School Children (grades 1-3) (ages 6 to 8)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reads longer fictional selections and chapter books independently</li> <li>• With some guidance, uses all aspects of the writing process in producing compositions and reports</li> <li>• Independently reviews work for spelling, mechanics and presentation</li> </ul>
7. Responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connects information and events in text to real-life and life experiences to text</li> <li>• Retells, reenacts or dramatizes stories or parts of stories</li> <li>• Can name some favorite book titles and/or authors</li> <li>• Listens attentively when read to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes new information gained from text in own words</li> <li>• Engages in a variety of literacy activities voluntarily</li> <li>• Discusses similarities in events and characters across stories</li> <li>• Takes part in creative responses to text such as dramatic presentations, oral presentations, fantasy play, etc.</li> <li>• Participates in conversations about books with teacher and peers</li> <li>• Writes in response to texts</li> <li>• Reads voluntarily for own interests and purposes</li> <li>• Presents and discusses own writing with other students and responds helpfully to other students' compositions</li> <li>• Produces a variety of written work (e.g., literature responses, "published" books, semantic maps) in a variety of formats including multimedia</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX B**

**Examples of reading and Literacy-Related Learning Experiences That Young  
Children Should be Having According to Current Research**

**Examples of Reading and Literacy-Related Learning Experiences  
That Young Children Should be Having According to Current Research**

Clusters of Reading and Literacy-Related Learning Experiences	Learning Experiences Suggested by Research for	
	Infant and Toddlers (ages birth to 3)	Pre-School Children (ages 3 to 5)
1. Phonemic awareness/phonics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in language play with children</li> <li>Read and reread stories rich with interesting sounds, rhymes, nursery rhymes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about letters by names and sounds</li> <li>Provide activities with letters and sounds in context of meaningful print and non-print activities</li> </ul>
2. Concepts about print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide appropriate books</li> <li>Model front to back, top to bottom, left to right</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model front to back, top to bottom, left to right while reading books, including Big Books, to children</li> <li>Model one-to-one matching</li> <li>Provide literacy materials that reflect varied functions</li> <li>Provide language rich play activities</li> <li>Read aloud stories rich in sounds</li> <li>Daily experiences with poems, rhyme, chant</li> </ul>
3. Developing speaking, reading, writing vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read and reread stories</li> <li>Engage children in conversations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide picture books that are wordless, have labels to encourage vocabulary development</li> <li>Provide opportunities for children to talk</li> <li>Daily read aloud of story and informational text</li> </ul>
4. Developing grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read and reread stories</li> <li>Model correct grammar in conversation with children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily read aloud of story and informational text</li> <li>Model correct grammar</li> </ul>
5. Listening/speaking/reading/writing for meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model listening, speaking, reading, and writing for meaning</li> <li>Provide opportunities for children to write in meaningful contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide picture books for strong sense of story</li> <li>Daily read aloud</li> <li>Provide informational text</li> <li>Provide opportunities for daily reading, speaking, writing</li> </ul>
6. Speaking/reading/writing fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model fluent speaking, reading, writing</li> <li>Provide opportunities for daily experimentation with spoken language, reading, writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model fluent speaking, reading, writing</li> <li>Provide daily opportunities for speaking, reading, writing</li> <li>Provide appropriate feedback</li> <li>Model/introduce letters in meaningful reading and writing activities</li> </ul>
7. Responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage children to recount experiences and describe ideas and events that are important to them</li> <li>Model responding to stories, making real-life connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Model responding to texts, making real-life connections</li> <li>Read aloud a variety of genre daily</li> </ul>

