Arizona's Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant Application

CDFA 84.371C

June 2020

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I.   Need for Project

Introduction

Arizona is committed to supporting and improving the literacy skills of all of our children, as evidenced by the Consolidated State ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) Plan (2017) of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE). *[See Appendix A.]* Arizona's proposal for the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) Grant CFDA 84.371C further illustrates our commitment to providing a comprehensive and systemic approach to advancing literacy skills among disadvantaged children from birth through grade 12, including children living in poverty, English learners, children with disabilities, and those belonging to a subgroup that is otherwise underrepresented, (i.e., Native American, students reading well-below grade level).

Arizona has not had an active discretionary federal grant award under the CLSD or Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant programs in the last five years. *[Competitive Preference Priority 1: Applications from New Potential Grantees]* In 2010, ADE received formula funding to develop Arizona's first State Literacy Instruction Plan, but Arizona has subsequently relied on state funding for implementation. Despite slow but steady gains in overall student achievement in recent years—for example, the passing rate for all students on Arizona's English Language Arts assessment has increased from 34% in 2015 to 42% in 2019—progress has not been sufficient to close achievement gaps for disadvantaged children; the passing rate among low-income students in 2019 was 30%.

With intentional coordination and collaboration between and among early learning programs (ELP), local education agencies (LEA), and education community consortiums (ECC), Arizona's CLSD project will implement targeted, evidence-based strategies to produce measurable gains in literacy outcomes for Arizona's most vulnerable children.

Needs Assessment

Arizona's CLSD project is informed by a comprehensive state needs assessment and data analysis by Arizona's Literacy Leadership Team—including ADE, First Things First (FTF), Arizona's early childhood agency, and Read On Arizona (ROA), our state's early literacy Campaign for Grade-Level Reading initiative—to identify gaps in early literacy proficiency, strategic opportunities for improvement, and areas with the highest need.

Arizona serves 1,110,851 students in 2,887 K-12 school settings with 47,867 full-time teachers across the state. More than half of Arizona's students (50.4%) are identified as being of low socioeconomic status; 11.8% as students with disabilities; 7.9% as English language learners; and 4.5% as Native American.

Arizona's literacy challenges go hand-in-hand with the significant impact poverty has on our state's children. Currently, 50% of Arizona's children live below 200% of the federally-defined poverty level (up from 46% in 2009). Arizona also ranks high among states with children living in concentrated poverty (defined as census tracts with 30% of poverty or more): Arizona has the highest percentage of rural children living in concentrated poverty (39% vs. 11% nationally); Arizona is home to more than a quarter of the nation's Native American children living in high-poverty areas (56,000 children, or 28% of the national total); and 30% of Latino children in Arizona are living in concentrated poverty. Data shows that the negative impact of poverty on our children's developing literacy begins in the early childhood years and continues through high school. A 2015 research project conducted by Read on Arizona with Arizona State University identified poverty as one of three factors with a statistically-significant impact on third-grade reading outcomes for Arizona students. (The others were daily attendance and chronic absenteeism, both connected to issues stemming from poverty, such as transportation and health.)

Arizona's most-disadvantaged children do not have equitable access to critical opportunities along the education continuum. Arizona is home to 546,609 young children (ages 0-5), and there are notably fewer 3- and 4-year old children in Arizona enrolled in preschool (40%) than nationwide (48%). And only 22% of our 3- and 4-year-olds in preschool have access to a high-quality early learning setting. According to the 2019 National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) Report, Arizona was found to meet just 3 of the 10 quality indicators for early childhood education. Digging deeper into early childhood data, a recent (Fall 2019) Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG) sampling indicates a significant percentage of Arizona's young children are not meeting widely-held expectations for the key skills necessary for reading readiness: 65% of 4-year-olds did not achieve expectations in Language, and 70% of 4-year-olds did not meet expectations in Literacy.

Significant literacy gaps continue up the age continuum. Figure 1 shows the high percentage of Arizona K-2 students who are at risk in their literacy development: over 40% of kindergarten students were found to be at risk, and almost 30% in both first and second grade, demonstrating the critical need to strengthen K-2 literacy instruction across the state to address these gaps in early literacy.

*Fig. 1: Arizona K-2 Literacy Benchmark Data, Fall 2019 (ADE)*
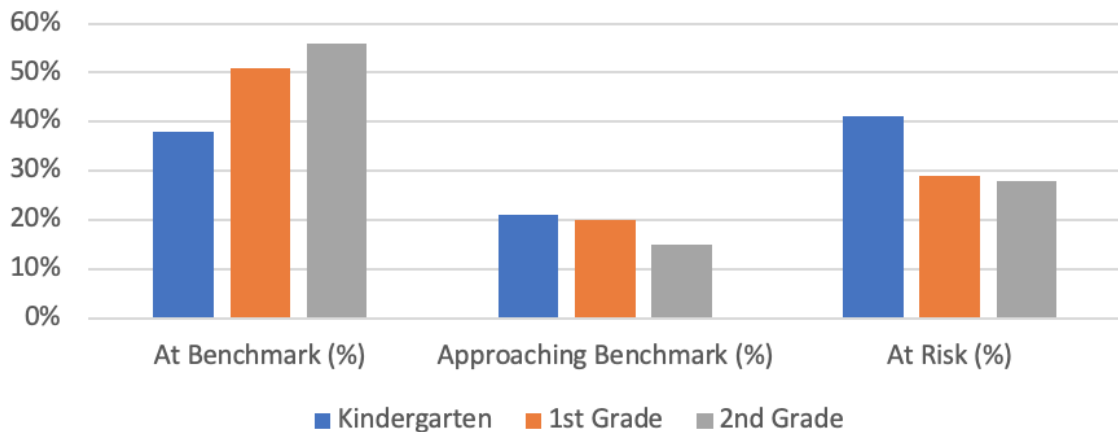
Arizona's annual statewide English Language Arts assessment, AzM2, is another measure of the dramatic need to improve literacy outcomes. Aggregating the performance of all students across grades 3-12, the majority (58%) scored below proficiency, with most (39%) falling in minimally-proficient, the lowest category on the assessment. For Arizona's 168 Qualified Opportunity Zones (QOZ), which encompass 302 LEAS and 236 ECE sites, the divide is even more stark; in 141of these LEAS, a majority of their students (50% or more; all students all grades) scored minimally proficient. *[Priority 2: Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones]* Scores among key subgroups reveal a significant achievement gap among children living in poverty, English learners, American Indians, and children with disabilities. Although proficiency among all Arizona students has increased from 34% in 2015 to 42% in 2019, gaps in literacy achievement among high-need subgroups have not changed significantly. Figure 2 below shows the percentage of students passing the AzM2 English Language Arts assessment by subgroup and the persistent gap between subgroups and all students. And as shown in Figure 3, the majority of students in each disadvantaged student subgroup scored minimally proficient.

