

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program

LEA Grant Application

System Cover Sheet

Please return to: Georgia Dept. of Education Attn: 205 Jessie Hill Jr. Dr 1758 Twin Towers East Atlanta, GA 30344	DOE Use Only Date and Time Received:	DOE Use Only: Received By:
Name of Applicant: Jefferson County Board of Education	Project Number: (DOE Assigned)	
Total Grant Request: \$3,033,719	System Contact Information:	
	Name: Dr. Donnie Hodges	Position: Assistant Superintendent
Number of schools	Phone:	Fax:

in system: 6 (plus early learning)	applying: 6 plus early learning: 7	478-625-7626	478-625-7459
Congressional District: 12th		Email: hodgesd@jefferson.k12.ga.us	

Sub-grant Status

Large District (45,000 or more students)

Mid-Sized District (10,000 to 44,999 students)

Small District (0-9,999 students)

Check the one category that best describes your official fiscal agency:

X	School District	Community-based Organization or other Not-for-Profit Organization
	Regional/Intermediate Education Agency	Nationally Affiliated Nonprofit Agency- other

Fiscal Agent/Applicant Required Signatures:

I hereby certify that I am the an authorized signatory of the fiscal agent for which grant application is made and that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, complete and accurate. I further certify, to the best of my knowledge, that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, application

guidelines and instructions, assurances, and certifications. I also certify that the requested budget amounts are necessary for the implementation of the program described in the attached application.

Please sign in blue ink.

Name of **Fiscal Agent's** Contact Person: ___ Dr. Donnie Hodges _____

Position/Title of Fiscal Agent's Contact Person: ___ Assistant Superintendent _____

Address: ___ 1001 Peachtree Street _____

City: ___ Louisville GA _____ Zip: ___ 30434 _____

Telephone: (_ 478 _) _ 625-7626 _____ Fax: (_ 478 _) _ 625-7459 _____

E-mail: ___ hodgesd@jefferson.k12.ga.us _____

___ **Signature on paper copies as per Ms. Morrill** _____

Signature of Fiscal Agency Head (required)

___ **Molly P. Howard, Ed.D.** _____

Typed Name of Fiscal Agency Head (required)

___ **Superintendent** _____

Typed Position Title of Fiscal Agency Head (required)

Date (required)

LEA Narrative:

Jefferson County School System is located in eastern Georgia in the 12th Congressional District. It is comprised of a geographically large, sparsely populated rural area with three small towns -Louisville, Wrens, and Wadley where the three elementary schools are located - spread out over a 35 mile span along U.S. Hwy # 1 which cuts north to south through the county. The middle schools are in Louisville and Wrens with the high school centrally located between Louisville and Wrens. Louisville is near the geographic center of the county while Wrens is in the north and Wadley is in the south. The poverty rate for Jefferson County is 26.5%, and the school system has 84.35% of students who receive free and reduced lunch. Also, all six schools are Title I school wide projects, making all students eligible for Title I services. Many of the students are from homes where literacy growth and expectations are lacking. As a result, the students often enter school with literacy deficiencies that affect the ability to perform at expected levels on state-mandated standards and assessments. A lack of literacy materials and technology support also has a negative impact on the literacy growth of Jefferson County students.

Jefferson County students have scored below the state and the other CSRA RESA districts on the English Language Arts, mathematics, social studies, and science Georgia High School Graduation Tests GHSGTs and End of Course Tests EOCTs. The graduation rate is just above the state level (81.3%). The Iowa Test of Basic Skills ITBS for fourth and eighth graders also shows significant deficits in reading comprehension and vocabulary. Criterion-Referenced Competency Test CRCT scores for 3rd through 8th graders also indicate below state and CSRA RESA results in Reading/English Language Arts at most grade levels with 164 students (13.7%) not meeting standards for those grade levels. State writing scores also reflect a deficit in writing skills for 3rd, 5th, and 8th graders. Upon examination of the domain data associated with the state tests and the ITBS, the Jefferson County leadership notes that these deficits reflect a lack of literacy skills, especially in vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing, and speaking. Currently, the school system has created a literacy plan that proposes how to institute a systematic

approach for improving literacy needs for Jefferson County students (see Appendix). The Striving Reader Project can be the vehicle to make this happen. The intent of the project is not meant to be considered as self-standing, fragmented, or appropriate for piecemeal implementation; rather, it will be implemented in a thoughtful, planned, systematic manner. As a result, the Jefferson County Board of Education has identified literacy as a key component of the county strategic plan and has pledged to place monetary assets when available to support a literacy initiative. They recognize the need for sustained professional learning in the following areas:

Early literacy (PK-3)	Adolescent Literacy (4-12)
Instructional technology strategies and implementations	Research-based best practices needed for CCGPS literacy demands for all content areas
Formative and summative assessments	Monitoring to ensure fidelity

A major component also includes sustaining a community literacy focus with the early learning centers in our community. The literacy strategic plan is to include all schools in sustained, quality professional learning and implementation of research-based best practices in literacy as Jefferson County implements the CCGPS, the impact of targeted technology instruction on learning, the reading and writing connection and the responsibility across all content areas, and the importance of monitoring to sustain and guarantee the impact on instructional growth.

The vision of the Jefferson County School System is to have EVERY CHILD graduate from high school postsecondary ready based on a mission to partner with the community in creating a learning culture that challenges, supports, and ensures the success of EVERY CHILD, EVERY DAY. The school system has gained state and national attention from several successful partnerships including ones with the Southern Regional Education Board and the International Center for Leadership in Education

through the leadership of the school system and Dr. Molly Howard who was named the 2008 National Association of Secondary School Principal (NASSP) of the Year out of 48,000 candidates. Dr. Howard, who is now Superintendent of the school system, has spoken throughout the country on school reform and the dynamics of changing school culture.

The Jefferson County School System has approximately 2,900 students in grades PK-12 for the 2011-12 school year. The system has consistently lost 50-75 students per year over the last 10 years. The system is comprised of 74% minority students with 84.35% of students qualified for the free-reduced lunch program. Many students come to school with significant literacy delays. Even though many efforts have been made by the school system to address the overwhelming weaknesses in vocabulary, depth of knowledge, and necessary frameworks for active learning that many Jefferson County students have, much work has to be done on institutionalizing and sustaining a comprehensive approach to literacy that can be ultimately applied in all content areas including special education and Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE). This will require support for teachers through high-quality professional development, a consistent monitoring piece for leaders, and ongoing understanding of curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment. Jefferson County leadership members from both the school system and the community pledge to make literacy growth a priority and are willing to create a sustainability plan to continue the efforts after the shelf-life of the grant.

Eligibility of Schools and Centers

The following CRCT scores are for the initial spring testing for all students. *(In some instances, the school applications used the 2nd round AYP CRCT results to determine needs more specifically.)*

Elementary Schools	% F/R (includes PK)	AYP Status	N DNM CRCT Grade 3	% DNM CRCT Grade 3	N DNM CRCT Grade 5	% DNM CRCT Grade 5
Carver Elementary	94.53%	Distinguished	40	7.5%	46	13%
Louisville Academy	84.78%	Distinguished	81	21%	83	15.7%
Wrens Elementary	82.57%	Distinguished	89	12.4%	108	24.2%

Middle Schools	% F/R	AYP Status	N DNM CRCT Grade 8	% DNM CRCT Grade 8
Louisville Middle	89.30%	Made AYP	113	2.7%
Wrens Middle	78.34%	Distinguished	86	10.5%

High School	% F/R	AYP Status	Graduation Rate
Jefferson County High	82.59%	NI-3	81.3%

LEA Process for Selecting Schools: One of the key components of our system strategic plan is for all schools to be more alike than different. A consistent approach and message is critical for vertical and horizontal growth and understanding of progress. Since we are a small school system, it is important not to fracture or splinter programs and initiatives as much as possible. The Board of Education and the system and school leadership teams agree that all schools should be included in this application.

Experience of the Applicant:

The school system has not had state or federal grants in the past five years that fit the description in Section IV: Experience of the Applicant: however, the system has had such grants in the

past ten years. The leadership of the school system is very stable and long-serving, so many of the current leaders managed these initiatives over the past ten years.

