



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

Rod Blagojevich
Governor

Jesse H. Ruiz
Chairman

Dr. Randy J. Dunn
State Superintendent of Education (Interim)

The Reading Improvement Block Grant Update July/August 2005

Dana Kinley, Division Administrator, Curriculum and Instruction
Laurie Lee, Principal Consultant, Reading Improvement Block Grant
Dr. Anne Sustik, Principal Consultant, Reading Recovery and other reading initiatives

FY06 RIBG Applications Due July 25, 2005

The Reading Improvement Block Grant (RIBG) application is now available on the eGMS through IWAS. The application is due no later than July 25, 2005. Some tips in filling out the application - if you intend to hire staff with RIBG funds, please be sure you indicate how personnel will serve students by choosing from the selection on the *Use of Funds* page. Also, note the budget section of the application asks for more detail than in years past and is similar to other grants. Make sure names of staff are listed on the Budget Detail page along with the building where they work. Finally, please pay particular attention to the sections that ask about testing. The FY06 performance report due date has been changed to **June 15, 2006**, for districts choosing assessments other than ISAT and **30 days after ISAT scores are received** for districts using ISAT to demonstrate progress. This means some districts will have to transition to a spring testing schedule. Options are given on the application for helping with this transition. If you have questions regarding the application, please contact Laurie Lee at 217-557-7323 or lleee@isbe.net. The Technical Support Call Center at ISBE should be contacted at 217-558-3600 should computer problems be incurred.

Choosing Assessments for Establishing Performance Progress

There are several assessment tool choices listed on the RIBG application this year. The list is not meant to imply that other instruments may not be used; rather it is intended to make the application process more expedient by suggesting measures that are known to be credible for the purposes of this grant. When choosing an assessment tool to establish performance progress, several things need to be kept in mind. First, assessment tools have different purposes. Some are for screening, others for diagnostic purposes and others determine outcome. While screening and diagnostic tools such as IRIs and running records are useful in planning instruction and should be utilized – it is an outcome assessment measure that must be used to establish performance progress for this grant. The outcome assessment provides information as to whether students have improved in their reading abilities, the goal for which we all strive. The list provided on the application provides examples of outcome assessments. (Again, please note, this list is not exhaustive.)

Second, assessment tools used need to be valid and reliable. Remember, if you choose to use an assessment measure not listed on the application you must submit evidence of validity and reliability. Sometimes research regarding an instrument is difficult to locate. Look in the instruction manual – if research from outside sources is cited then that satisfies the ISBE requirement of proof of reliability/validity. If research was only done by the company selling the tests, you'll have to look elsewhere. Three websites serve as excellent sources for finding information regarding assessment tools. The Florida Reading Research Center is at www.fcrr.org. You will find reviews of some assessment tools there. The University of Oregon has a site at www.idea.uoregon.edu/assessment

which offers information as well. Finally, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory at www.sedl.org/reading/rad/ may be of value. If your chosen assessment tool doesn't appear on any of these websites it may be time to rethink your choice.

Finally, the assessment tool should be able to assess for a wide range of reading skills at lower grade levels as well as comprehension at upper grade levels. The STAR reading test is a vocabulary test which extrapolates data to give comprehension scores; however, it doesn't actually test comprehension according to the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. Therefore, STAR is not an acceptable choice to establish performance progress for the Reading Improvement Block Grant.

Keep in mind that if your assessment tool is not approved to use to establish performance progress, you may still use that instrument to provide valuable information for your teachers to use in making instructional decisions. You just won't be able to use the data collected from the results in reporting to ISBE to establish performance progress for the Reading Improvement Block Grant. Data for the annual performance report must be gleaned from an assessment that has been approved through the application process.

Providing for accountability is one of the challenges of this grant, however, we must be able to show the taxpayers of Illinois that the reading abilities of children are improving for their \$76 million dollar investment in the Reading Improvement Block Grant. It is our hope that the investment will be increased when the benefits to K-6 students become more and more evident.

FY05 Performance Report due November 1, 2005

The form for the FY05 performance report is available on the ISBE website. Go to the homepage and click on FY05 Reading Improvement Block Grant Performance Report Form located on the sidebar entitled "Resources and Hot Topics." This will take you to the link for the form, which is interactive. Type directly on the form, print it out, and mail it to ISBE with your data establishing performance progress by November 1, 2005.