Fig. 2: Percent Passing AzM2 English Language Arts, All Grades, 2015-2019 (ADE)

AzM2 English Language Arts	2015	2019
All Students	34%	42%
Income Eligibility 1 and 2*	23%	30%
American Indian/Alaska Native	13%	20%
Student with Disabilities	11%	13%
Limited English Proficient	2%	5%

*(NOTE: *ADE identifies students as disadvantaged according to their income eligibility for free-and-reduced lunch [FRL].)*
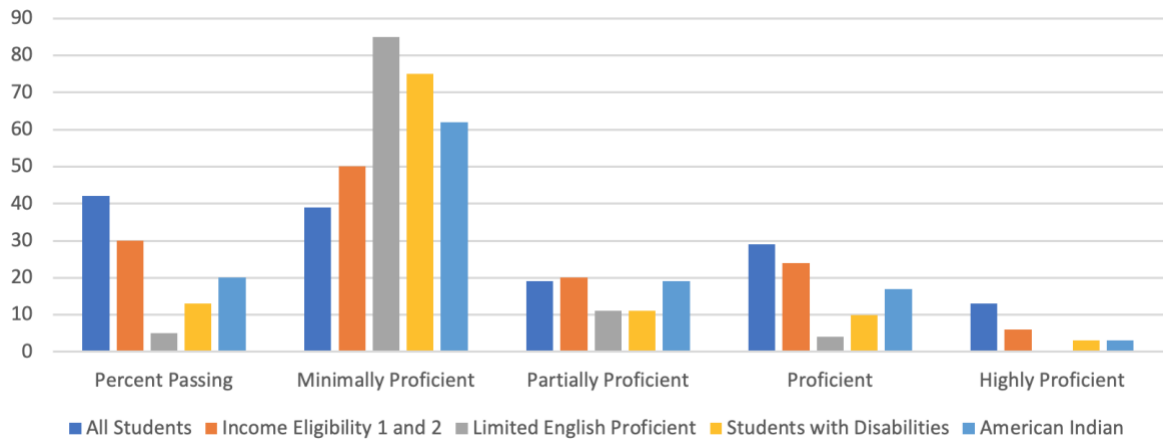
Arizona ranks in the lower third among states on the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) and is below the national average in reading for both fourth and eighth grades. In 2019, 39% of Arizona fourth graders and 30% of eighth graders fell below basic reading levels on NAEP. As with our statewide assessment, Arizona has made incremental gains in NAEP scores over the last several years, but with significant disparities between disadvantaged students: a 29-point gap between FRL vs. Non-FRL in fourth grade scores and a 24-point gap in eighth grade.

One source of these longstanding, systemic disparities among disadvantaged children in Arizona is the lack of equitable access to highly-effective schools and teachers with knowledge and experience in the Science of Reading—reading instruction that is grounded in the converging scientific evidence about how reading develops, why many students have difficulties, and how we can prevent reading failure.

Figure 4 shows a disparity in the experience of teachers and school leaders between Title I schools (with large concentrations of low-income students) vs Non-Title I schools, while also highlighting that, overall, 1 in 5 Arizona teachers and school leaders are inexperienced. Out of the approximately 85,462 teachers across all age bands in Arizona, less than 50% of certified teachers are in Title I schools and only 34% of those educators with a reading endorsement can be found at

a Title I school. This problem is exacerbated by a persistent teacher shortage in Arizona, leaving roughly 1,800 public school classrooms without a permanent teacher. This means substitutes, student teachers and teachers with emergency certificates who are filling the void have less experience teaching reading and student access to an effective, experienced teacher is limited.

Fig. 4: Arizona K-12 Teacher Experience (Title I vs. Non-Title I), 2019 (ADE)

Core Academic Teachers, Principals and School Leaders	Non-Title I Schools	Title I Schools	All Schools
Experienced (≥ 3 years in position)	82%	78%	79%
Inexperienced (< 3 years in position)	18%	22%	21%

The majority of Arizona's youngest children also lack access to early childhood educators with sufficient training or preparation to effectively foster early literacy development, particularly among disadvantaged children living in high-need areas where the availability of high-quality early learning programs is limited. The qualifications of early childhood teachers vary widely, despite the scientific evidence linking early childhood language and literacy development to later academic success. A 2015 report from the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine stressed that lead educators working with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers require equivalent knowledge and specialized competencies as those working in early elementary grades. The Arizona Early Childhood Professional Development Network and Workforce Registry—a centralized location that connects early childhood practitioners and others interested in the field with information and resources to advance their careers—currently includes 5,702 teachers, assistant teachers, and family child care providers who have submitted their educational diploma/transcript/credential. Of those, only 45% (2,582) have a credential, certificate, or degree including credits in early childhood education, and another 55% (3,120) have a high school

diploma only. One thing is clear, Arizona's early childhood professionals lack specific training in effective, evidence-based approaches to fostering language and literacy development.