	Project Title	Funding Received	Is there audit?	Audit results
LEA				
LEA (fiscal agent for SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc.	Safe Schools, Healthy Students FY03-FY06	2,872,949	Yes	Clear
Schools				
Carver Elem	21 st Century (federal)FY02-FY04	669,846	Yes	Clear
	CSR Grant FY06-FY07	120,587	Yes	Clear
Carver Elem & Wrens Elem	Reading First FY02-FY05	1,423,205	Yes	Clear
Louisville Academy	Tech Literacy Challenge (II-D) FY99-FY02	253,000	Yes	Clear
Louisville Middle	Making Middle Grades Work FY06-FY07	106,879	Yes	Clear
Jefferson County High	High Schools That Work FY03-FY05	192,743	Yes	Clear

Description of Funded Initiatives: Even though the funding for the initiatives above has ended, the school system has benefitted greatly from lessons learned. Through these initiatives, the Jefferson County School System leadership has worked to establish a culture of learning where teachers accept responsibility for student learning within a network of support from peers and administrators through recursive, job-embedded professional learning. Since most of these initiatives are school-based, the level of job-embedded professional learning varies school by school; however, the goal is to have a plan where sustainability and a vertical and horizontal instructional growth pattern emerge. Therefore, the current Jefferson County leadership team recognizes the need for a systematic sustainability plan. The

school system also has current initiatives, RTI, and READ 180 (universal screener and tiered and Read 180) that are being funded through a combination of IDEA, Title I SIP and/or Title-I A funds. The Striving Reader Project activities as set forth by the grant will not only revisit previous professional learning, such as that provided by Reading First, but also will expand to the new literacy demands and assessments needed to create a more sustainable literacy culture in Jefferson County. Because of lessons previously learned, the leadership team is more aware of what steps to put into place to ensure the sustainability piece of the grant.

Description of Non-funded Initiatives: The school system has a number of initiatives that are on-going and are being sustained because of job-embedded professional learning and are reflected in the system strategic plan. These include Thinking Maps, roll-out of CCGPS, and CLASS KEYS implementation. Since the Striving Reader activities focus on all aspects of literacy, instructional practices to include the importance of assessments, and monitoring, the current initiatives will not be in conflict with any aspects of the grant. Our current roll-out plan of CCGPS centers on the understanding of the standards and instructional planning for the 2012-2013 school year. Based on the roll-out of the current Georgia Performance Standards in 2005-2006, we note that the more training our teachers can have on the roll-out of the CCGPS will only strengthen their knowledge and implementation practices. The Thinking Maps program represents “thinking” organizers to help students plan and organize their thought process; the maps are strategies and should not be in conflict with other research-based strategies. Currently, Jefferson County teachers are evaluated by CLASS KEYS , but that monitoring piece focuses on instructional practices. The Striving Reader’s grant will provide the level of professional learning and training that are needed to take teachers and students to the next level.

Description of LEA Capacity:

In their book Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard, authors Chip and Dan Heath (Broadway Books, 2010) highlight Dr. Molly Howard, the Jefferson County Superintendent of Schools, for the tough challenge she accepted when she became the principal of the new Jefferson County High School in 1995 where 70% of the students remained in the county making it one of the poorest in the state with less than 50% of the adult population having a high school diploma or its equivalent. Through a High Schools That Work (HSTW) grant from the Southern Regional Education Board and a state designated and funded affiliation with the International Center for Leadership In Education, Howard, along with strong support from the school system, led a school reform effort that received state and national attention culminating in her being named the 2008 NASSP National High School Principal of the Year. Through a research-based reform model guided by the 12 key practices of HSTW, Howard and her leadership team established a School of **H.O.P.E.** based on **H**igher Expectations (abolishing the dual track and putting all students in college-preparatory classes and opening doors for Advanced Placement (AP) courses; offering **O**pportunities for Success (mastery / modular approach to mathematics, “no zero” grading policy, and after-school tutoring with teachers and peers; **P**ersonalizing Learning Environment (teachers-as-advisors stressing relationships, 4 x 4 block scheduling, and face-to-face parent contact); and providing **E**xperiences in Real-World Problem Solving (youth apprenticeship placements in the community through work-based learning and articulation with Oconee Fall Line Technical College for dual enrollment).

Over the past fifteen years, the Jefferson County School System has managed several successful partnerships that resulted in positive project implementation. The school system was the driving force in establishing our community collaborative SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc. This collaborative began as the Jefferson County Family Connection and was established in 1994

through the interagency council with the goals of improving economic capacity, school success, and child health. The Jefferson County Family Connection became a partner with Communities in Schools during the 2000-2001 school year and established SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., a non-profit agency focused on improving quality of life for families in Jefferson County with the school system serving as fiscal agent and driving partner. Collaborative members include all of the county's social agencies, county government, law enforcement, business representatives, the faith community, our local technical college, parents, and students. Through this strong collaborative, a network of blended opportunities and services for families in the county has been established and is working well. Referrals have been streamlined among agencies that are now more competent in discussing problems and issues through monthly board meetings and quarterly full collaborative meetings. Among its accomplishments, the collaborative received a Safe Schools, Healthy Students federal grant for three years totaling over \$2.8 million dollars. The school system served as fiscal agent for this project and was able to use staff and resources to support the full implementation of this community-wide project.

Some of the other successful partnerships that had positive project implementation are ones with Oconee Fall Line Technical College (OFTC), the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), and the International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE). The partnership and articulation with OFTC has resulted in the school system often being touted as the model for dual enrollment for the state of Georgia with one of the highest per size rates of seniors graduating with both a diploma and a technical college seal. In working with SREB through both High Schools That Work (HSTW) and Making Middle Grades Work grants, the school system has made significant progress in both academic areas as well as institutionalizing job-embedded professional learning at the high school level. The HSTW efforts at Jefferson County High

School brought national attention to the staff and its principal, Dr. Molly Howard who was named the 2008 NASSP National High School Principal of the year. As a result of a Georgia Department of Education Daggett school designation and working with the ICLE under Dr. Willard Daggett's direction, Dr. Howard and her leadership staff presented at the 2008 16th Annual Model School Conference in Orlando in a featured session entitled: "Leading for Secondary School Redesign".

Description of sustainability of initiatives implemented by the LEA

The Jefferson County School System values professional learning that is job-embedded providing opportunities for teachers to build their content and pedagogical knowledge and to examine practices that are based on student learning data. For example, the superintendent of Schools, Dr. Howard, who is a nationally known professional developer, led over sixty system and school administrators and teacher leaders in a year-long professional learning on assessment during the 2010-11 school year. These sessions were held in the evenings, and attendance was voluntary. The response to these monthly sessions was positive and pervasive. Each of the school teams were involved in re-delivering the assessment information and in bringing feedback from the school staffs. Through this initiative, several significant outcomes resulted. The group spearheaded a shift to move away from ability grouping and to redo how students were assessed and grouped for instruction which was instituted in 2011-12. Other outcomes were an examination of grading practices and policies and a move toward standards-based grading which is being piloted at one of the middle schools. This is just one example of the commitment by the school system to be sure that initiatives are carried out with fidelity and integrity and that professional learning is job-embedded to the point that it is sustained.

Resources

Align use of Federal and State funds (GA Striving Reader Subgrant Application, page 21)

FY12	Title I Funds (before carry-over)	Title II Part A Funds	Title VI Part B Funds
LEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$264,208 for system-level teacher development specialist and instructional coaches to deliver job-embedded professional learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Each Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carver Elementary \$166,693 for teachers & paraprofessionals • \$6,277 Classworks • Louisville Academy \$167,765 for teacher & paraprofessionals • \$11,758 Classworks • Wrens Elementary \$128,079 for teachers & paraprofessionals • \$11,161 Classworks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$250 for substitutes • \$58,000 salary, benefits for teacher • \$2,000 stipends • \$7,200 for consultant services • \$4,300 registration fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$10,740 Classworks software
Each Middle and High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louisville Middle \$145,235 for teachers & paraprofessionals • \$6,786 Classworks • Wrens Middle \$48,102 for teachers & paraprofessionals • \$4,818 Classworks • Jefferson Co. High \$195,156 for teachers & paraprofessionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$250 for substitutes • \$1,500 stipends • \$11,000 for consultant services • \$3,300 registration fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$10,740 Classworks software • \$1,000 supplies

- LEA Use of Title I Resources: The LEA uses Title I funds for professional learning in the form of instructional coaches to deliver job-embedded professional learning.
- LEA Use of Title II Resources – Based on the Title II needs assessment in the spring of 2011, funds are used to meet the following system goals: every teacher and paraprofessional highly qualified, reduction of class size in kindergarten through grade three to 18 students per class,

quality professional learning in mathematics and literacy, quality professional learning on differentiated instruction, and creation of a quality mentoring program. To meet these goals, Title II funds are used at each elementary school to fund one teacher to reduce class sizes in the early grades. In addition, funds are used to pay for substitutes and registration fees for teachers to attend professional learning activities with a focus on Lexile scores, integrating technology, differentiated instruction, CCGPS redelivery and literacy (writing workshops, standards based best practices, DOK). A consultant works with staff at each elementary and middle school for nine days during the year on DOK levels, differentiated instruction, and formative assessment, with emphasis on mathematics. Stipends are paid to a teacher at each elementary school to attend a local university to receive the Reading Endorsement and for teachers to mentor new teachers at each school.