Clusters of Reading and Literacy-Related Learning Experiences	Learning Experiences Suggested by Research for	
	Kindergarten Children (age 5)	Primary School Children (grades 1-3) (ages 6 to 8)
1. Phonemic awareness/phonics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing classroom assessment to determine the needs of children for direct instruction in phonemic awareness (important because the earlier the intervention is provided for children who do need it, the better their chance for success and for children who do not need it, such instruction can set them back)</li> <li>Daily experiences with nursery rhymes, other rhyming activity, songs, chants, poems</li> <li>Daily shared rereading activity (books, morning news, language experience charts) that focuses on: listening for initial and final sounds; listening for sequence of sounds; listening for long and short words; clapping for syllables; concept of word; concept of sentence</li> <li>Instruction for writing one’s own name</li> <li>Phonemic awareness games, e.g., with blocks and Elkonin boxes to develop phoneme analysis and synthesis</li> <li>Instruction of letter names and letter sound associations in the context of shared writing activity</li> <li>Reinforcement of letter names and letter sound associations in the context of shared reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing classroom assessment to determine the needs of children for direct instruction in phonemic awareness (important because, for children who do not need it, such instruction can set them back)</li> <li>Listening games: listening to sounds, listening to sequence of sounds</li> <li>Rhyming activity: poetry, song, chants, jingles, nursery rhymes, rhyme stories, emphasizing rhyme through movement, action rhymes</li> <li>Shared reading, interactive reading, guided rereading activity: reinforcing concept of sentence; reinforcing concept of word; listening for syllables, short and long words with initial and final sounds, with phonemes (two-sound words, three-sound words, four-sound words), with consonant blends; adding sounds; removing sounds with letter-sound associations; removing letters; adding letters; swapping letters</li> <li>Instruction in spelling patterns and strategies</li> <li>Instruction in spelling of high utility irregularly spelled words</li> <li>Instruction in high utility spelling generalizations</li> <li>Instruction in sounding words</li> <li>Daily practice in context of meaningful reading and writing</li> </ul>
2. Concepts about print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher modeling, daily shared reading including Big Books and language experience charts focusing on concepts about print, e.g., front to back, top to bottom, left to right, return sweep, concept of word, concept of letter, upper case, lower case, basic punctuation, title page</li> <li>Interactive reading for children who need individual or small group attention to develop the concepts</li> <li>Shared writing, interactive writing activity focusing on the concepts about print</li> <li>Teacher modeling, think aloud, of the concepts in language experience activity</li> <li>Introduction to fiction, non-fiction, poetry, personal narrative in read aloud and shared reading and writing</li> <li>Ongoing assessment and adjusting instruction as needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher modeling, think aloud, of the concepts in daily shared reading of books, including Big Books; language experience text; other genre</li> <li>Interactive reading for children who continue to need it</li> <li>Teacher introduction of more sophisticated concepts, through explicit instruction in context, e.g., implications of changes in font and text size for reading and comprehension, punctuation ! “ ”...etc., subtitles, captions, introductory pieces, foreword, table of contents, index, appendix, footnotes</li> <li>Reinforcement of concepts taught in small group and individual reading conferences</li> <li>Reinforcement in shared reading and writing activities</li> <li>Introduction of an increasing number of genre</li> <li>Ongoing assessment and adjusting instruction as needed</li> </ul>

Clusters of Reading and Literacy-Related Learning Experiences	Learning Experiences Suggested by Research for	
	Kindergarten Children (age 5)	Primary School Children (grades 1-3) (ages 6 to 8)
3. Developing speaking, reading, writing vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily read aloud, various genre: fiction, non-fiction, poetry, magazine, newspaper</li> <li>• Daily shared reading, interactive reading</li> <li>• Listening center – books on tape</li> <li>• Conversations about books, teacher modeling and instruction re appropriate contributions</li> <li>• Word walls – rebus, alphabetized by first letter</li> <li>• Use of picture books – wordless, label books, predictable plots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily read aloud, various genre: fiction, non-fiction, poetry, magazine, newspaper, student-authored material, historical fiction, chapter books, science fiction, adventure, animal stories, series</li> <li>• Conversations about books; teacher modeling; instruction re appropriate contributions; teacher-student generated checklists, rubrics</li> <li>• Literature Circles</li> <li>• Word walls – categorized, alphabetized</li> <li>• Listening center – books on tape</li> <li>• Use of picture books to develop vocabulary through individual and cooperative telling of the story, writing captions for the pictures, writing dialogue</li> <li>• Individual word banks</li> <li>• Introductions of key words in shared reading and guided reading</li> <li>• Daily opportunity for independent reading, identifying words for investigation</li> <li>• Writing lessons focusing on revision – adding, subtracting vocabulary</li> <li>• Sharing own writing for response; providing feedback to peers</li> </ul>
4. Developing grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily read aloud of various genre – models for grammar and language</li> <li>• Teacher modeling of correct grammar and language in speech and writing</li> <li>• Attention to grammar and language in shared reading and writing activity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily read aloud of increasing numbers of genre as models</li> <li>• Teacher modeling in speech and writing</li> <li>• Explicit instruction on syntax in the context of meaningful literacy activities</li> <li>• Focused lessons on verb tense in reading and writing</li> <li>• Writing lessons on sentence expansion and sentence reduction</li> <li>• Focused lessons on varied sentence structure in the revision element of writing process</li> <li>• Reinforcement of grammar and other language lessons in shared reading and writing, individual and small group reading and writing conferences</li> <li>• Focus on syntax cues in guided reading lessons</li> <li>• Sentence building activities with word strips</li> </ul>
5. Listening/ speaking/ reading/ writing for meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily read aloud, discussion of some selections</li> <li>• Daily shared reading – Big Books, language experience materials</li> <li>• Interactive reading for students who need individual and/or small group attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of some read aloud selections</li> <li>• Shared reading activities: whole group, small group, literature circles</li> <li>• Daily guided reading groups (instructional level materials)</li> </ul>