Project Needs

The needs assessment data underscore the impact of the challenges facing Arizona's disadvantaged children and our need for targeted, strategic, evidence-based approaches to advance the literacy skills of our state's children living in poverty, English learners, students with disabilities, and other underrepresented subgroups. Arizona has the leadership, collaboration, and commitment to improve literacy outcomes—resulting in incremental progress for all students— but there is more to be done. Arizona struggles to adequately and consistently fund K-12 education and early learning programs which makes collaborative efforts critical to achievement.

The current COVID-19 crisis has drawn even more attention to the needs and deficiencies in Arizona. A survey of Arizona school superintendents at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis revealed that as many as 20% of urban households and 40% of rural households with school-aged children did not have internet access, thus unable to participate in distance learning opportunities afforded by schools. Educators across the state will need more training and coaching supports in order to prepare for the learning loss students are currently experiencing.

Arizona's CLSD project will target our most disadvantaged children in our highest-need schools and early care and education settings in underserved areas of our state to accelerate literacy outcomes by:

1. **Building the capacity of Arizona schools and systems serving the highest percentage of disadvantaged students to accelerate improvement in English Language Arts outcomes, particularly targeting schools and early childhood education sites in high-need areas.**

2. **Ensuring disadvantaged students have equitable access to highly-effective teachers and early care and education providers trained in the Science of Reading.**

3. **Expanding Arizona's capacity and infrastructure to implement high-quality, evidence-based practices and strategies to support struggling readers**.

II. Project Design

Arizona recognizes that improving language and literacy outcomes will involve a comprehensive statewide approach inclusive of cross-agency and cross-sector partnerships. Arizona's approach is grounded within the Implementation Science Framework, which will be utilized throughout the course of the grant period. Based in research, this approach will provide a guiding framework for early learning providers and schools while simultaneously allowing them the autonomy to use program data to evaluate current practices, identify gaps, determine capacity to engage in the intervention/initiative, and to develop sustainable strategies specific to their unique needs. *[See Appendix B, Implementation Science Stages and Drivers Matrix.]*

Implementation Science refers to the "methods or techniques used to enhance the adoption, implementation, and sustainability" of an intervention. Often what is adopted in early learning, school, district or community programs are not fully realized because the necessary supports for success are not put into place. Therefore, fidelity to an effective practice can be difficult to achieve. The Arizona CLSD project uses Implementation Science to adopt an active implementation formula designed to result in improved outcomes. The active implementation formula states that *Effective Practices x Effective Implementation x Enabling Contexts = Improved Outcomes*. In order to have improved outcomes, all three components must be present. Arizona will leverage this framework to help identify what activities and evidence-based interventions (the practice) will result in improved literacy outcomes for children, as well as, address the necessary supports to

ensure fidelity of implementation. ADE staff will guide local grantee partners through a process of Implementation Science that begins with table-setting sessions including analysis and synthesis of needs assessment data in Year 1. In Years 2-5, program teams will identify strategies and move toward implementation of research-based strategies. More detail is illustrated below in Figure 5.

Fig. 5: Arizona Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant Logic Model
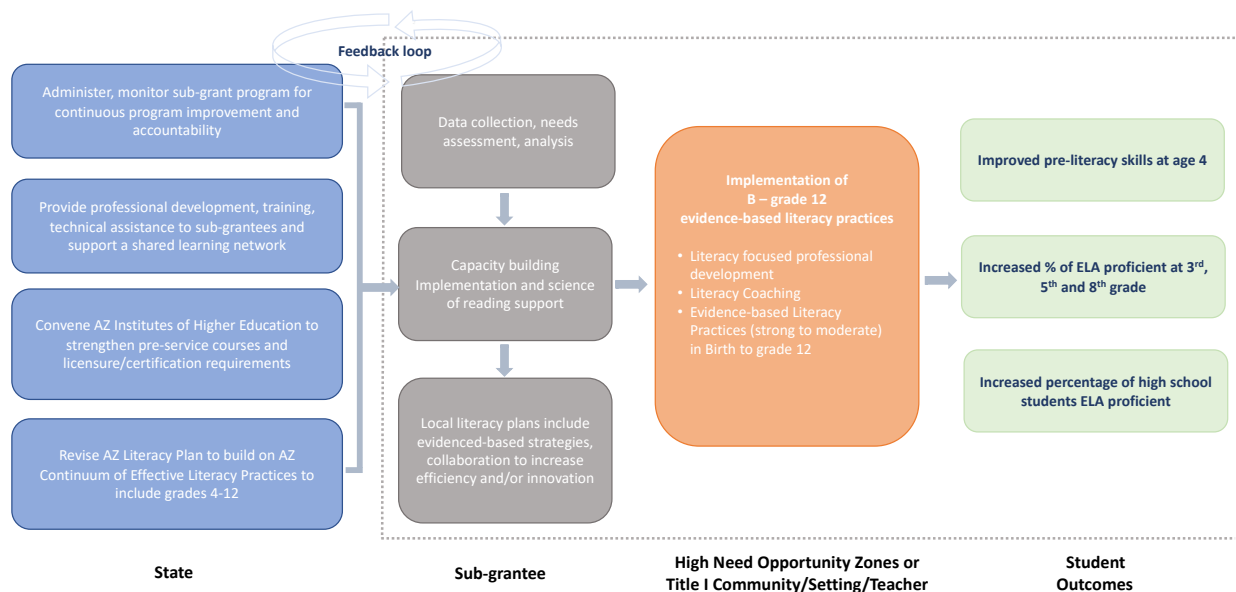
Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes

Driven by data analysis of the state needs assessment, trends relative to language and literacy, and a thorough review of relevant research, Arizona's State Literacy Leadership Team has designed Arizona's CLSD project to address gaps and weaknesses in Arizona's literacy system. CLSD subgrantees will implement high-quality professional development and coaching supports and other evidence-based practices to improve outcomes for our most disadvantaged children from birth to grade 12. To build capacity in educators, caregivers, and practitioners to support, improve, and sustain effective teaching and literacy practices, Arizona has established the following goals, objectives, and related outcomes:

Project Goal 1: Build the knowledge, skills, and capacity of early learning programs and school leadership to serve struggling and emerging readers more effectively in schools and systems with the highest percentage of disadvantaged students in the state to accelerate their literacy outcomes.