- Title I and Title II Resources at Each School – Title I funds are used primarily for personnel. Title I also partially funds the Tier 2-3 portion of Classworks for the three elementary and two middle schools. Since Title II funds are used primarily for reduced class size and professional learning, the only resources located at the schools are professional learning materials for book studies.

Clear alignment plan for SRCL and all other plans

In addition to the SRCL grant funding, the Jefferson County School System will continue to invest in literacy efforts, curriculum alignment including CCGPS roll-out, and quality professional learning for teachers and staff members. The system pledges to implement a systematic plan to improve literacy instruction and opportunities by aligning SRCL funding with other programs supported by federal funds including Title I, Title II-A of the ESEA, Bright from the Start, IDEA Act of 2006, and state and local funds. For instance, the school system will continue to fund Classworks, the universal screener and interventions software for RTI Tiers 2-4

through a combination of funding from IDEA, Title I, and Title II-A which will support the literacy efforts. The system will use Title I and Title II-A funds to reduce class size and to provide support for interventions which will also enhance the literacy efforts afforded by SRCL funds. The school system will use its technology team and available e-rate, eSPLOST and local technology funds to support the software, hardware, and non-print media that the SRCL funds will bring.

The school system plan is to maximize the benefit of SRCL and other funding for teachers and students; to communicate clearly that programs will be non-competitive with each other; to integrate program activities to avoid repetition; and to maximize the benefits to students and minimize the costs per teacher and students as good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars. One of the benefits of a small school system is that a small staff makes it easier to communicate and to consolidate initiatives. There are fewer levels of bureaucracy, and it is much easier to ensure against duplication and repetition of people. As a result of this effort, the system and each of our schools have in place a school improvement plan that has decreased previously fragmented efforts. Our current plans focus on improved academic achievement and assessment practices, targeted professional learning, instructional technology planning, and curriculum alignment and development. This more systematic approach to school improvement initiatives has highlighted a need for a more systematic sustainability plan for the literacy goals, a noted aspect of the Striving Reader activities.

List of resources available at each building

Elementary	Middle Schools	High School
Average of 4 non-modern student computers per	Average of 2 non-modern student computers per	Average of 1 non-modern student computer per classroom

classroom	classroom	
Mini lab with 8-9 computers	Mini lab 8-9 computers	4 vocational labs with 25 computers
4 document cameras	2 document cameras	
7 digital cameras	8 digital cameras	25 digital cameras
30% of classrooms have interactive white boards	46% of classrooms have interactive white boards	69% of classrooms have interactive white boards
25 computer lab	Two 25-computer labs	Two 25-computer labs
Generic list of shared resources in every K-12 building:		
Galileo		
Software for intervention and remediation		
Microsoft Office, including Publisher		
Video distribution, united streaming		
Leveled texts – limited in quantity and diversity		
Trade books – fiction and nonfiction – limited in quantity and diversity		
Thinking Maps		
Adequate print materials in the media center, but up-to-date materials are needed.		
Minimal audio-books, DVDs, Videos, TVs, periodicals		
All classrooms have overhead projectors		
All classrooms have high speed Internet access		
All classrooms have at least one networked printer		
At least 2 sets of student response system per school		
All media centers have at least six computers.		
Additional shared resources in every K-8 building:		
Renaissance Place		
Minimal classroom libraries		
Additional shared resources in every 6-12 building:		
SRI licenses (through READ 180)		
Wireless Internet access in part of the buildings		
Mobile carts		
READ 180 software for at least 30 students per school		

A plan to ensure that no supplanting takes place

Even though the school system has been informed that supplanting will be allowed with this grant, the system will make every effort to use funds to support literacy efforts that will supplement and enhance rather than supplant those funds that are already committed because of our efforts to sustain the Striving Reader Project activities.

Detail of how SRCL will add value to the existing resources in the schools

The school system has acknowledged that there is noted critical area for literacy improvement is in the early learning centers, pre-school programs, and in the elementary schools. The primary and elementary students have a dire need for extended work in the foundational reading skills, writing skills, and overall literacy components of learning. Jefferson County students often lack any literacy support from home. As a result of the literacy needs of the students, Jefferson County educators need to be equipped to provide students with viable, sustainable skills and opportunities that will not only show an increase in test scores but also more importantly an increase in all literacy expectations, from early literacy skills to literacy strategies for reading, writing, and communication. The literacy focus for Jefferson County will need to extend into a partnership with Head Start, family day care facilities, the Jefferson County library, and SHIPS for Youth (Family Connection and CIS) to target younger children who are not receiving the literacy needs in the home. Not only will Jefferson County teachers need systematic and monitored professional learning opportunities to improve literacy instruction in the classroom to meet the literacy demands of the CCGPS, but also the Jefferson County teachers will provide professional learning that they have received to the early support systems' personnel on Saturdays, in the evenings, or in the summer. The goal is to train personnel in daycares or other early learning centers on different literacy strategies to help young children in their comprehension and vocabulary development. This partnership will create a strong alliance on behalf of the children as they enter the Jefferson County school system. The literacy needs of the younger children will be a critical component in establishing literacy goals for the county because of the rigorous demands of the literary, informational, and foundational reading demands of the (CCGPS).

The second critical literacy need is in improving the content literacy expectations as set forth by the CCGPS and the College and Career Readiness Performance Index. As evident by the performance on the current state assessments, SATs, and other post-secondary measurements, Jefferson County

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students are lacking skills necessary in reading, writing, and speaking in the content areas. A critical focus will be to improve literacy skills needed to achieve in English Language Arts, math, social studies, science, and technical subjects, as indicated by the CCGPS. Again, a systematic and monitored professional learning community will be essential in training Jefferson County teachers on evidence-based literacy strategies that are needed to increase the literacy scores of the students. The professional learning will also need to extend on how to choose appropriate materials and technology to support students as they work to increase their literacy skills. Currently, many Jefferson County teachers are lacking the expertise in this critical area.

Perhaps the most critical component for ensuring a strong literacy plan for Jefferson County is in the area of literacy assessment and evaluation. Currently, Jefferson County is using DIBELS as well as Classworks as the universal screener for students through grade eight. However, a major concern is the lack of true understanding as to how to use these instruments effectively to guide instruction and need. Another concern is the lack of a universal screener for high school students. Also, a lack of understanding regarding Lexiles and what that instrument means in selecting reading materials is of concern. This concern is only going to increase with the issue of text complexity evident in Reading Standard 10 in the CCGPS. Professional learning and training in understanding the different prongs to measure reading materials will be important: quantitative, qualitative, and reader to task. Also, assistance in selecting appropriate reading measures and how to use them will be necessary. Most importantly, the ability to use formative assessments throughout instruction to measure reading growth will be another component of needed professional learning.

Management Plan and Key Personnel:

	Individual Responsible	Supervisor
Project Director	Dr. Donnie Hodges	Dr. Molly Howard

Purchasing	Dr. Donnie Hodges	Dr. Molly Howard
Site-Level Coordinators	See chart below	Principals
Professional Learning Coordinator	Mrs. Cindy Rabun	Dr. Molly Howard
Technology Coordinator	Mrs. Lynn Hopper	Mrs. Cindy Rabun
Assessment Coordinator	Mrs. Cindy Rabun	Dr. Molly Howard

The Jefferson County Public Schools has a qualified and expert infrastructure. Dr. Donnie Hodges, Assistant Superintendent, will serve as Project Director for the SRCL Project and monitor the day-to-day operation of the early learning portion of the project. Dr. Hodges has over twenty years experience at the central office level and has written or collaborated in the writing of and managed a number of grants for the school system including *Reading First, High Schools That Work, Making Middle Grades Work, Next Generation School Project, 21st Century Community Learning Center, and Safe Schools, Healthy Students.* Dr. Hodges has served as Title I Director for the school system for more than ten years and has extensive experience with federal programs and budgets. Dr. Hodges is currently the Director of Pre-K and has served in that capacity since 1994. She will wear “two hats” in this project: Project Director for the SRCL Project and Coordinator for Early Learning.

School Project Coordinators for the SRCL Project will be named at all six of the schools.

Even though the principals will be expected to be very involved with the grant, school level directors will be named to be responsible for the day-to-day grant operations.