Clusters of Reading and Literacy-Related Learning Experiences	Learning Experiences Suggested by Research for	
	Kindergarten Children (age 5)	Primary School Children (grades 1-3) (ages 6 to 8)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small group guided reading</li> <li>• Daily opportunity for children to explore books independently</li> <li>• Daily modeled writing: morning news, language experience, focused lessons</li> <li>• Daily shared writing (large group/whole class)</li> <li>• Daily interactive writing for students who need more individual and/or small group attention</li> <li>• Focused lessons on purpose in writing</li> <li>• Journal writing</li> <li>• Writing class books</li> <li>• Daily opportunities for students to talk with partners, in small groups; regular opportunities to talk one-to-one with teacher, to the class</li> <li>• Ongoing assessment to inform instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit instruction and guided practice in such comprehension strategies as: Think-Pair-Share, K-W-L, QAR, Reciprocal Teaching; and skills such as: predicting outcomes and events, summarizing, drawing conclusions, making inferences, monitoring understanding</li> <li>• Explicit instruction and guided practice in the use of various graphic organizers, e.g., story map, character map, Venn diagram, Somebody wanted-but-so, Herringbone, T chart, matrix; and application – having students design graphic organizers</li> <li>• Daily opportunities for students to talk with partners and in small groups and regularly to talk one-on-one with the teacher and in front of class</li> <li>• Daily writing – journals, logs, stories, reports, poetry, plays, personal narrative, persuasion – with teacher and peer conferences, revision and editing (support as needed), opportunities to share/publish</li> <li>• Ongoing assessment to inform instruction</li> </ul>
6. Speaking/reading/writing fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily opportunities to speak with others – partners, in small groups, and regularly with the teacher and in front of a group</li> <li>• Explicit instruction for telling (about experiences, events, feelings, things) and for retelling of stories heard and read</li> <li>• Guidelines for speaking and regular feedback</li> <li>• Instruction on letter names, construction and letter sound associations with ample guided practice for automaticity</li> <li>• Daily practice identifying and constructing letters in various media/modes: clay, playdough, sand, chalkboard, magnetic letters, movement</li> <li>• Instruction, as needed, and practice in writing own name, a few high utility words, to automaticity</li> <li>• Rereading of read alouds, fiction, non-fiction, language experience</li> <li>• Shared reading of familiar chants, rhymes, jingles, songs, nursery rhymes and simple stories</li> <li>• Opportunities for students to “reread” texts introduced in read aloud, shared reading, interactive reading and guided reading during independent reading time and in centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily opportunities to speak with others – partners, in small groups, and regularly with the teacher and in front of a group</li> <li>• Group discussions and oral presentations: guidelines generated by the class, teacher facilitated; assessment tools, e.g., checklist, rubric, based on the guidelines; self assessment</li> <li>• Frequent opportunities for freewrite (uncorrected, ungraded)</li> <li>• Explicit instruction in strategies for prewriting and (first) drafts – including use of listing, drawing, charting, invented spelling as necessary, arrows, cross-outs</li> <li>• Instruction on spelling patterns, adding letters, deleting letters, substituting letters; practice to automaticity – whole group, small group, and/or individual as needed</li> <li>• Instruction in high utility key vocabulary for reading and writing; practice to automaticity – whole group, small group, or individual as needed</li> <li>• Daily opportunity for independent reading of comfort level texts</li> <li>• Opportunities to read aloud to someone text that has been reread for fluency – partner, older student, volunteer, or take-home books</li> </ul>