Amendment Reminder

Amendments will be required for the Reading Improvement Block Grant should changes be needed to the grant. Amendments are required when the scope of the program is expected to change (example: changing the grade levels served; requesting a change of assessment tool) or when expected expenditures exceed the variance allowed by the program guidelines (20% or \$1000 per cell, whichever is greater); or adding a new expenditure item. Amendments are due **30 days prior to the project end date**. Per Grant Administration Policy #8, obligations of funds based on amendments cannot begin prior to the date of receipt at ISBE of a substantially approvable amendment request.

Proposed Rule Changes for the RIBG

Several rule changes have been proposed in an effort to help the RIBG cycle run more efficiently and to provide for fairness in the awarding of grant funds while requiring accountability on the part of grant recipients. Please take time to review the proposed changes at the ISBE website. Click on "Rules" on the left sidebar of the homepage, and then on "Proposed Rules and Amendments," and finally scroll down to the proposed rule changes for the Reading Improvement Block Grant. You are welcome to make comment on the proposed changes until August 31, 2005. Comments may be emailed to rules@isbe.net or mailed to Sally Vogl, Agency Rules Coordinator, ISBE, 100 N. First Street W-475, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001.

The Reading Improvement Block Grant Update Now on ISBE's Website

The Reading Improvement Block Grant Update can now be found on the Illinois State Board of Education's website at www.isbe.net/curriculum. Click on Reading.

Please share this copy of The Reading Improvement Block Grant Update with those in your school district who work with this grant and let them know they will be able to access future copies on the ISBE website.

Summer Administrators' Academies

ISBE has developed a Best Practices in Reading Grades 4-8 Administrators' Academy. This Academy provides an overview of the identified 15 best practices in reading instruction as they apply to students in grades 4-8. It is a twenty-five hour Academy spread out across five sessions over a period of three to four months. Research shows that a sustained staff development model promotes greater understanding and application of information presented in the professional development sessions. The course will cover the following areas: leadership and literacy issues, instructional connections to data analysis, research about guided and shared reading, multi level vocabulary development, the importance of developing reading skills for informational text, integrating reading and writing in the content areas, building a literacy-rich school environment, and designing a school literacy plan. A list of trained presenters is available. For more information contact Anne Sustik at 217-557-7323 or by email at asustik@isbe.net

Request for Information

As school begins again, please let us know what you're doing with your Reading Improvement Block Grant dollars. Are your teachers holding book clubs? Are your students engaged in small group activities? We welcome receiving pictures, newspaper articles, and anecdotes. Send your information to Laurie Lee, ISBE, Curriculum and Instruction C-215, 100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001. We'd love to highlight your school in an upcoming edition of *The Reading improvement Block Grant Update*.

Contact Information for ISBE Reading Consultants

Laurie Lee, principal consultant for the Reading Improvement Block Grant, fields questions and offers support at her email address lelee@isbe.net and phone number 217-557-7323.

Dr. Anne Sustik, principal consultant for Reading Recovery, The Principals Flip Charts for Reading, and The Best Practices in Reading Grades 4-8 Administrators Academy can be contacted at the Springfield office of the Illinois State Board of Education by t phone number 217-557-7323.

Debra Coet-Hanna and Sandra Smith, principal consultants for Reading First, can be reached at the Illinois State Board of Education's Springfield office by telephoning the Division of Curriculum and Instruction at 217-557-7323. Debra's email address is dcoethan@isbe.net. Sandra can be emailed at ssmith@isbe.net.

Dr. Maureen Kenney Richel and Dr. Terry Rusin, principal consultants for Reading First, are located in the Chicago office of the Illinois State Board of Education at 100 West Randolph, Suite 14-300, Chicago, IL 60601. Their phone number is 217-557-7323. Maureen's email address is mrichel@isbe.net. Email Terry at trusin@isbe.net.

Please feel free to contact these dedicated professionals with your reading grant questions.

The next edition of The Illinois Reading First Update will be issued on Friday, September 23, 2005. This will not be mailed, but will instead be posted to the website only.