SCRL grant operations	School	Position
Dr. Donnie Hodges	Jefferson County BOE	Coordinator for Early Learning
Ms. Tiffany Pitts	Carver Elementary	Assistant Principal
Mrs. Dana Williams	Louisville Academy	Instructional Coach
Mrs. Ginger Parris	Wrens Elementary	Instructional Coach

Ms. Jacqueline Jukes	Louisville Middle	Instructional Coach
Mrs. Stacy Arnold	Wrens Middle	Assistant Principal
Mrs. Stephanie Hildebrant	Jefferson County High	Assistant Principal

All members of the management team have been closely involved in the literacy task force that worked on the grant at the system level and the school level and in the development of the system literacy plan. Currently, they are all involved in the roll-out of the CCGPS. This roll-out, as well as learning to implement the new CCGPS with fidelity, is an essential part of the school system’s literacy focus. The members have researched and studied all aspects of the CCGPS initiative and have participated in collaborative discussions to examine the components of the Striving Reader Project that will best benefit the students of Jefferson County. Each member of the team understands her individual role in serving as the literacy leader in her school. Each member has had experience in planning and conducting professional learning. The members are also involved in the writing and implementing of school improvement plans. Since they have helped to write the individual school plans, they have a full understanding of the existing school data and system needs, forming the basis of the grant.

Sustainability Plan

Through this grant, Jefferson County School System leadership has the intent to further efforts to enrich the culture of learning where teachers accept responsibility for student learning within a network of support from peers and administrators through job-embedded professional learning that becomes more and more internalized and institutionalized. The system will continue to conduct an in-depth study of the CCGPS literacy demands.

As Jefferson County staff becomes more and more familiar with the demands of CCGPS of both

foundational and adolescent literacy, they will be able to lead their own professional learning, thus building sustainability. The professional learning provided will be systematic and connected to all the aspects that participants have learned through the Striving Reader activities. Also, leadership from the county office will be instrumental in the planning and monitoring of that professional learning. The professional learning sessions will be monthly and with targeted topics based on data and needs as indicated in the school/system's school improvement plan. The Jefferson County leadership will participate in the trainings provided through the Striving Reader grant, so they will have first-hand knowledge of all aspects of the professional learning piece. Any outside consultants needed or desired will be determined based on recommendations from the Georgia Department of Education and national research. The purpose of empowering the Jefferson County staff is to allow the staff to embed all aspects of the learning into the existing school day without depending on afterschool, Saturday or summer professional learning time, based on the fact that such programs are expensive and Jefferson County does not have the monetary resources consistently to support such programs. Also, since Jefferson County staff will become comfortable and knowledgeable with all aspects of the CCGPS particularly through content areas beyond ELA, Jefferson County will not have a need to add any additional staff to sustain the project. The goal is to maximize existing resources and personnel to ensure growth and sustainability. One approach is to have a teacher training team that will redeliver and train any new teachers or early learning center personnel to Jefferson County. All Jefferson County schools are Title I Schoolwide Projects. Title I-A and Title II-A funds will be brokered to re-direct the work to support the initiative beyond the grant. It will be imperative that resources including time, materials, and energy be used and allocated wisely to meet student and teacher needs. Time must be allowed and fiercely protected for teacher professional development and data analysis. The school system plans to assign teacher leaders as instructional mentor teachers to assist and promote content literacy skills to all content area teachers.

The greatest sustainability challenge will be with the technology aspects of the grant. Jefferson County’s Board of Education, along with early learning centers and school system personnel, are so dedicated to this effort that existing eSPLOST funds, e-rate, and general funds will be used to maintain

DOE Use Only	DOE Use Only:	DOE Use Only:
Date and Time Received:	Received By:	Project Number

and expand the technology aspects of the grant.

There is a strong commitment from our community to ensure that the literacy initiative will benefit our students. The commitment extends from the high school student association, Jefferson County Rotary, and Louisville Kiwanis to have ongoing fundraisers to help sustain this effort. Also, all school personnel will have the opportunity under a voluntary basis to have money withdrawn monthly from their pay checks and will be used to fund the FERST foundation subscriptions at the Jefferson County Library. The goal is to make literacy the number one effort of the entire Jefferson County community.

Appendices are on hard copies as per Ms. Morrill (via email).

School Name: Jefferson County Early Learning Collaborative		Total Grant Request: \$214,956
System: Jefferson County		School Contact Information:
		Name: Dr. Donnie Hodges
		Position: Assistant Superintendent/ Pre-K Director
Number of Students		Phone Number: 478-625-7626
		Fax Number: 478-625-7459
	1168 (below age 5 in the county)	Email Address: hodgesd@jefferson.k12.ga.us
Number of Teachers		
	N/A	

Free/Reduced Lunch %	26.5% - poverty rate in county 84.35% - school system	
Principal's Name: Dr. Molly Howard (Superintendent of Schools)		Other Reform Efforts in School: None
		Principal's Signature: On paper copies as per Ms. Morrill

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant

School and Center Cover Sheet

Jefferson County School System: Early Learning Initiative

Jefferson County is a large, sparsely populated county in the 12th Congressional District. With information from Bright from the Start, the Jefferson County School System has identified ten learning centers that serve birth to three years olds in the county. The learning centers are primarily located in the three main towns in the county – Wrens, Louisville and Wadley - that are located along U.S. Highway #1 that runs north to south through the county. Louisville is near the geographic center of the county while Wrens is in the north and Wadley is in the south. The Head Start Center is located in Louisville and has satellite classes at Wrens Elementary (in the north) and Carver Elementary in Wadley (in the south).

Jefferson County has seven Georgia Pre-K (lottery-funded) classrooms in the county. Four classes are located at Wrens Elementary (in the north), two at Louisville Academy Elementary (in the middle) and one at Carver Elementary (in the south) which give the system 154 slots. At one time the school system had 11 classrooms with 220 slots at its peak enrollment in 1995-96; however, because the county and the school system have lost population and enrollment, the classes have been cut to seven.

Jefferson County has approximately 1168 children under age five (2010 U.S. Census) with 36.3% of them living in single parent homes. Of these children, 30.2% of these children are born to mothers with less than 12 years of education (Annie E. Casey Foundation and 2010 Georgia County Guide). Of the approximate 1168, children under age five, less than half of them are served in a learning center of some type. In most instances, the children that are not in any type of learning center are the neediest and have less exposure to literacy materials and lack opportunities and encouragement to develop oral language. Sixty-one % of low-income families do not have a single book suitable for a child in their homes (FERST Foundation).

The school system recognizes that with such limited resources and few structured early learning centers available in the large geographic area of the county the leadership must spearhead the early learning initiative. Two important providers are part of this initiative: The Jefferson County Library and SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc. (the county collaborative that includes Family Connection and Communities in Schools).

The Jefferson County Library System is unique because it has three libraries located in the three major towns in the county – Wrens, Louisville, and Wadley – that again follow along U.S. Hwy. #1 that cuts north to south through the county. Most counties with populations the size of Jefferson only have one centrally located library. The fact that the county has three libraries eases transportation issues and allows for more people to have access to the resources afforded by the libraries. Even though library hours are limited because of budget restraints and trying to spread resources over three branches, the county is fortunate to have this resource available.

SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., is the county community collaborative that serves and advocates for families. This collaborative began as the Jefferson County Family Connection and was established in 1994 through the interagency council with the goals of improving economic capacity, school success, and child health. The Jefferson County Family Connection became a partner with Communities in Schools during the 2000-2001 school year and established SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., a non-profit agency focused on improving quality of life for families in Jefferson County with the school system serving as fiscal agent and driving partner. Collaborative members include all of the county's social agencies, county and city government, law enforcement, business representatives, the faith community, the local technical college, parents, and students.

The school system, along with its early learning center providers, the library, and the community collaborative, recognizes that many of the neediest children under five are not being served by any entity. The initiative must address children not being served as well as those currently in centers, Head Start, and/or Pre-K. Another source of assistance in the community is the number of churches that are willing to partner with the school system in dispensing information and supporting programs that help children and their families.

“The Why” document emphasizes that “oral language skills in and of themselves importantly underpin reading and listening comprehension during kindergarten and preschool” (Lynch, Van den Broek, Kremer, Kendeou, White, & Lorch, 2008). Typically, “many early literacy programs, including ones in Georgia, do not focus nearly enough on oral language skills” (p.62). For children in Jefferson County, this is confounded by the high rate of poverty and the isolation of a large, sparsely populated county. The intent of this initiative is to equip learning centers and parents of children birth to three with the techniques, technology, resources, and materials to develop oral language and to provide rich literacy experiences for these children in order to prepare them to be college and career ready.