Clusters of Reading and Literacy-Related Learning Experiences	Learning Experiences Suggested by Research for	
	Kindergarten Children (age 5)	Primary School Children (grades 1-3) (ages 6 to 8)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily opportunities to write in journals and/or blank books and in shared or interactive writing time</li> <li>• Ongoing assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily small group guided reading instruction in appropriately leveled texts</li> <li>• Motivational strategies for practicing reading to fluency, e.g., plays, audio taping, Readers Theatre, reading to younger students, etc.</li> <li>• Ongoing classroom assessment to inform instruction</li> </ul>
7. Responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking about books: read aloud, shared reading, interactive reading, SSR/DEAR</li> <li>• Shared writing of texts based on originals – favorites from read aloud or shared reading/interactive reading</li> <li>• Drawing in response to text</li> <li>• Retelling by drawing, e.g., trifold for beginning-middle-end</li> <li>• Story Theatre – students acting out, directing plays based on their own oral compositions</li> <li>• Dramatizing stories</li> <li>• Art creations in response to story or non-fiction, e.g., puppets, posters, murals</li> <li>• Oral retellings – to the teacher, to the class, to small groups, to a tape recorder</li> <li>• Ongoing assessments based on ways teachers want students to respond, lists of criteria generated with the students, rubrics or checklists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking about books – with partners, in small groups, whole class (models provided by teacher, generated in class, to focus the conversations)</li> <li>• Sharing information about books through a variety of ways, sometimes student option: oral retelling; book report, summary; composing sequels; book blabs; rewriting endings; rewriting from a different point of view; etc. (teachers adding to the menu of options by introducing, modeling, instructing, and providing feedback)</li> <li>• Dramatizing stories, Readers Theatre (assessing based on criteria generated by the class)</li> <li>• Responding to books via music and/or art (criteria for competency established by the class)</li> <li>• Criterion for teachers: does the response activity enhance the comprehension and/or appreciation of the text?</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX C**

**Pennsylvania Context: Policies and Programs Consistent With and Supportive of  
The Purposes of the Reading Excellence Act**

### **III. Pennsylvania Context: Policies and Programs Consistent with and Supportive of the Purposes of the Reading Excellence Act**

In order to provide a context for this application, this section highlights some of the Pennsylvania policies and programs that are in place or are being developed that are supportive of the purposes of the Reading Excellence Act.

#### **Adoption of Pennsylvania academic standards**

##### **in reading, writing, speaking, and listening**

After more than three years of work, Pennsylvania made part of Chapter 4 of the state regulations academic standards in reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and in mathematics, and established a schedule by which it plans to adopt state standards for the other academic content areas.

The Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening standards are organized under the following topics: (1) learning to read independently, (2) reading critically in all of the content areas, (3) reading, analyzing and interpreting literature, (4) types of writing, (5) quality of writing, (6) speaking and listening, (7) characteristics and functions of the English language, and (8) research.

#### **Alignment of the Pennsylvania reading assessment to the reading standards**

Along with its adoption of academic standards, Pennsylvania adopted rules and regulations aimed at bringing the State assessment system in alignment with the academic standards. Particularly pertinent to this application are the following rules and regulations:

The State assessment system shall be designed to serve the following purposes:

- (1) Provide students, parents, educators and citizens with an understanding of student and school performance.
- (2) Determine the degree to which school programs enable students to attain proficiency of academic standards...
- (3) Provide results to school districts...for consideration in the development of strategic plans...

- (4) Provide information to State policymakers including the General Assembly and the Board on how effective schools are in promoting and demonstrating student proficiency of academic standards.
- (5) Provide information to the general public on school performance.
- (6) Provide results to school districts...for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and for those without an IEP. [4.51.(a)]

All State assessment instruments will be standards-based and criterion-referenced and include essay or open-ended response items in addition to other item formats...The criteria for judging performance on State assessments are as follows: Performance on the State reading assessment shall be demonstrated by student responses to comprehension questions about age-appropriate reading passages and by their written responses to in-depth comprehension questions about the passages. [451(b)]

**Pennsylvania's Title I effort to improve the assessments schools were using to document student progress toward achieving reading, writing, speaking, and listening standards**

In a parallel effort to the state's development of academic standards, the Pennsylvania Department of Education supported the following three activities to improve the assessments that LEAs and schools were using to document student progress in relation to reading, writing, speaking, and listening standards.

- Early Childhood Assessment Task Force. For the past three years, the Department has supported the work of a task force composed of leaders in the fields of reading and language arts from schools, LEAs, institutions of higher education, and the Department to: (a) review developments in the assessments used in those fields with young children from pre-school to grade 4, (b) develop a framework and a collection of sample instruments that LEAs and school could use to develop a local program for assessing student progress toward achieving the state standards, (c) disseminate that collection to all LEAs and schools, and (d) present sessions at the Annual Assessment Congress and at other Pennsylvania conferences aimed at helping local educators to benefit from its work.

