

School Profile

Created Thursday, October 02, 2014
Updated Tuesday, November 04, 2014

Page 1

School Information

System Name:	Rockdale County Public Schools
School or Center Name:	Edwards Middle School
System ID	722
School ID	0378

Level of School

Middle (6-8)

Principal

Name:	Fred Middleton
Position:	Principal
Phone:	770-483-3255
Email:	fmiddleton@rockdale.k12.ga.us

School contact information

(the persons with rights to work on the application)

Name:	April Swain
Position:	Teacher
Phone:	770-483-3255
Email:	aswain@rockdale.k12.ga.us

Grades represented in the building

example pre-k to 6

6-8

Number of Teachers in School

73

FTE Enrollment

886

Grant Assurances

Created Tuesday, November 04, 2014

Page 1

The sub-grantee assures that it has the necessary legal authority to apply for and receive a SRCL Grant.

-
- Yes
-

Sub-grantee certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.

-
- Yes
-

The SRCL projects will target students who attend Title I schools or schools eligible for Title I schoolwide programs and their families.

-
- Yes
-

The SRCL project will be administered in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, program plans, and applications.

-
- Yes
-

The Grantee will participate in all technical assistance/information-sharing opportunities and professional development activities provided through the STRIVING READER COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY GRANT Project Grant Program.

-
- Yes
-

All activities must be correlated with the development of STRIVING READER COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY GRANT goals for children birth through grade 12.

-
- Yes
-

The second year of funding is dependent upon successful program implementation and progress aligned with the components of the request for application submitted.

-
- Yes
-

Prior to any material change affecting the purpose, administration, organization, budget, or operation of the SRCL project, the Sub-grantee agrees to submit an appropriately amended application to GaDOE for approval.

-
- Yes
-

The Sub-grantee agrees to notify the GaDOE, in writing, of any change in the contact information provided in its application.

-
- Yes
-

The activities and services described in the application shall be administered by or under the supervision and control of the Sub-grantee. The Sub-grantee shall not assign or subcontract, in whole or in part, its rights or obligations without prior written consent of GaDOE. Any attempted assignment without said consent shall be void and of no effect.

-
- Yes
-

The Sub-grantee will use fiscal control and sound accounting procedures that will ensure proper disbursement of and account for Federal and state funds paid to the program to perform its duties.

-
- Yes
-

Funds shall be used only for financial obligations incurred during the grant period.

-
- Yes
-

The Sub-grantee will, if applicable, have the required financial and compliance audits conducted in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1966 and OMB Circular A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations."

-
- Yes
-

The fiscal agent will adopt and use proper methods of administering each program, including: (A) the enforcement of any obligations imposed on agencies, institutions, organizations, and other recipients responsible for carrying out each program; and (B) the timely correction of deficiencies in program operations that are identified through audits, monitoring, evaluation and/or technical assistance.

-
- Yes
-

The Sub-grantee will cooperate in carrying out any evaluation of each such program conducted by or for the Georgia Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Education, or other state or Federal officials.

-
- Yes
-

The Sub-grantee will submit reports to GaDOE as may reasonably be required. The Sub-grantee will maintain such fiscal and programmatic records and provide access to those records, as necessary, for those departments to perform their duties.

-
- Yes
-

The Sub-grantee will submit an annual summative evaluation report no later than June 30.

-
- Yes
-

The Sub-grantee agrees that GaDOE, or any of its duly authorized representatives, at any time during the term of this agreement, shall have access to, and the right to audit or examine any pertinent books, documents, papers, and records of the Sub-grantee related to the Sub-grantee's charges and performance under the SRCL sub-grant.

-
- Yes
-

The property (e.g., computers, equipment, classroom desks, tables, and pilferable items) purchased with the SRCL grant funds must be managed in accordance with EDGAR section 74.34 through 74.37 (for non-profit organizations) and with EDGAR section 80.32 and 80.33 (for school districts).

-
- Yes
-

The Sub-grantee certifies that it will abide by GaDOE's Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Policy. Applicants with a conflict of interest must submit a disclosure notice.

-
- Yes
-

The Sub-grantee will comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (34 C.F.R. 99).

- Yes
-

Sub-grantee will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibits discrimination on a basis of disability.

- Yes
-

In accordance with the Federal Drug-Free Workplace and Community Act Amendments of 1989 and the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Sub-grantee understands that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance, marijuana, or dangerous drug is prohibited at geographic locations at which individuals are directly engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the 21st CCLC grant.

- Yes
-

All technology purchases (software and hardware) will be approved by the LEA Technology Director for compatibility with current operating systems and building infrastructure. The Technology Director must ensure that any purchases for the building will be able to be implemented and sustained beyond the grant period.

- Yes
-

Preliminary Application Requirements

Created Tuesday, November 04, 2014

Page 1

Click on the [General Application Information](#) link below to assist you in the grant development process.

[SRCL General Information Packet-Cohort 4](#)

Did you download and read the General Information document to assist you with writing the grant?

-
- Yes
-

Click on the [SRCL Rubric](#) link below to assist you in the grant development process.