Project Design:

Analysis and identification of student and teacher data

In looking at the elementary school data in preparation for discussion with early learning providers, the system literacy task force noted that various data points for the upper grades are consistent and point to a major deficit in reading achievement including vocabulary and comprehension. All three elementary schools lack consistent data across the school. Because not all of the elementary schools utilize DIBELS or have all staff members who are skilled in assessing literacy skills, the data is often inconsistent or presents an unclear picture. In addition,

there is not enough diagnostic data for any grade (which is being addressed in the K-5 SRCL school applications.) All three elementary schools are examining others ways to assess students' progress in reading achievement which will help early learning providers know weaknesses to address.

Although specific, hard data for children birth to three is at best scant and mostly anecdotal, it is clear that great deficits exist because of the overwhelming poverty in the county. The Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning – Third Edition (DIAL-3) is given at the beginning to Pre-K to identify Significantly Developmentally Delayed Students (SDD). They are assessed again in the spring to note progress and to determine placements and next steps for children who have shown little or no progress. As can be noted in the chart below, in the fall of 2011-12, the DIAL-3 was administered to 151 Pre-K students in the school system. Of those tested, it was determined that 9% were significantly delayed in the concepts area , 11% were delayed in the language area, and 8% were delayed in the total area.

In the fall of 2010, the DIAL-3 was administered to 162 Pre-K students in the school system. Results showed that 15% were significantly delayed in the concepts area, 15% were delayed in the language area, and 9% were delayed in the total area. According to the DIAL-3 information, the normal expectation for any group of children would be a delay of 7% in each of the areas of concepts, language and total (American Guidance Service, Inc.).

The DIAL-3 is the only consistent assessment data we have on children entering Pre-K in the county. This lack of meaningful, diagnostic data for early learning is clearly a weakness that needs to be addressed.

DIAL-3 Pre-K	2011	Total Number Tested	Concepts Delay	Language Delay	Total Delay

Carver Elementary	22	9%	9%	14%
Louisville Academy	44	2%	2%	2%
Wrens Elementary	85	13%	15%	9%
TOTAL:	151	9%	11%	8%
Expected delays (as per DIAL-3)		7%	7%	7%

DIAL-3 Pre-K 2010	Total Number Tested	Concepts Delay	Language Delay	Total Delay
Carver Elementary	27	15%	22%	7%
Louisville Academy	56	20%	7%	14%
Wrens Elementary	79	11%	15%	6%
TOTAL:	162	15%	15%	9%
Expected delays (as per DIAL-3)		7%	7%	7%

Needs assessment

On November 16, 2011, representatives from the school system, Head Start, Jefferson County Library, SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc. (community collaborative), and 90% of the early learning centers in the county met to conduct an assessment needs for early literacy in children ages birth to three in Jefferson County. The group looked at poverty data for the county and reading data for Pre-K and grades K through three for the school system. They also discussed the technology and teacher professional learning needs for early learning in the county. The group used the following materials:

- Disaggregated poverty data

- Data from the FERST Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Georgia Kids County, and the Georgia County Guide
- Disaggregated test score data from Pre-K and grades K through three
- Needs assessment adapted from Reading First
- Discussion with representatives from the school system, Head Start, the Jefferson County Library, SHIPS for Youth, Inc. (community collaborative), and early learning centers

Areas of concern

Areas of concern as they relate to the research-based practices found in the “What” document:

- Early learning providers do not have the appropriate data to make informed decisions about literacy.
- All data points to the fact that at least 50% of the students in the school system are not ready for grade level instruction based on the Lexile requirements of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS).
- At least 50% of the students in the school system are not ready for the increased rigor that will be needed for CCGPS.
- The achievement gap in various subgroups (students with disabilities and African-American) remains significant.
- The number of students who exceed the standards in all state assessments is well below the state and RESA areas.
- Specific areas of concern identified by the early learning providers regarded the following about readiness: speech delays, lagging gross and fine motor skills, lack of engagement and motivation, lack of opportunities and verbal acuity, attention deficits, and English as a second language.

- Specific areas of concern identified by the early learning providers recognized the following about parental involvement: lack of parental engagement, lack of self-help skills, economic struggles (unemployment rate, lack of funds for child care, lack of ability to access information and help, and lack of technology access).
- The early learning centers in the county have few resources and little to no technology which limits their access to professional learning from such sources as Bright from the Start.
- Early childhood readiness is difficult to assess due to transportation and access to the poorest and most isolated children who lack opportunities to acquire learning approaches that support development and school success. These children miss out on the needed multiple opportunities to construct meaning from spoken words and to express thoughts with sounds, words, and gestures.
- Parental involvement and understanding of literacy are critical to student success.
- Economic conditions (unemployment and few job opportunities) affect the resources and access available to the early learning centers in the county.
- Lack of literacy materials in the homes and in the early learning centers limits opportunities for young children to gain literacy acuity and schema. Children need these chances to develop foundations for reading and writing particularly through read-alouds which should be rich with vocabulary and language.
- The daycare providers see the need for vision and hearing screening in their centers because many of their clients do not have preventive care from a doctor.
- The daycare providers expressed a need for knowing how to assess and identify children who are delayed or are not showing progress as the other children.

Identifies the areas (the specific age, grade levels, or content areas) in which the concern originates

These areas of concern originate at birth and span the early years of language development. The lack of vocabulary development due to a deficit literacy home environment originates from birth into school age and beyond. Speech delays impact the child's exposure to language development, and therefore, the verbal acuity is limited and often non existing. Since there are few if any reading materials in the home or the parents are unable to read, the child enters the early learning centers struggling with the basic components of language. Often the child lacks motivation and engagement in the literacy instruction that occurs. Because the centers must play "a catch up" game, the child often enters Pre-K or Head Start and elementary school with literacy deficits. Even though Jefferson County does not have many students who have English as a second language, many of the strategies associated with teaching ELL students will benefit the students in Jefferson County's early learning centers.

Identifies the areas of concern and details the steps the school system and early learning centers have or have not taken to address the problem.

Steps that have been taken to address the problem:

The Jefferson County Library has been instrumental in getting the FERST Foundation established in Jefferson County. The FERST Foundation for Childhood Literacy is a 501(c) 3 non-profit with the mission to "provide books for local communities to prepare all Georgia preschool children for reading learning success." Packets include an age appropriate hard cover book with a monthly newsletter containing community resource information along with a book guide specific to the monthly title mailed to the child's home from birth to the age of five. During the first year, Jefferson County raised \$16,237 to fund books for 451 children through the efforts of various civic clubs, private donations, and fund raisers. To date the county library has registered 228 children. Registration did not begin until nine months after fundraising began.

The goal for the second year is to register 50% of all children under five which would be 584 children. This would take \$21,024. The cost per year for all 1168 children in Jefferson County under age five would be \$42,048. The Jefferson County SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., (community collaborative of Family Connection and Communities in Schools) has a family resource center located in Louisville that has parenting and literacy materials available for check out. SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc. also has a former Pre-K Resource Coordinator/Transition Coach who the school system has deployed to SHIPS to work with Communities in Schools and to support Pre-K registration and family needs.

The Jefferson County SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., has a community collaborative that meets monthly to discuss resources and services available to families in the county. Those representatives attending the collaborative include the school system, the county library, DFACS, the health department, mental health services, early learning centers, county and city government, law enforcement, chamber of commerce, businesses, and parents. This collaborative has been effective in having these entities communicate and share ideas.

The school system and Head Start have a good working relationship in that Head Start has classes that are housed in two of the elementary schools (Wrens Elementary in Wrens in the north end and Carver Elementary in Wadley in the south end of the county). The school system and Head Start also have an agreement to share transportation and special education services.

The school system initiated a comprehensive strategic planning process during the 2010-11 school year that involved community meetings, extensive parent surveys, and planning retreats with school and system level leadership, teachers, and parents. The chief need that was identified in the process was a comprehensive literacy plan for the school system particularly with the advent of the CCGPS and the College and Career Readiness standards. The Board of

Education and the superintendent have pledged to keep this literacy in the forefront as decisions are made about funding and priorities.

As a result of the 2011 Georgia legislative session, the lottery funded Pre-K Program was cut to 160 for students and 170 for staff throughout Georgia. In spite of a strained budget and continuing austerity cuts from the state, the Board of Education made the decision to restore the 20 days for students and staff for Pre-K for the 2011-12 school year through the use of local funds. This extraordinary measure shows the commitment and understanding the Board has for the need of early learning opportunities the county.

Through the brokering of local and federal funds, the Board of Education has secured two community interpreters to work with Hispanic families throughout the county. The school system is constantly looking for ways to communicate with these families through a variety of media and methods.