Goal 1 Objectives:

1. ADE, with support from system partners, will collaboratively determine and competitively award an estimated 15-25 subgrants with priority given for targeting high-need schools and early childhood education sites: Title I schools, free-and-reduced lunch ECE settings, and LEAs within Qualified Opportunity Zones. *[Priority 2: Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones] [See Appendix C, Opportunity Zones by Census Tract.]* ADE and collaborative partners will provide ongoing, high-quality, intensive options for literacy professional development, coaching support, and funding for strong-to-moderate evidence-based strategies birth through grade 12.

Goal 1 Measurable Outcomes:

Increase the percentage of:

1. Participating 4-year-old children who are meeting widely-held expectations in oral language and emerging literacy skills;

2. Participating K-3 grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on LEA K-3 benchmark literacy assessments;

3. Participating fifth-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on state reading/language arts assessments;

4. Participating eighth grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on state reading/language arts assessments; and,

5. Participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on state reading/language arts assessments.

Measurement Tools: ADE will use a battery of tools to document improvements, including the state-approved preschool assessment (currently Teaching Strategies Gold), LEA Spring K-3 benchmark assessments, the state-approved English Language Arts assessment tools for fifth and eighth grades (currently AzM2), and the state English Language Arts assessments at the high school level.

Project Goal 2: Increase the number of disadvantaged students who have access to high-quality instructional staff trained in the Science of Reading.

Goal 2 Objectives:

1. Increase the number of birth through grade 12 teachers and administrators participating in professional development and intentional coaching supports that ensure teachers understand the Science of Reading and have the skills necessary to implement evidence-based practices to meet the needs of all learners in their classrooms and schools.

2. Increase the availability of high-quality, evidence-based professional development and coaching support relating to language and literacy development for birth through grade 12 educators, administrators, and collaborative partners.

3. Increase the quality evidence-based language and literacy pre-service courses and certification related to literacy development and instruction birth through grade 12 by convening/collaborating with Arizona Institutes of Higher Education and system partners.

Goal 2 Measurable Outcomes:

1. An increase of 25% in the number of participating practitioners within the identified subgrantees that are trained and implementing strategies based in the Science of Reading.

2. A completed menu of evidence-based professional development training options available to instructional staff in the science of reading.

3. An increase in the number of Institutes of Higher Education with Science of Reading objectives included in course descriptions that are shared with the state certification unit.

Measurement Tools: ADE will use a battery of measurement tools for this goal that may include subscales of the Early Childhood Environmental Ratings System-Revised (ECERS-R), practice profiles, pre/post survey and coaching data.

Project Goal 3: Increase state capacity and infrastructure to implement high-quality, evidence-based practices and strategies to support struggling readers.

Goal 3 Objectives:

1. Strengthen and leverage existing community collaboration focused on literacy to improve alignment, coordination, data-driven and evidence-based practices, efficiency, and innovation to produce better literacy outcomes in and out of classroom settings. *[Priority 3: Promoting Innovation and Efficiency]* This includes the ongoing review, understanding, and application of data, literacy program design evaluation, and strengthening community collaboration to support local literacy plans. Subgrantees at all levels will increase the use of actionable data. Based on data, subgrantees will identify strong and moderate evidence-based literacy programs that will support child outcomes in local communities.

2. Build a Shared Learning Exchange throughout the grant cycle. *[Priority 3: Promoting Innovation and Efficiency; Invitational Priority: Leveraging Education Resources]* Through reflection, feedback, and assessment of professional learning, professionals can identify local needs that will accelerate learning outcomes and prevent and close learning gaps.

3. Early learning programs participating in the CLSD grant will create a codified transition plan for the age/grade bands identified to serve that includes feeder schools and receiving schools with an emphasis on ensuring continuity of services, supports, and programming. This will result in local data sharing plans to ensure the opportunity for longitudinal data analysis.

4. Increase the capacity of practitioners in the field to implement comprehensive literacy instruction components by accessing evidence-based instructional practices on Arizona partner website(s), including the Arizona Department of Education.

5. Convene the State Literacy Leadership Team to update the Arizona's Literacy Instruction Plan. *[CLSD Requirement: State Literacy Instruction Plan; See Appendix D.]* The team will utilize the high-quality relevant literature review *[CLSD Requirement: High-Quality Literature Review; See Appendix E]* and build on Arizona's *Continuum of Effective Literacy Practices: Birth-Third Grade* publication to include grades 4-12. *[See Appendix F.]*

Goal 3 Measurable Outcomes: These objectives will result in multiple artifacts including an update to Arizona's Literacy Instruction Plan. The SEA will document formal agreements, transition plans, and evidence of improved literacy practices as appropriate for this goal. Success of this goal will be measured based on the completion of artifacts.

These goals, objectives, and outcomes align with, and extend from, the required CLSD Government Performance and Results Act (GRPA) measures. Because the baseline scores are unknown until the cohort of subgrantees are selected, all objectives are measured by annual increase over the baseline.

Evidence-based Activities

Through a competitive subgrant competition, collaborative partners will prioritize children and students in qualified opportunity zones and high-need communities to ensure that high levels

of disadvantaged, geographically-diverse children who are at risk for reading below grade level are being impacted. Identifying subgrantees that can effectively implement research and evidence based practices will eliminate and minimize the learning gap found in some Arizona communities.

