



# THE READING MENTORS PROGRAM

A LANGUAGE AND LITERACY PARTNERSHIP

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS ANNOUNCEMENT  
AND APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

FY16



**READING MENTORS PROGRAM  
LANGUAGE AND LITERACY PARTNERSHIP  
COMPETITION**

**RFP Release Date:** April 30, 2015

**1<sup>st</sup> (Priority) Deadline for Proposal Submission:** May 29, 2015

**2<sup>nd</sup> Deadline for Proposal Submission:** June 19, 2015

**Contact Person:** Renee Gottwald  
Governor's Office Student Achievement  
205 Jesse Hill, Jr. Drive SE  
952 Twin Towers East  
Atlanta, GA 30334  
rgottwald@georgia.gov  
(404) 904-5431

**Award Notification:** June 30, 2015

**Awarding Agency:**  
Governor's Office of Student Achievement

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In 2012, Governor Nathan Deal introduced a new initiative to improve early literacy in Georgia. The Reading Mentor Program (RMP) was created to help students read at grade level by the end of third grade. In this second iteration, the focus of the program has been expanded to encompass not only the conventional reading skills of decoding, oral reading, fluency, reading comprehension, and spelling, but also the foundational early literacy skills that include speaking, listening, and writing.

For children to become appropriately literate adults in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, teachers and administrators must provide transformational literacy instruction for all students. The Governor's Reading Mentors Program is designed to work directly with teachers and school administrators to increase students' reading proficiency. Literacy Language Specialists (LLSs) work with each participating school to facilitate the change needed to strengthen current instructional practices and train teachers and administrators on new practices to help more students read at grade level by the end of third grade. Each LLS will utilize a variety of coaching and instructional practices, including, but not limited to:

- professional learning meetings,
- direct instruction,
- modeling,
- observation with feedback/follow up,
- videos,
- webinars,
- virtual coaching, and
- video chats.

Research-based instructional strategies and practices will be presented at regularly scheduled, grade level specific professional learning meetings for immediate implementation and follow up. Administrators and teachers will use data to formulate effective instruction; build on their current best practices; and develop a repertoire of research-based strategies to significantly enhance classroom instruction and student learning.

## **ASSESSMENTS**

DIBELS is the required assessment for participation in the Reading Mentors Program. GOSA reserves the right to ask awardees to participate in additional data-gathering and knowledge-sharing activities over the life of the partnership that are not specified in this notice. These activities might involve awardees participating in State-sponsored meetings where they are able to share their experiences and help shape future early literacy-related developments throughout the state.

## **PROGRAM NON-NEGOTIABLES**

Eligible schools, in partnership with their school system, will implement the following program components to improve language/literacy instruction:

- Students will receive a minimum of 90 minutes of daily direct instruction in a literacy “block” (reading, writing, listening, speaking).
- Students will participate in daily small group phonics/reading instruction.
- Students will have access to high quality materials that support the acquisition and development of language and literacy.
- Teachers will engage in coaching conversations with their designated Language and Literacy Specialist.
- Teachers will conduct, and students will participate in, regular formative and summative assessments as prescribed by DIBELS for the purpose of guiding instruction.
- Teachers will have access to the ongoing formative and summative assessment data to drive instructional decisions and planning, and to evaluate the effectiveness of current instruction.
- Teachers and administrators will participate in high-quality job-embedded professional learning (PL) to build their capacity for using data and research-based practices in literacy instruction.
- Teachers will implement research-based instructional strategies to enhance classroom instruction and student learning.

- School administrators will ensure that K-2 classrooms are self-contained so that language and literacy learning and development can be consistently reinforced by the teacher throughout the school day.
- School administrators and teachers will participate in program surveys.
- School administrators will actively support the program by reinforcing teacher learning and implementation of high-yield strategies and practices.
- School administrators will commit to improving instruction and support the program by actively participating in bi-annual professional learning at the local, regional and state level.
- School administrators and district leaders will work diligently to sustain the ideals of the program after Year 3.

Additionally, in the second and third year of the partnership, a local school administrator, literacy/instructional coach (if applicable), and grade level chair or teacher leader from each grade (K-3) will participate annually in a two (2) day Summer Literacy Institute.

## **2.APPLICATION DETAILS**

### **ELIGIBILITY**

The Reading Mentors Program is a three-year program for public schools that serve lower elementary grade students. Schools that previously received services under the initial Reading Mentor Program are eligible to apply. Charter schools, as public schools, **are** eligible to apply.

### **SCORING**

All applications will be scored using a 100-point scale using a rubric.

### **PROGRAM PERIOD**

The Reading Mentors Program is a three year, state-funded program that will begin July 1, 2015.

### **SUSAINABILITY**

Active participation and sustainability are requirements of the program.



Applications received by 5:00 PM EDT, Friday, May 29 will be given first priority. Applications that are received by 5:00 PM EDT, Friday, June 19, 2015 will be reviewed and served as resources allow. All applications must be submitted by mail (e.g., USPS, FedEx, UPS, etc.) to GOSA.

Mail the application to:

Governor's Office of Student Achievement  
Attention: Renee Gottwald  
205 Jesse Hill, Jr. Drive SE  
952 Twin Towers East  
Atlanta, GA 30334

### **DISQUALIFICATION FACTORS**

Any application received after the deadline will be regarded as late and will not be considered. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the proposal is received by the specified deadline. Additionally, GOSA will not consider funding any applicant that fails to comply with all application requirements. Disqualification factors include any of the following:

- Failure to address and meet all required content;
- Failure to include application narrative and application attachments;
- Failure to provide appropriate number of copies and format requested;

### **QUESTIONS**

GOSA will post a recorded technical assistance webinar on the GOSA website to answer questions from potential applicants no later than May 4, 2015. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to view the webinar.