The school system has a Child Find program that seeks to identify, evaluate, and/or refer and provide support for students with special needs in Jefferson County. The Special Education Department conducts an aggressive media campaign each July with fliers in the county newspaper and has PSAs on the local radio station. Announcements are provided to local churches for inclusion in church bulleting and/or displayed on church announcement boards. Referral information is provided to local pediatricians, health department, and Department of Family and Children Services for display in offices. Referral information provided to local pediatricians, health department and Department of Family and Children Services for display in offices. All local public and private childcare centers are provided pamphlets which outline developmental milestones to be distributed to parents of their clients. The DIAL-3 is administered to students entering Pre-K to identify significant developmental delays.

The school system is making a concentrated effort to offer experiential knowledge to students at all grade levels through field trips (both actual and virtual) and linking past experiences to text. The “Why” document emphasizes that “in keeping with the expectation of a rigorous curriculum and standards for all students, including English Language Learners, students with exceptional needs, and other at-risk populations, it is crucial that teachers access students’ prior knowledge and build upon students’ background experiences. By taking into consideration the individual needs and strengths of all students, teachers build a foundation for the implementation of appropriate strategies that lead to academic success” (p.43). In spite of budget restraints, the Board of Education and the superintendent have made this a priority which sends a strong message to parents and the community of the importance of experiential knowledge in the development of vocabulary and oral language.

Steps needed to be taken to address the problem:

- The school system, Head Start, the county library, and the early learning centers must work together more closely and more formally to make an impact on readiness and literacy levels as well as assessment of children entering Pre-K
- Parental involvement must be addressed in a more systematic, formalized manner with providers agreeing to assume specific roles in a parenting program.
- Technology needs and access of early learning centers and families must be addressed.
- Professional learning needs of the early learning centers must be addressed and become job-embedded.
- The churches and county agencies must be involved to help identify and communicate with the families of children under five not being served by an early learning center.

- The Jefferson County Health DFACS must be involved in identifying children under five who are not being served by an early learning center.

Root cause analysis

The root or underlying cause of the areas of concern found in the needs assessment

Using the “Five Why’s” root cause analysis method, the early learning providers determined that students come to Pre-K with lagging verbal acuity and speech delays because of limited language. Their language and vocabulary are affected by their lack of experiences which is a result of the culture of poverty and living in a geographically isolated area. These problems result in the lack of transportation, access to technology, meaningful verbal exchanges, and rich, literacy opportunities.

The lack of language and verbal acuity gravely affects students’ ability to:

- Use phonics to decode text
- Attend to text and persevere
- Comprehend and produce text commensurate with their age
- Process and connect ideas and relationships
- Build a framework with which to connect vocabulary and stories

The specific grade levels that are affected

All ages and grade levels are affected. Children must have the physical, emotional, social, literacy, and cognitive development to be able to read. The lack of this foundation directly impacts the foundational reading piece in the early grades, as well as other components of literacy such as writing and speaking.

A specific rationale for the determination of the cause

The culture of poverty that exists in Jefferson County has significantly impacted the language acquisition of children. The “Why” document of the Georgia Literacy Plan states “the code for translating the written word into speech. Oral language skills include skills that relate to deep understanding of spoken and written communication.” These code-related skills can usually be mastered within a couple of years of instruction. This is not the case with oral language skills which take years to develop and are “generally considered to include comprehending and producing complex sentences, drawing inferences, having the ability to listen, and, perhaps most importantly, acquiring new vocabulary. (Lynch, Van den Broek, Kremer, Kendeou, White, & Lorch, 2008).

The “Why” document also stresses that “children with insufficient oral language may struggle in later elementary grades and beyond as children with insufficient oral language may struggle in later elementary grades and beyond as they encounter what K. Stahl (2007, p. 56) refers to as “heavy texts” or long books with well-developed themes, complex plots, and sentence structure and complex vocabulary. The children who come from homes in Jefferson County where oral language is not developed and is not recognized as important will require intense interventions. The earlier this intervention can occur and the earlier parents can be helped to recognize the importance of oral language development, the better.

The “Why” document also states that “unfortunately, Georgia’s child care currently is not of the quality that it needs to have to support early vocabulary and oral language skills in an optimal fashion” (p.64). Even though efforts are being made by Bright from the Start, there is still much work to be done. The school system is pleased that so many of the early learning centers in the county have come to the table for this literacy initiative and are anxious to participate in professional learning. This is an important first step in addressing the cause of the literacy deficits in the county.

The early literacy providers have not worked closely and formally enough together to ensure that children come to Pre-K and four-year Head Start with appropriate literacy skills and verbal acuity. A systematic approach must be established to ensure that children begin to acquire learning approaches that support development and school success. These must be identified, communicated, and supported among the early literacy providers and their parents.

What has been done in the past to address the problem?

The community collaborative through SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., has made some progress in getting the early learning providers to the table at least to discuss early literacy needs; however, it has been difficult to get the early learning providers to come to meetings regularly because they are short staffed and cannot leave during the day for many meetings. The providers have more or less given “lip service” to the effort but have never dug in and gotten to the root problem. SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc. has also had several parent initiatives in the past – including Parents as Teachers – that were not fully institutionalized enough to continue after funding ended and personnel changed.

New information the needs assessment uncovered

In looking at the DIAL-3 data for those students entering Pre-K in 2011-12, it was determined that the percentage of students who were identified as Significantly Developmentally Delayed (SDD) in language had decreased from 2010-11 by 6 % which may be due in part to the loss of 40 Pre-K slots since the previous year (cuts by Bright from the Start due to low enrollment history). Since Pre-K has a first come – first serve registration, the parents of the children who are most in poverty and have few resources are the ones who are the last to register their children. In other words, the children who need the service the most are the ones who are the last to be registered and often miss out on service.

Another finding during the needs assessment process was that the early learning providers were not aware of many resources that were available through the county library. They also found out much more about how to access the FERST Foundation books for children. It was also agreed that The SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., Family Contact will pick up applications for the FERST Foundation from the early learning centers and take them to one of the three county libraries.

Site-based Literacy Team

Members of the Early Learning Literacy Team:

Superintendent of Schools	Tippy Toes Daycare
Asst. Supt. For Student Learning	A Child’s Success Place
Asst. Supt. For Technology & Prof. Learning	King’s Heritage Place
Jefferson County Library Director	Kiddie Kollege Family Child Care
SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc. Family Contact	Kids’ World Childcare and Learning Center
Jefferson County Head Start Center Director	Louisville United Methodist Church Preschool
Ms. Cheryl’s Family Daycare	Wrens Christian Daycare Center
Five Star Learning Center	Wrens Child Development Center

The function of the site-based literacy team in terms of the needs assessment

The function of the site-based literacy team is to ensure that the early learning collaborative meets regularly, reviews the data, reviews research based best practices and strategies, and communicates regularly and systematically among the providers, the community collaborative providers and parents. This initiative will help ensure that the parental involvement program is coordinated and implemented as well as being sure that professional learning opportunities are offered and that they are needed and offered at the best times for the providers.

Minutes of the meetings of the site-based literacy team

Minutes of the meetings of the site-based literacy team are attached in the **Appendix**.

As an example, the following is the agenda portion from the November 16, 2011, meeting of the early learning providers where 90% of the early providers in the county were represented.

Jefferson County Schools
Title I Monitoring and Technical Assistance
System Initiatives and CLIP FY12*
Literacy Task Force
Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant – Early Learning
November 16, 2011
Board of Education at 2:00 p.m.
Agenda and minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introductions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verify contact information: addresses, phone numbers, and email
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Initiative
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Georgia Literacy Plan: The “What” – Birth to third year of life
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early learning in Jefferson County
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Needs Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timeline
Notes:

How the site-based literacy team communicates and includes all members of the staff in the decision making process

The site-based literacy team members have made the commitment that communication is the key to making an impact of early learning literacy in Jefferson County. Even though that seems obvious, providers have admitted that they get too engrossed in their day-to-day business and do not communicate enough. Information will be shared in regular meetings, and an email

group has been set up to ensure quick and constant communication. The Family Contact for SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., will serve as the link to the group and serve as a runner among the members which are spread over a land mass of 526 square miles. The school system will provide the funds for her transportation costs. She will relay information and keep members abreast of the latest information for the group. She will work with parental involvement and help ensure consistency among the providers. She will help with transitional data as children register for Pre-K and Head Start and coordinate hearing and vision screenings by the health department and the special education department of the school system.

The county library has pledged to be a conduit of information for the group and to continue offering technology access for parents. This will be particularly valuable since there are three sites that make transportation and access more viable to the literacy efforts. A stronger partnership between the school system and the county library can only strengthen the opportunities and resources for young children and their families.