Arizona's current Literacy Instruction Plan will serve as a key foundation for successful implementation of Arizona's CLSD project. Once it is updated, the plan will further serve as a guide for the development of local literacy plans and CLSD subgrantee applications. Rooted in a foundation of evidence-based practices, the current plan outlines five essential literacy components: Literacy Collaborative Leadership, Evidence-based Literacy Instruction & Interventions, a balanced Comprehensive Assessment System, Professional Development, and Family Engagement in support of literacy. The updated plan will advance the ability of subgrantees to identify research and evidence-based practices proven to support the science of reading and literacy development.

In addition to a widely-acknowledged State Literacy Instruction Plan, Arizona has a compendium of literacy resources based on research and steeped in evidence-based practices. Resources include: (1) Read On Arizona's *Continuum of Effective Literacy Practices*; (2) ADE's Evidence-Based Practices, Strategies, Programs, and Intervention Resource page, which includes a searchable database of evidence-based programs, practices, and interventions based on online resources such as The Early Childhood Knowledge and Learning Center, Evidence for ESSA, What Works Clearinghouse, National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices; *[See Appendix G]* (3) West Ed's *Evidence-based Improvement: A Guide for States to Strengthen Their Frameworks and Supports Aligned to the Evidence Requirements of ESSA*; (4) SEA & LEA Guidance for Evidence-Based Interventions, Intervention Evidence Review, and Comparing Evidence-Based Interventions.

III.   Project Management Plan

Arizona recognizes that improving literacy outcomes is not the sole responsibility of a single entity. To ensure our most vulnerable children have access to highly-qualified instructional staff, evidence-based interventions, and appropriate literacy programming, collaboration among ADE, other state agencies, our state literacy initiative, and other community partners (private and philanthropic) is essential. Arizona's CLSD project leverages the state's strong partnerships and existing SEA infrastructures to create a cost-effective model that utilizes available resources so as to not duplicate current statewide and local level initiatives.

Following the Implementation Science Framework, Arizona will devote the first year of the CLSD project to: creating and releasing the Application for Consideration for potential subgrantees; selecting and awarding subgrantees; enhancing statewide resources; supporting the investigation and analysis of local needs assessment data, building the capacity of subgrantees on the use of frameworks and tools designed to evaluate current practices; and building the capacity of ELP, LEA and ECC(s) personnel around the Science of Reading and Tier 1 (strong) and Tier 2 (moderate) evidence-based practices. Years 2-5 will focus on: the initial implementation of identified evidence-based practices and programming by subgrantees; the ongoing review of program progress and data; the leveraging of actionable data; and the leveraging and enhancement of current literacy networks and initiatives to support implementation efforts.

Arizona's CLSD project has the depth of breadth of expertise necessary for successful implementation. With support of the State Superintendent for Public Instruction, ADE personnel will oversee the administrative implementation of the grant with the investment of six key staff, which include: the Associate Superintendent of High Academic Standards for Students; the Deputy Associate Superintendents of both the Early Childhood Education/Head Start State Collaboration

Director and K-12 Academic Standards Units; the Director of English Language Arts and Move On When Reading; as well as the Early Childhood Director, a K-3 Literacy Specialist, a Secondary English Language Arts Specialist, and a Dyslexia and Literacy Intervention Specialist. Additional guidance and expertise will be provided by the Arizona Literacy Director (Read On Arizona) and the Chief Program Officer of First Things First (Arizona Early Childhood Development and Health Board). *[See Appendix H.]* Additional partners for effective implementation of the Arizona plan include: the Governor's Office of Education; State Board of Education; Arizona State University Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College; the Head Start State Association; Helios Education Foundation; Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust; and the Arizona Department of Economic Security (the state's Child Care administrator). All of these partners provided letters of support for this project. *[See Appendix I.]*

Management Plan

Objective 1: ADE, with support from system partners, will collaboratively determine participating programs and award, support and monitor up to 15-25 subgrants in Years 2-5.			
Major Tasks	**Indicators of Success**	**Timeline**	**Lead/Partners**
1.1 Create, release and disseminate RFA Conduct TA, webinars	RFA includes required elements for CLSD subgrants Informed potential applicants prepared to apply	Sept.-Dec. 2021	ADE/FTF/ROA
1.2 Gather baseline data as part of local needs assessment	Subgrantee applicants understand gaps and incorporate into plans	Jan.-Mar. 2021	ADE/FTF/ROA

1.4 Technical Assistance (TA) literacy plans	Strong local literacy plan	Jan.-Mar. 2021	ADE
1.5 TA Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)	Increased knowledge of MTSS to inform plan	Jan.-Mar. 2021	ADE
1.6 TA ESSA Evidence Levels/Programs	Increased understanding of evidence levels	Jan.-Mar. 2021	ADE/REL West
1.7 TA on Comp. Needs Assessment (CNA)	Subgrantee able to complete strong CNA to inform plan	Jan.-Mar. 2021	ADE/FTF/ROA
1.3 Subgrantee review/selection	15-25 subgrantees prepared to begin implementation	April - June 2021	ADE/FTF/ROA Grant Reviewers
1.8 Reflection on data	End of year progress report	Year 2-5	ADE/subgrantees
Objective 2: Increase the number of birth-grade 12 teachers and administrators participating in professional development and intentional coaching supports on the science of reading.			
2.1 Coordinate literacy coaching	Subgrantees receive coaching training	Yr. 2-5	ADE/FTF
2.2 Coordinate Teaching Reading Effectively trainings (TRE/TOT/TSR)	Subgrantees receive TRE training	Yr. 2-5	ADE
2.3 Coordinate delivery of LETRS.	Subgrantees receive LETRS training	Yr. 2-5	ADE/FTF/ Voyager Sopris