- Intermediate Grades Assessment Task Force. In the summer of 1998, the Department initiated a similar task force. This one is focusing on assessments that could be used in grades 4 through 8 to document student progress toward meeting the state standards in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
- An Annual Pennsylvania/Title I Assessment Congress. Over the last four years, the Department and the Pennsylvania Association of Federal Program Coordinators has sponsored an annual conference on assessment. More than 500 Pennsylvania educators attend the conference to learn about: (a) schools' and districts' experiences in implementing specific assessments in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics, (b) assessment programs that LEAs have implemented to document student progress, and (c) changes in the state's assessment program and strategies for helping students to learn the knowledge and skills assessed by the state assessments. The Region III Comprehensive Center has helped the Department develop the program for the Congress. Each year, the program has been composed of more than 35 sessions.

### **Proposed development of a Pennsylvania third grade reading assessment**

The Governor has proposed to the State Legislature that funds be appropriated for the development of a state reading assessment that would be administered toward the end of the third grade. This proposal is supportive of the proposed Read to Succeed initiative (see page 96), which aims to strengthen the reading program of the primary grades in ways that significantly increase the number of students who are becoming proficient readers of third grade texts.

If funds are appropriated (and they are expected to be), development work will be initiated this summer, an assessment will be piloted and calibrated in the spring of 2001, and the assessment will be administered statewide in the spring of 2002. This schedule presents the possibility of using that assessment as one indicator of the achievement of students in schools involved in the Reading Excellence program.

**Pennsylvania's requirement that LEAs develop and implement strategic plans for implementing standards-based reform (Chapter 4)**

Along with its adoption of academic standards and rules and regulations for an aligned assessment system, Pennsylvania adopted rules and regulations that require every district to develop and file with the Department a strategic plan once every six years.

Relevant to this application is the requirement [4.13.(c)] that the plan shall include such components as:

- A listing of the school district's...goals as they relate to student achievement and high school graduation requirements. [4.13.(c)(2)]
- A description of academic standards for student achievement which shall be consistent with those (adopted by the State). [4.13.(c)(3)]
- The planned instruction to be offered and the instructional and assessment practices to be used to strive for the academic goals and attain academic standards...and the high school graduation
- An assessment plan...designed to determine the degree to which students are achieving academic standards...including descriptions of methods and measures used to determine achievement, how information from the assessments shall be used to assist students who have not demonstrated attainment of the academic standards at a proficient level or higher and how information from the assessments shall be made available to the public. [4.13.(c)(5)]
- A plan for improving student achievement, including specific measurable goals for student growth and plans...that are designed to attain student achievement goals... [4.13.(c)(6)]
- The professional development plan... [4.13.(c)(7)]
- A plan for additional instructional opportunities for students not achieving at the proficient level including identification procedures, alternative instructional strategies, monitoring of assessment procedures and opportunities for extended learning time. [4.13.(c)(11)]

The regulations also make clear that: “Strategic plans shall be developed through active participation by parents, students, school directors, teachers, school administrators, other school personnel, business, and community representatives...” [4.13.(d)]

In addition, there is a regulation that states: “Beginning in the 2001-2002 school year, students who have not achieved proficiency in reading and mathematics in their primary grades (K-3), as determined by the local school district...shall be afforded additional instructional opportunities through a grade-level learning plan developed by the school district... The plan will assist the student in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve at the proficient level...” [4.21.(j)]

### **Pennsylvania Standards Project**

In the fall of 1997, the Pennsylvania Department of Education used federal resources to initiate the Pennsylvania Standards project. That project is a collaborative effort on the part of the Pennsylvania Intermediate Units to make presentations to educators and community members across the state that explain the standards reform movement, present the initial set of academic standards approved by the State Board, and discuss the implications of the reform for local action.

With the adoption of Chapter 4, the project is providing training for educators on how to implement a standards-based educational program. To support this effort, the Intermediate Units have developed training modules that help local educators with the tasks of aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment to academic standards.

To date, the Standards Project has communicated its message to over 15,000 educators and community members.

### **Pennsylvania Governor’s Institutes and Academies for Educators**

Pennsylvania is interested in creating challenging learning environments that will promote success for all students. A series of ten Institutes and Academies have been designed to promote continued professional development among educators by providing intellectually challenging programs that will improve their classroom instruction and their students’ learning.



The professional development programs will be rich in opportunities to strengthen subject area knowledge and will provide experiences that will help teachers link the PA Academic Standards with curriculum, instruction and assessment. Methods for integrating technology into the curriculum as an instructional tool will be included in the programs.