Project Goals and Objectives

A clear list of project goals directly related to the identified needs

- To create a sustainable literacy program for early learning that will ensure that children will begin to acquire learning approaches that support development and school success; begin to construct meaning from spoken words; begin to express thoughts with sounds, words, and gestures so they are prepared for foundations for reading and writing when they enter Pre-K or four-year Head Start;
- To establish a sustainable, viable early learning parental involvement program for Jefferson County;

- To establish a means for gathering and assessing literacy needs for early learning in Jefferson County; and
- To establish a formalized system of sharing resources, professional learning opportunities, and technology access among early learning providers and parents.

A clear list of project objectives that relate to the implementing the goals identified:

- To provide professional learning for the staff of the early learning centers in implementing the birth through the third year of life standards from The “What” document of the Georgia Literacy Plan;
- To provide professional learning for staff of early learning centers on using data to inform instruction and to establish priorities for literacy instruction;
- To create partnerships with SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., and the county library system to design and spearhead a sustainable parental involvement program for early learning;
- To work with the county churches, the Jefferson County Health Department, the Jefferson County Department of Family and Children Services and local pediatricians to identify children under the age of five who are not receiving any services from one of the early learning centers; and
- To provide children birth to three years of age with access to a rich environment of print and other media at both the early learning centers and in the community through the FERST Foundation, the library system, SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., and the churches.

The research-based practices the “What” and “Why” documents as a guide for establishing goals and objectives.

The “What” and “Why” documents delineate clear, specific standards for all developmental levels from birth to twelfth grade. It makes reference not only to instructional practices, but also to the

need for professional learning for teachers and staff members, the effective use of technology and other media, a tiered instructional model, vertical alignment, and sustainability. This grant proposal for early learning focuses on the literacy development and, chiefly, the oral language development of children from birth to three as well as the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development of these young children. It will be imperative for the early learning providers to design sustainable, job-embedded professional learning for staff members in these areas along with strategies/methods on how to enhance instruction with technology and other media.

Considers practices already in place when determining goals and objectives:

Practices in place include the following;

- A community collaborative through SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., that meets monthly to discuss families and services. The early centers have been identified and have come to the table to put the literacy plan together. They have also shown a strong desire for professional learning and more structured and directed collaboration.
- SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., Family Contact has experience working with all the learning centers and the school system because of her experience as a Pre-K Resource Coordinator and Transition Coach.
- The Jefferson County Library has begun a successful campaign to establish the FERST Foundation in the county. Many civic clubs, private donors, and schools groups are involved in the fund raising and understand the importance of getting books in the hands of young children.
- The school system and Head Start have a positive, collaborative relationship – both formal and informal – on which to build stronger assessments and to share professional learning opportunities.

- The Child Care Resource and Referral Agency of Central Georgia which is funded in part by Bright from the Start offers state-approved training to daycare providers in the area.

Goals to be funded with other sources

- The Jefferson County Library will solicit funds and encourage fund raisers to support the FERST Foundation efforts in Jefferson County. The library system will offer computer access for parents and other community members.
- SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., will use Family Connection and Communities in Schools funds to pay for staff who support the Family Resource Center and services for children and families. The school system will provide funds for part of the salary for the Family Contact person and will provide transportation for her to work with the early learning centers as well as to make home visits.
- The Jefferson County Board of Education will make every effort to continue funding Pre-K at 180 days for children and the full school year professional days for staff in order to support early learning and to help families.

Scientific, Evidence-Based Literacy Plan

The Georgia Literacy Task Force defines 21st Century Literacy as *“the ability to speak, listen, read, and write, as well as to view print and non-print text in order to communicate effectively, think and respond critically, and to access and use multiple forms of media and information”* (p.33 of the “Why” document). This definition of literacy is the purpose of this literacy plan.

- Proposes a plan to implement the goals and objectives identified** (See chart below)
- Establishes who will implement** (See chart below)
- What will take place based on the “What” document** (See chart below)

Goal 1. *To create a sustainable literacy program for early learning that will ensure that children will begin to acquire learning approaches that support development and school*

success; begin to construct meaning from spoken words; begin to express thoughts with sounds, words, and gestures so they are prepared for foundations for reading and writing when they enter Pre-K or four-year Head Start.

a. Objectives	b. Who will implement	c. What will take place
a. To provide professional learning (PL) for the staff members of the early learning centers in implementing the birth through the third year of life standards from the “What” and “Why” documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Consultant (to train the school system trainers and staff in order to sustain and institutionalize practices) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine specific PL needs • Create PL calendar for the based on most convenient times and days for providers • Conduct PL based on above
b. To provide professional learning for the staff of the early learning centers on using data from the Developmental Profile 3 and other screeners to information instruction and to establish priorities for literacy instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School system teachers and school psychologist and psychometrist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine specific PL needs • Create PL calendar for the based on most convenient times and days for providers • Conduct PL based on above

Goal 2. *To establish a means for gathering and assessing literacy needs for early learning in Jefferson County.*

a. Objectives/Goal	b. Who will implement	c. What will take place
a. To provide professional learning on inclusion and working significantly with developmentally delayed students before the age of three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School system Special Education Director and school system psychologist and psychometrist and other school system teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine specific PL needs • Create PL calendar based on most convenient times and days for providers • Conduct PL based on above
b. To provide professional learning for staff on Child Find and services offered by the school system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School system Special Education Director and school system psychologist and psychometrist and other school system teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine specific PL needs • Create PL calendar based on most convenient times and days for providers • Conduct PL based on above

Goal 3. To establish a formalized system of sharing resources, professional learning opportunities, and technology access among early learning providers.

a. Objectives/Goal	b. Who will implement	c. What will take place
To provide children birth to three years of age with access to a rich environment of print and other media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early learning providers • Jefferson County Library • Churches • SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc. Family Contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technology and resources to early learning centers and libraries (see p.23-24 of this document) • Institute parent involvement program that helps parents access resources and understand importance of literacy experiences • Involve churches and community partners in identifying and offering services to children who are not being served • Expand the FERST Foundation participants
b. Objectives/Goal	b. Who will implement	c. What will take place
To work with the county churches, the health department, and DFACS to identify children under the age of five who are not receiving any services from one of the early learning centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc. • Jefferson County Library (FERST) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brochures • Web Site • Media (PSAs) • Cable TV • Software at the library • Books, puzzles, CDs, and manipulatives for check-out at the library • Access to computers at the library • Family resource center at SHIPS

Goal 4. To establish a sustainable, viable early learning parental involvement program for Jefferson County.

a. Objectives/Goal	b. Who will implement	c. What will take place
To partner with Ships for YOUTH, Inc., and the county library to design and spearhead a sustainable, parental involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc. • Jefferson County Library • Other collaborative members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly scheduled community parent nights • Implement parent program that is a toolkit of resources that enables public libraries

program for early learning		and early learning centers to prepare parents/ caregivers as their child’s first teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops for staff of library and early learning centers on early literacy practices • Take home literacy kits • Brochures • Bookmarks • posters
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Strategies and Materials (Existing and Proposed)

a. General list of current classroom resources

<p style="text-align: center;">Sample Early Learning Current Classroom Materials Prepared by Early Learning Literacy Task Force November 2011</p>	
Birth to 1	1-3 toddler
Climbers	Smart cycle
Push toys	Learning carpets
Exerciser/exersaucer	Print rich – labeling
Toys-manipulatives	Puzzles
Floor mats	Puppets
Soft books	Pop-up books
Board books	Big books
Blocks	Easels
Finger play	Music instruments
See n Say	Art supplies
	Centers: Blocks
	Kitchen/family

	Dramatic play
	Science

b. & c. Generic list of shared resources

At this time, the early learning providers do not formally share resources. The only common place for shared resources at the current time is the Jefferson County Library which has three sites located in Wrens, Louisville, and Wadley. In the needs assessment, it was determined that the early learning centers use the libraries at varying levels – some used the libraries constantly and others were hardly aware of the resources available. Most of the early learning providers were not aware of the Family Resource Center at SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc. This exercise was most helpful in helping the collaborative members see the need for communication and sharing the limited resources available in the county. A generic list of the shared resources that are available at the three library sites is as follows:

Jefferson County Library (Three sites: Wrens, Louisville, and Wadley)	
Available for use in the library	Available for check out
38 Computers for public use (across the 3 libraries) – not modern	Books
8 student computers (with learning software for use across the 3 libraries)	DVDs
1 digital camera for library system	Learning Kits
Flannel board for story hour	Leap Frogs
1 laminator for library system	Leap Pads
Big books for story hour	Puzzles
Headphones	Board books
TV & VHS	

d. List of resources needed to implement the literacy plan

Resources Needed to Implement the Grant	
Early Learning Providers	Jefferson County Library