Objective 3: Increase availability of quality evidence-based language and literacy professional development and coaching supports relating to language and literacy development for birth-grade 12 educators, administrators, and collaborative partners.			
3.1 Identify and vet available professional development offerings.	LL/FE/PD work group produces list of vetted PD offerings, RFI for training on Science of Reading	Yr. 2-5	ADE/FTF/ROA
3.2 Make available a menu of language and literacy PD offered by age/grade bands.	Development of literacy/language evidence-based PD in AZ, RFI for training on the Science of Reading	Yr. 2-5	ADE/FTF/ROA Language Literacy PD w.g.
Objective 4: Increase the quality evidence-based language and literacy pre-service courses on literacy instruction birth-grade 12, review certification system for areas to strengthen.			
4.1 State partners collaboratively convene IHE to strengthen and enhance pre-service courses	1. Collaboration with Certification unit to vet course descriptions 2. Collaboration with IHE to modify course objectives 3. Development of TRE as a credit bearing course.	Yr. 2-5	ADE FTF ROA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION IHE
4.2 State partners to collaboratively convene IHE for review of literacy instruction	Summary recommendations from task force	Yr. 2-5	ADE FTF ROA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

certification standards (birth through grade 12)			IHE & Teachers
Objective 5: Strengthen and leverage existing community collaboration focused on literacy to improve alignment, coordination, data-driven and evidence-based practices, efficiency, and innovation to support struggling readers in and out of classroom			
5.1 ELP, LEA or ECC(s) communicate as part of literacy plan how they intend to leverage existing collaboration to enhance and advance literacy outcomes.	Subgrantee able to complete strong narrative detailing collaboration with local collaborative focused on literacy.	Jan.-Mar. 2021 Progress checks Yrs. 2-5	ADE/FTF/ROA Subgrantees
Objective 6: Build a Shared Learning Exchange for subgrantee participants			
6.1 Includes ongoing review, and application of data, evidence-based practices around literacy	Sessions hosted virtually. Subgrantees participate in shared learning exchange	Year 3-5	ROA/ADE/FTF
Objective 7: Early Learning Program CLSD participants will create codified transition plans			
7.1 subgrantees write transition plans for age/grade bands	Strong transition plans that emphasize continuity of services and supports	Year 2-5	ADE/FTF/ROA
Objective 8: Increase capacity of practitioners in the field to implements comprehensive literacy instruction components by accessing evidence-based instructional practices online			

8.1 Arizona partners will enhance/expand instructional practices made available on website(s)	New evidence-based instructional resources identified for ADE and partner websites	Yr. 2-5	ROA/ADE/FTF
Objective 9: Update Arizona's Literacy Instruction Plan and enhance CELP (grades 4-12)			
9.1 Convene State Literacy Leadership Team to *Update AZ Literacy Instruction Plan*	Revised AZ Literacy Instruction Plan for distribution	Oct. 2020- Aug. 2021	ADE/ROA/FTF
9.2 Convene Arizona literacy task force to update and expand *Continuum of Effective Literacy Practices (CELP)*	Updated/Expanded (CELP) for distribution	Oct. 2020- Aug. 2021	ROA/ADE/FTF

Adequacy of Procedures for Feedback and Continuous Improvement of Project Operations

The leveraging of Implementation Science's stage-based framework will allow Arizona to measure implementation at multiple system levels for practitioners, leaders, and partners. Using data and feedback to drive decision-making to promote continuous improvement is one of the core components threaded through each stage of the Implementation Science Framework. Data derived from program evaluation, as gathered through ADE platforms such as the Grants Management

Enterprise System (GME), are critical components of this grant initiative that enables us to measure the effectiveness of our efforts after having had time to produce results. Leveraging its current GME system, ADE will establish baseline data and continually measure improvement in participating programs. The ADE platform(s) will allow CLSD subgrantees and the Arizona team to reflect upon and evaluate both quantitative and qualitative feedback regarding the progress of implementation and on their experiences. *[Priority 3: Promoting Innovation and Efficiency]*

IV.   Project Services

At the heart of Arizona's CLSD project is the goal to support making high-quality literacy instruction available to all students, ensuring equal access and treatment to disadvantaged children, and improving student outcomes. Success is dependent on a highly-effective workforce, access to evidence and standards-based curriculum and interventions, high-quality literacy programming, and actionable data used to inform instruction and decision-making. This section outlines the high-quality Project Services Arizona will deploy during implementation:

1. **Award and monitor subgrants:** Subgrantees will engage in a competitive application process where they must demonstrate alignment between their local literacy plan and the Arizona Literacy Instruction Plan. Subgrantees must also assess their needs and have clearly-stated goals for improving literacy achievement. The items below detail the additional components a subgrant application should exhibit:

   a. Eligibility requirements: Subgrantees will use the definition for disadvantaged students outlined in the federal register to demonstrate their plan for advancing literacy with students who demonstrate the highest need. Required Priority will be given to those schools and systems that are designated as eligible entities, including: (1) those in Qualified Opportunity Zones*[Priority 2: Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones]*; (2)

those qualifying for Title I; (3) schools in improvement; (4) those serving greater than 12% of students with disabilities; (5) those serving greater than 15% of students who are English learners; and (6) those having more than 80% of students eligible for free-and-reduced lunch. In all age bands, priority will be given to entities serving a majority of students designated as not meeting widely-held expectations, at risk, or minimally proficient related to literacy achievement. In the early age bands, priority will be given to ECE Quality First (Arizona's Quality Improvement System) and Head Start programs, as well as existing community literacy collaborations (i.e., Read On Arizona coalitions) to ensure efficiency, leveraging of resources, and sustainability of supports for disadvantaged students.

b. Use of evidence-based interventions: ADE published "*Evidence-Based Improvement and Decision Making ESSA Guidance*" (2017). *[See Appendix J.]* This document details how evidence-based improvement, as outlined by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, requires states, LEAs, and schools to base improvement efforts on those strategies, programs, and interventions which have solid basis in evidence. Subgrantees will demonstrate how their selection of specific interventions for the advancement of literacy is strongly or moderately evidence based. They will also demonstrate how they are appropriate for the population being served. ADE will continue to support this process with technical assistance and professional development focused on recognizing and using high-quality research.