Other questions may be directed to Renee Gottwald ([rgottwald@georgia.gov](mailto:rgottwald@georgia.gov)). Though questions will be permitted until the date of the application submission, they will be answered subject to staff availability. As such, applicants are strongly encouraged to pose all questions as early as possible.

**READING MENTORS PROGRAM**  
**A LANGUAGE AND LITERACY PARTNERSHIP**  
**APPLICATION**

**Reading Mentor Program  
A Language and Literacy Partnership  
Application Cover Sheet**

**SECTION 1: APPLICANT INFORMATION**

School System Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
School System Address: \_\_\_\_\_ School System Superintendent Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
School System District Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
School System District Contact Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
School Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip (+4): \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 2: APPLICANT CERTIFICATION**

\_\_\_\_\_ *School System does hereby certify that \_\_\_\_\_ school is eligible to apply for the 2015-2017 Reading Mentors Program:*

- ☐ The school meets the definition of a public school in the state of Georgia.
- ☐ If awarded, the school will follow the non-negotiables as described in the application guidelines.
- ☐ If awarded, the school system will work closely with the Governor's Office of Student Achievement and the school to support the language and literacy reform efforts.

**SECTION 4: AUTHORIZING SIGNATURES**

*I, the undersigned, have read, understand, and agree to all relative conditions specified in the Request for Proposals and having read all attachments thereto do submit this application. If awarded a grant to implement the provision herein, I do certify that all applicable federal and state laws, rules, and regulations thereto will be followed.*

**District Signature:**

**Principal:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature Date**



## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

### Required Application Order:

#### 1. Application Cover Sheet

Signed by school system designee and principal

#### 2. Proposal Narrative

#### 3. Appendix Attachments

Supplementary materials the applicant wishes to include

#### 4. Electronic Attachments

CD or USB drive with a pdf of the application

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### Application Format:

- Number every page submitted as part of your application
- Use 11-point Times New Roman Font
- Space proposal at 1.5 lines
- Use 1 inch margins throughout application
- Use white paper that is 8.5 x 11 inches
- Do not exceed word limits
- Do not staple applications; use paper clips
- Structure the application in order defined in Application Checklist

**Proposal Application**  
**Please provide the following information.**

**A. Critical Issues**

25 points

- i. **Identify the 2014-2015 critical issues as related to the district and/or school's goals for literacy improvement in its most recent literacy plan. Please rank the priorities in order (with 1 being the top priority) for this current academic year.**
- ii. **Please provide a short (no more than 500 words) descriptive statement describing the rationale for selecting the top two issues of need.**

Ensuring that all students are assessed using a variety of formative and summative assessments to determine the need for interventions and the intensity of interventions.  
Providing tiered systems of curriculum delivery including the use of data to inform instruction, both core and intervention instruction, as well as enhancements to core instruction.

Embedding language and literacy skills in content learning with a focus on vocabulary instruction, including oral language development.

Ensuring that all students are receiving direct, explicit instruction in reading.

Developing literacy plans at the district and school level to encourage the strategic use of literacy resources to help all students become proficient readers and writers.

Ensuring that all teachers are proficient in providing effective reading and writing instruction to a variety of student learners.

**B. Plan for Initiative**

30 points

**Describe the plan (no more than 750 words) to implement the Reading Mentors Program that will address the identified critical issue(s). The description narrative should include all of the following:**

- a) An explanation of how, if awarded, working with a Language and Literacy Specialist will improve literacy instruction.
- b) An explanation describing previous efforts to address literacy needs across the school.
- c) An explanation of how the school and district leadership team will monitor the fidelity of the program.
- d) An explanation regarding any potential challenges that may impede the initiative and a description of how those challenges will be addressed.
- e) An explanation of how the school will arrange for collaboration and joint professional development opportunities for teachers, school leaders, and school library personnel with a focus on using literacy resources effectively to support reading and writing and academic achievement.
- f) An explanation of how the school, if awarded, will inform parents of the initiative.

### C. Goals

25 points

Please provide 2 - 3 SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound) professional practice/student achievement goals that will drive the implementation of the school's literacy team during the first year of implementation. Please note that each selected school will also set annual outcome measure using DIBELS and Lexile levels for grades K-3.

- Choose a verb: *increase, decrease, reduce, improve, deliver, grow*
- Define the object: *what you wish or will work toward to get better at and for whom*
- Identify how much: *target goals and a reference to the meeting of success*
- Identify by when: *time frame for completion of goal*

Smart Goal	How Will This Goal Be Evaluated?
(Example) <i>Each kindergarten teacher (100%) in ABC Elementary will provide a daily literacy block that includes whole group explicit instruction in word identification, vocabulary, and comprehension by December 5, 2016.</i>	(Example) <i>Administrators (and department/grade level chairs) will observe classrooms and conduct monthly fidelity checks. This information will be aggregated each month.</i>

### D. Evaluation and Sustainability

(20 points)

Please provide a short narrative describing how the school and/or school system will evaluate the progress of the initiative. Please describe how the school and/or school system will plan to sustain and scale emerging best practices.

### E. Appendix

Although the following documents will not be scored, they are important because they give the review team a sense of the school's current reality.

- **SCHOOL LITERACY PLAN AND/OR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**  
Upload the school's current Literacy Plan and/or School Improvement Plan. If the school does not have a Literacy Plan, describe how teachers in the school are currently teaching reading.
- **THE DAILY SCHEDULE FOR GRADES K – 3**  
Upload the school's master schedule and the daily schedule for Kindergarten, first grade, second grade and third grade classes.