Learning carpets	FERST Foundation subscriptions
Television	Software to check out to providers
Listening station & headphones	DVDs to check out to providers
Digital camera	Computers – access to <i>PBS Kids' Island</i>
Computer	Student computers / learning software
Printer – picture quality	Activity kits for check out (puzzles, flash cards, puppets, games)
Classroom libraries including: general and instructionally topic-related (fantasy, nonfiction, wordless, repetitive, informational, rhyming, predictable, familiar sequence)	Children's literature books, general and instructionally topic-related (fantasy, nonfiction, wordless, repetitive, informational, rhyming, predictable, familiar sequence, repetitive phrase, cumulative, multicultural,
Blocks	Die cut machine
Learning tablets	Dies in various fonts and shapes
Learning tablet software	
Laminating machine	
Die cutter machine	
Dies in various fonts and shapes	
Family literacy kits	
Developmental Profile 3 (DP-3) assessments	
DVDs	
Projector	
CDs (audio books and music)	
Refresh props in various learning centers to develop alphabetic principles and language development: i.e. dramatic play, dolls, dress up	Parent Involvement Toolkit & supplies (bookmarks, brochures, take home books,

clothes, props for kitchen play, props for cleaning play, blocks	
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e-g. Generic lists of activities that support classroom practices, activities that support literacy intervention, and additional strategies needed to support student success

Generic list of activities that support classroom practices
Georgia Early Learning Standards (GELS) based instruction
Language Experience activities
Opportunities for play that develops oral language
Read-alouds
Frequent progress monitoring
Building prior knowledge and experiences
Generic list of activities that support literacy intervention programs
Professional learning in identifying developmental delays
Professional learning in assessing developmental delays
Examining risk and protective factors (legal rights of students (i.e. parent permission to assess)
Conducting systematic observations of individual children
Assessing developmental status,
Creating rich and varied learning opportunities,
Planning and delivering services and supports
Providing intervention based on assessment data.
Generic list of additional strategies needed to support student success
Adopting appropriate assessment instruments and procedures
Making 21 st Century technology available to staff and students
Considering diverse needs of all learners
Instituting and supporting a strong parental involvement program
Building communication lines and foster trust among all partners

Project Procedures and Support

a. Details a sample schedule

Sample Early Learning Activity Schedule	
Prepared by Early Learning Literacy Task Force	
November 2011	
6:30-8:15	Arrival/Greet parents/Child-Initiated activities/Activity Centers
8:15-8:30	Clean up/Bathroom time/Prepare for breakfast
8:30-9:10	Breakfast
9:10-9:15	Clean up/Bathroom time/Change diapers, if needed (Proceed immediately to Circle Time)
9:15-9:30	Circle Time
9:30-10:00	Child-Initiated Activities/Activity Centers
10:00-11:00	Outside activities (weather permitting)/Large Motor Activities
11:00-11:10	Clean up/Bathroom time/Change diapers, if needed
11:10-11:25	Large Group; Story; Finger plays, songs, etc. (transitioning for lunch)
11:30-12:00	Lunch
12:00-12:15	Clean up/Bathroom time/Brush teeth/Change diapers/Prepare for nap
12:15-12:30	Story time
12:30-3:00	Nap/quiet time. Lights dimmed, soft music Children may be allowed to do quiet activities as they awake.
3:00-3:30	Wake-up time/Bathroom time/Change diapers/put away mats
3:30-4:00	Snack
4:00-5:00	Homework (after-schoolers)/Prepare for departure/Free play/Child-Initiated activities/Group activities, etc.
5:00-6:00	Outdoor play/Departure

b- c. Elementary schedules and RTI

In reviewing the rubric in light of the early learning initiative, the collaborative members and the Special Education Director for the school system determined that the most appropriate way to approach this was to get agreement from collaborative members to participate in the Child Find program for the schools system. As part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), all members have agreed to participate in professional learning on how to recognize developmental delays, how to assess, and how to develop a plan for interventions. Members have agreed to use the Developmental Profile 3 (DP-3) as the assessment tool which is a well-established measure of child development. It is a checklist that utilizes input from parents and caregivers to provide scores in five key areas: physical, adaptive, behavior, social-emotional, cognitive, and communication.

As part of the collaborative efforts, the school system will provide professional learning on this intervention process. The PL will be conducted by the Director of Special Education and the system school psychologist and psychometrist. They will work with the early learning providers on how to set up interventions for the delays that have been identified through the assessment process as well as how to best fit those into their schedules.

Professional Learning Strategies Identified on the Basis of Documented Need

a-f Professional learning activities

During the needs assessment conducted by the early learning collaborative, it was determined that there was no consistent professional learning among the partners. Each provider had chosen their professional learning based on availability, convenience of staff, level of experience, and costs. All the early learning centers had used the Child Care Resource & Referral Agency of Central Georgia in Macon which is funded in part by Bright from the Start (BFTS). All the providers have to have ten (10) hours per year of professional learning in the form of Continuing Education Units (CEU's). The training calendar offered to these providers has a menu of topics including General (i.e. Promoting Power Play, CPR &

First Aid, Dramatic Play Make Over, and the Basics for Creating a Quality Lesson Plan) and then courses by specific age groups: Infant/Toddler, Preschool, and School-Age.

In the needs assessment meetings, the collaborative members determined they would prefer to have the professional learning that will be offered through the SCRL initiative staggered at different times of day: late evening, Saturdays, and on-site through modeling and observation/feedback. The group asked the school system to contact Bright from the Start to determine if the SCRL sessions can be used to earn CEU's toward their license requirements. The school system Assistant Superintendent for Technology and Professional Learning is in the process of checking on that with BFTS.

The following Professional learning sessions are planned based on the needs identified in the needs assessment:

- Implementing the Georgia Early Learning Standards (GELS) standards for birth to third year of life from the "Why" document.
- Identifying and assessing students with developmental delays
- Using data from the Developmental Profile 3 (DP-3) and other screeners to inform instruction and to establish priorities for literacy instruction
- Working with parents on early literacy skills

Assessment/Data Analysis Plan

a-g. Assessment Protocols

From the needs assessment conducted by the early learning collaborative, it was determined that no assessments were being given from birth to three with any consistency or plan. The group varied in how much members knew about Child Find and what other resources were available to support interventions for developmental delays. Information was given to the group about the Developmental Profile 3 (DP-3) which is found in the suggested assessment protocol for birth to three. The group discussed how the DP-3 could be given twice a year to measure development and function. It

was stressed to the group that the DP-3 has been viewed by users as quick, easy informative, reliable, and valid which helped relieve the concerns of the group about the level of difficulty and staff capacity to administer an assessment.

The school system will take the lead on providing the professional learning on the administering the DP-3 and how to use the results to inform instruction and to design simple, effective interventions. In administering the DP-3, the preferred method is to interview the parents; however, the DP-3 offers an alternative that's useful when a face-to-face meeting is not possible. The Parent/Caregiver Checklist contains the same item content as the Interview Form (though language has been altered slightly). Written at a sixth-grade reading level, the Checklist can be completed, without supervision, by the child's parent or other caregiver who is knowledgeable about the child's functioning which can save time for early learning providers.

The results of the DP-3 screenings will be collected by the SHIPS for YOUTH, Inc., Family Contact and reviewed by the school system psychologist and psychometrist, and results will be shared with collaborative members on a regular basis to determine needs for further professional learning and support. This data will also be very valuable in informing Head Start and Pre-K of potential problem areas or needs for acceleration as the children transition to the next level. The data will also be very valuable as part of the school system's Child Find as the special education department prepares for children who have critical needs that will be need to addressed as soon as they enter school (i.e. special equipment for physical handicaps, adaptive technology, speech pathology, and/or occupational or physical therapy.)

Like any psychological assessment, the DP-3 will not be used without the informed consent of the child's parent or legal guardian. Through professional learning, providers will be encouraged to take necessary precautions to protect the confidentiality of test results and to restrict access to only those

who “need to know.” Data presented to the collaborative will be gathered in a manner not to compare individual centers, but to encourage data driven decision making that will lead to informed instruction.

Data will not only be shared with the collaborative, but also with parents. Providers will be encouraged to focus on interpretation for the results and their implications rather than on specific scores. Parents want to know if their children will be successful in school. Early learning providers should build on that foundation. The Principles and Recommendations for Early Childhood Assessments (National Education Goals Panel, 1998) states, “Although teachers collect much more information than can be shared with parents, samples of student work and teacher appraisals of each child’s progress should be shared on a regular basis as part of an ongoing, reciprocal relationship between professionals and parents (p.8)” Early learning providers need to keep this in mind and frame the DP-3 results in conjunction with work samples and anecdotal information the parent can understand.

Appendices are on hard copies as per Ms. Morrill (via email).