Three Institutes and one Urban Academy will target literacy. School teams who attend the Early Childhood Institute will use the reading and writing standards as the basis for early literacy learning and strategies for improving reading instruction for children in the primary grades. Two reading institutes will focus on the improvement of teachers' knowledge of how children learn to read and increase their ability to use effective strategies for assisting the students who are not progressing toward the proficient level of achievement of the PA Academic Standards in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. An additional theme will be the inclusion of all types of learners—Title I, Special Education, development of literacy skills. At the Urban Academy for Reading Educators, teachers will learn that research-based reading strategies can be effective in teaching students to read regardless of the students' environment.

### **Pennsylvania Family Literacy Program**

In 1998, Pennsylvania initiated its own Family Literacy Program. Its purpose is to increase the basic academic and literacy skills of eligible parents and their children, so as to break the intergeneration cycle of under-education and poverty. The Pennsylvania program, like Even Start, emphasizes an integrated approach to serving families with the following four components: (1) direct adult education services for parents in the context of work and family; (2) literacy-focused direct early childhood education; (3) parent involvement in their children's education, including reading instruction, parent group for life skills education, peer support and management of family responsibilities related to work and school; and (4) regular parent and child "together time" which includes reading activities.

The Pennsylvania Family Literacy Program currently consists of 48 programs (24 Even Start and 24 State Act 143 Adult Literacy) administered by 39 local educational agencies or community-based organizations, operating within the attendance areas of 103 LEAs in 36 counties.

**Pennsylvania *Read to Succeed* Initiative**

Governor Ridge has proposed a \$100 million four-year innovative program to ensure that all students in Pennsylvania will learn to read no later than the end of the third grade. The program will enable school districts and charter schools to (1) develop an ongoing assessment plan that will monitor student progress toward the proficient level of achievement on the PA Academic Standards in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and (2) provide extended learning opportunities for students who are not progressing toward the third grade Academic Standards. For every two RTS dollars, the school or charter school must match one dollar.

The program components will include, but not be limited to the following.

- review of the current reading program and identification of students not learning to read
- methods of ongoing assessment for planning the next level of instruction and monitoring student progress
- rationale for the selection of a specific research-based intervention or program
- changes in current practice that will result from the program
- measurable goals and objectives of the program modifications or new interventions
- strategies that teachers and parents will use to increase the students' literacy knowledge and skills
- plan for ongoing intensive professional development for school staff, preschool staff and daycare providers
- opportunities for extended learning time through extended day, after school, Saturday, weekends and extended year programs
- plan for improved parent literacy skills and increased parent involvement in providing the literacy experiences and practices needed to ensure that students will learn to read and comprehend
- coordination with community-based organizations, libraries, head start and even start programs to provide literacy activities that will improve the students' readiness and success in learning to read

- long-range planning that shows how the school district will assume full responsibility for the program at the conclusion of the grant.

The Read to Succeed program will combine the efforts of the state and the school district, parents and caregivers, family literacy groups and other community-based organizations in implementing research-based literacy programs for preschool through grade 3 students and their families. The program will target the schools and the students who have the greatest need for early literacy interventions and intensive reading instruction after entering school.

### **Pennsylvania/Title I Big Cities Consortium**

Since the summer of 1996, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has supported the Big Cities Consortium Project. The Consortium is composed of the 18 urban school districts located in Pennsylvania. This project supports collaborative improvement efforts of the members of the Consortium. The Consortium has organized its collaborative activities around the following challenges: how to improve student reading achievement, how to improve student mathematics achievement, how best to address student diversity in classrooms and school, how to improve the assessments that are used to document student progress and staff use of the data from those assessments to guide school improvement efforts, and how to integrate computer technology into the school program that it contributed to student learning.

A number of Big Cities Consortium members are eligible to participate in the Reading Excellence program. Their work over the past three years on improving reading achievement provides a useful foundation for some of the strategies that make up the Reading Excellence program.

### **State Parent Advisory Committee**

The State Parent Advisory Committee provides information and make presentations to the staffs of Title I LEAs and schools regarding strategies for building school-parent partnerships aimed at fostering student learning and achievement. In addition, it plans and conducts an annual conference for Title I parents on federal programs, the role that parents can play in helping their children succeed in school, and the role they can play in improving the effectiveness of their school's program. Annually, the

Advisory Committee manages a competitive mini-grant program that awards \$500 grants to schools that propose innovative parent involvement activities.