c. High-quality professional development: Subgrantees will demonstrate how they plan to design and implement a high-quality professional development system for educators that is designed to advance literacy for disadvantaged students. Subgrantees will demonstrate

how the professional development is aligned to the needs of the students and goals of the program. They will also demonstrate how they will provide professional development related to their evidence-based interventions for literacy.

d. Alignment with other federal, state, and local funds: Subgrantees will demonstrate how they plan to leverage use of CLSD funds with other federal, state and local funds to ensure the alignment of their activities to their needs assessment and also to examine the degree to which they are adequately funded. Additionally, subgrantees will demonstrate how they plan to sustain their activities after the grant has concluded. *[Priority 3: Promoting Innovation and Efficiency]*

2. **High-quality professional development and coaching supports:** ADE has developed and implemented proven professional learning opportunities in the science of reading to build teacher capacity in evidence-based literacy instruction. These trainings will be offered to sub-grantees to improve literacy instruction and to expand teacher understanding of proven reading practices. The CLSD grant opportunity will be used to accelerate and enhance professional development opportunities offered. The proposed trainings to be offered include, but are not limited to the following:

a. Teaching Reading Effectively (TRE): TRE, a course designed for teachers of kindergarten through third grade, supports the structured literacy model focused on each of the five pillars of literacy. There is a strong emphasis on the Science of Reading, phonological awareness, and phonics instruction along with an awareness of the characteristics of dyslexia. TRE Training of Trainers (TRE TOT) will also be made available. This course mirrors the objectives of TRE and is grounded in theory and research to help promote discussion and guide the learning of those they will be leading. This course is open to

teachers, reading coaches, district personnel, and administrators. A redesign of this course is in the planning stages to embrace a side-by-side coaching aspect of the training. Teaching Struggling Readers (TSR) is intended for middle- and high school teachers to build their knowledge and capacity around the five pillars of literacy to enable them to more effectively address students' specific areas of struggle. *[See Appendix K.]*

b. Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS): LETRS is a professional learning opportunity developed by Louisa C. Moats, Ed. D, and designed for educators who are responsible for improving Pre-K–12 instruction in reading, writing, and spelling. LETRS allows participants to understand the foundational knowledge necessary on how children learn to read and why some children have difficulty.

c. Evidence requirements of ESSA: REL West, in partnership with ADE, provides a series of trainings and multi-year coaching to foster deeper knowledge about the evidence requirements of ESSA, especially as they apply to K–3 literacy interventions and to build capacity to effectively implement evidence-based interventions at the local level.

d. Multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS): The Arizona MTSS framework is an instructional system with a tiered infrastructure that uses data to help match academic and social-emotional supports to address the needs of the whole child.

e. Lectio Program Design Evaluation Tool: Developed by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Lectio provides a framework to help educational leaders and practitioners adopt a new and intentional approach to improving language and literacy skills and outcomes.

3. **Increase the availability of high-quality, evidence-based professional development and coaching support relating to language and literacy development.** Arizona is proposing extensive and ongoing training for coaches that is sufficient in quality, intensity, and duration,

including the LETRS and TRE training outlined under Measurable Objective 2. Participating subgrantees must identify coaching supports to be implemented at their program sites. Due to their direct relationship with subgrantee personnel, coaches will leverage the training and resources to support practitioners in the field who work directly with students.

4. **Increase the quality evidence-based language and literacy pre-service courses, licensure and certification related to literacy development and instruction birth-grade 12.** In collaboration with state partners, ADE will work with Arizona Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) on implementing the cognitive science behind reading in their teacher preparation programs. Arizona proposes that, in order to implement the cognitive science behind reading into teacher preparation programs, it must first train IHE teacher preparation personnel on the Science of Reading and provide them the opportunity to become a certified facilitator of such trainings. Arizona will leverage the CLSD project to train IHE personnel to build their knowledge, skills, and capacity on the Science of Reading. This collaboration will provide undergraduate education for new teachers and currently certified teachers on the Science of Reading, thereby effectively building a pipeline and supporting the continuing education of teachers in language and literacy.

5. **Strengthen and leverage existing community collaboration**, **efficiency, and innovation to produce better literacy outcomes in and out of classroom settings.** Read On Arizona (ROA) was established as a statewide, community-based collaboration focused on early language and literacy. In partnership with ADE and the Maricopa Association of Governments, ROA launched MapLIT, a data-mapping tool to serve as a one-stop resource for identifying key data sets (census, school, health, family engagement) that impact early literacy outcomes in Arizona communities. MapLIT provides communities with graphic views of select data for all Arizona

public/charter elementary school and preschool site locations. Using the CLSD funds, a population-level integrated data system would be utilized that combines data from a range of programs that serve children and young adults. This data system would include: (1) identifying neighborhoods with high need and low service; (2) exploring or tracking improvement over time using tools from the data center; and (3) sharing information with community partners and decision makers to inform strategic planning centered on improving language and literacy outcomes.

6. **Engage in virtual shared learning exchange.** In 2019 Read On Arizona partners conducted a case study project, *Third Grade Reading Success: Decoding What Works,* to highlight schools with the most growth in ELA achievement and share what they were doing to stimulate growth in reading for third grade students. *[Priority 3: Promoting Innovation and Efficiency; Invitational Priority: Leveraging Education Resources]* Arizona is proposing to use the CLSD grant opportunity to launch a *Decoding What Works Learning Exchange Program.* This learning exchange program will allow CLSD subgrantees the opportunity to engage in virtual learning so that they can understand what steps high-performing programs took to accelerate results for high-needs students and identify key factors for impacting reading improvement.

7. **Codified transition plans.** Early Learning Programs will create a codified transition plan for the age/grade bands served by subgrantees that includes feeder schools and receiving schools with an emphasis on ensuring continuity of services, supports, and programming.

8. **Increase capacity of practitioners in the field to implement comprehensive literacy instruction components by accessing evidence-based instructional practices.** Arizona intends to leverage and enhance the current online collection of literacy resources housed within Read On Arizona. This expanded online library will house appropriate evidence-based,

high-quality data tools and literacy resources intended to aid practitioners and families with supporting improved literacy outcomes. Subgrantees will be guided on accessing resources and toolkits, with components publicly available on ADE's website as well.

9. **Utilize State Literacy Leadership Team and task force experts to update Arizona's Literacy Instruction Plan and expand Continuum of Effective Literacy Practices.** In 2017, ADE revised the State's Literacy Instruction Plan in response to the state's updated literacy legislation, ESSA requirements, and current reading research. Using the CLSD project as the impetus, ADE and the State Literacy Leadership Team will revisit, review, and revise the plan's conceptual framework and layers of support necessary to ensure that student develop strong literacy skills. In the first year of the grant, ADE will conduct Communities of Practice that will include teachers, administrators, families, and community stakeholders. These COPs will allow for members to coalesce and suggest revisions to ensure that the plan continues to meet the ever-evolving needs of its constituents. In addition, a taskforce of literacy experts from across the state will work to update and expand Arizona's Continuum of Effective Literacy Practices (CELP), a practioner's guide to the early years, to include grades 4-12.

Impact of Proposed Services

The project services detailed above are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to have the desired impact on children who are disadvantaged and traditionally underrepresented, including children below 200% of poverty, children who are English learners, children with disabilities and children who are reading far below grade level. The project services and design outlined in Arizona's CLSD project help focus the work of programs and schools by setting targets for student learning and achievement, or improving systems, processes, and programs that will impact achievement. In the case of CLSD subgrantees, these strategies and action steps would be

those that have evidence of moderate or strong effectiveness as defined in ESSA and outlined in ADE guidance documents. Arizona's CLSD project ensures that those schools and programs demonstrating the highest need are able to identify and advance evidence-based interventions and strategies that impact students who are the most at risk for not achieving reading success.

V.   Requirements, Competitive Preference Priorities, Assurances

State Agency Early Childhood Program Collaboration

ADE has a strong partnership with First Things First, Arizona's State agency responsible for administering early childhood education programs, and the Department of Economic Security (DES), the State agency responsible for administering childcare programs. Both agencies are ongoing collaborative partners with ADE and have played a role in the CLSD project proposal. In addition, Arizona's early literacy initiative, Read On Arizona, includes the Arizona Governor's Office of Education, Arizona State Board of Education, Arizona Department of Education, First Things First, philanthropic, local municipalities, regional, and local community partners all united in creating a continuum of supports and services to improve literacy outcomes. By leveraging this collective impact collaborative model focused on early literacy, Arizona's CLSD project ensures the sustainability and impact beyond instructional improvements.

Competitive Preference Priorities

Competitive Preference Priority 1: Applications from New Potential Grantees

Arizona has not had an active discretionary grant under the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant program or the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant program in the last five years. ADE received formula funding in 2010 to develop the state's first Literacy Instruction Plan. Since then Arizona has relied on state funding to implement key elements of the plan. Arizona has not received a Striving Readers Literacy Grant

or Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant Award in any of the competitive years (2015-2019).

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Spurring Investment in Qualified Opportunity Zones

Arizona's CLSD project will build capacity in communities identified as federally-qualified opportunity zones (QOZs). Subgrantee applicants providing services in one or more of the 168 QOZs identified in Arizona will receive priority points. Most QOZs in Arizona are in rural and tribal communities, with others embedded in urban areas. *[See Appendix L, ECE programs and K-12 schools in QOZ.]* Details on the services to be provided through Arizona's CLSD project and how these will include spurring investments of literacy supports and services in QOZs that are prioritized as part of the subgrantee application process is included in Section II, Project Design.

Competitive Preference Priority 3: Promoting Innovation and Efficiency, Streamlining Education with an Increased Focus on Improving Student Outcomes and Providing Increased Value to Students and Taxpayers

Arizona's CLSD project includes a focus on leveraging existing Federal, State, and local resources to reduce redundancy, increase efficiency, and strengthen literacy programs and activities. The strong collaboration of Arizona's early literacy initiative, Read On Arizona (ROA), has created the infrastructure of a collaborative literacy network of local schools, community partners, and state agencies coordinating literacy supports and services to reduce duplication and increase evidence-based and innovative practices in the classroom, as well as opportunities that take place in and out of school-time settings. *[See Appendix M, Read On Arizona Overview.]* This CLSD project is structured to leverage Federal, State and local investments focused on early literacy birth through grade 3 and will build on and extend collaborative structure into grades 4-12, ensuring that subgrantees improve their capacity to use data to drive decision-making and have

access to evidence-based strategies to address the local gaps identified in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment conducted as part of the subgrantee application.

Assurances

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) will include in its application all assurances. ADE will assure that it will subgrant not less than 95 percent of grant funds to eligible entities (as defined in this notice), based on their needs assessment and a competitive application process, for comprehensive literacy instruction programs according to the funding allocations in Program Requirement (a).

ADE assures that it will use grant funds described in section 2222(f)(1) for comprehensive literacy instruction programs as follows: (i) Not less than 15 percent of such grant funds will be used for State and local programs and activities pertaining to children from birth through kindergarten entry. (ii) Not less than 40 percent of such grant funds will be used for State and local programs and activities, allocated equitably among the grades of kindergarten through grade 5. (iii) Not less than 40 percent of such grant funds will be used for State and local programs and activities, allocated equitably among grades 6 through 12.

ADE assures that it will give priority in awarding subgrants to eligible entities that serve children from birth through age 5, who are from families with income levels at or below 200 percent of the Federal poverty line (as defined in this notice); or are LEAs serving a high number or percentage of high-need schools.

ADE assures that it will provide subgrants to eligible entities serving a diversity of geographic areas, giving priority to entities serving greater numbers or percentages of children from low-income families.