[SRCL Scoring Rubric-Cohort 4](#)

Did you download and read the SRCL Rubric to assist you with writing the grant?

-
- Yes
-

Click on the [Assessment Chart](#) link below to assist you in the grant development process.

[SRCL Required Assessments Chart](#)

Did you download and read the Assessment Chart to assist you in writing the grant?

-
- Yes
-

Assessments

I understand that implementing the assessments mentioned on page 6 in the General Information Packet is a necessary part of receiving SRCL funding.

-
- I Agree
-

Unallowable Expenditures

Preparation of the Proposal: Costs to develop, prepare, and/or write the SRCL proposal cannot be charged to the grant directly or indirectly by either the agency or contractor.

Pre-Award Costs: Pre-award costs may not be charged against the grant. Funds can be used only for activities conducted and costs incurred after the start date of the grant.

Entertainment, Refreshments, Snacks: A field trip without the approved academic support will be considered entertainment. End-of-year celebrations or food associated with parties or socials are unallowable expenditures. Game systems and game cartridges are unallowable.

Unapproved out of state or overnight field trips, including retreats, lock-ins, etc.

Incentives (e.g., plaques, trophies, stickers, t-shirts, give-a-ways)

Advertisements, Promotional or Marketing Items

Decorative Items

Purchase of Facilities or vehicles (e.g., Buses, Vans, or Cars)

Land acquisition

Capital Improvements, Permanent Renovations

Direct charges for items/services that the indirect cost rate covers;

Dues to organizations, federations or societies for personal benefits

Any costs not allowed for Federal projects per EDGAR, which may be accessed at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.html>.

NOTE: This is NOT an all-inclusive list of unallowable expenses. If you have questions about unallowable expenses please e-mail your questions to jmorrill@doe.k12.ga.us

Upon approval by the State Board of Education, sub-grantees will be required to submit electronic budgets through GaDOE Consolidated Application Portal. All budget requests must be made in accordance with the use of funds for the SRCL project and must meet the requirements in EDGAR and OMB circulars.

• I Agree

Georgia Department of Education Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Policy

Georgia's conflict of interest and disclosure policy is applicable to entities conducting business on behalf of and/or doing business with the Department and entities receiving a grant to implement a program and/or project approved by the State Board of Education. This policy is applicable for entities receiving state and/or Federal funds.

Questions regarding the Department's conflict of interest and disclosure policy should be directed to the program manager responsible for the contract, purchase order and/or grant.

I. Conflicts of Interest

It is the policy of the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to avoid doing business with Applicants, subcontractors of Applicants who have a conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest. The purpose of this policy is to maintain the highest level of integrity within its workforce, and to ensure that the award of grant Agreements is based upon fairness and merit.

a. Organizational Conflicts of Interest.

All grant applicants ("Applicants") shall provide a statement in their proposal which describes in a concise manner all past, present or planned organizational, financial, contractual or other interest(s) with an organization regulated by the GaDOE, including but not limited to Local Education Agencies (LEAs), or with an organization whose interests may be substantially affected by GaDOE activities, and which is related to the work under this grant solicitation. The interest(s) in which conflict may occur shall include those of the Applicant, its affiliates, proposed consultants, proposed subcontractors and key personnel of any of the above. Past interest shall be limited to within one year of the date of the Applicant's grant proposal. Key personnel shall include:

- any person owning more than 20% interest in the Applicant
- the Applicant's corporate officers
- board members
- senior managers
- any employee who is responsible for making a decision or taking an action on this grant application or any resulting Agreement where the decision or action can have an economic or other impact on the interests of a regulated or affected organization.

- i. The Applicant shall describe in detail why it believes, in light of the interest(s) identified in (a) above, that performance of the proposed Agreement can be accomplished in an impartial and objective manner.
- ii. In the absence of any relevant interest identified in (a) above, the Applicant shall submit in its grant application a statement certifying that to the best of its knowledge and belief no affiliation exists relevant to possible conflicts of interest. The Applicant must obtain the same information from potential subcontractors prior to award of a subcontract.

Conflict of Interest & Disclosure Policy

- iii.** GaDOE will review the statement submitted and may require additional relevant information from the Applicant. All such information, and any other relevant information known to GaDOE, will be used to determine whether an award to the Applicant may create a conflict of interest. If any such conflict of interest is found to exist, GaDOE may:
1. Disqualify the Applicant, or
 2. Determine that it is otherwise in the best interest of GaDOE to make an award to the Applicant and include appropriate provisions to mitigate or avoid such conflict in the grant awarded.
- iv.** The refusal to provide the disclosure or representation, or any additional information required, may result in disqualification of the Applicant for an award. If nondisclosure or misrepresentation is discovered after award, the resulting grant Agreement may be terminated. If after award the Applicant discovers a conflict of interest with respect to the grant awarded as a result of this solicitation, which could not reasonably have been known prior to award, an immediate and full disclosure shall be made in writing to GaDOE. The disclosure shall include a full description of the conflict, a description of the action the Applicant has taken, or proposes to take, to avoid or mitigate such conflict. GaDOE may, however, terminate the Agreement for convenience if GaDOE deems that termination is in the best interest of the GaDOE.
- b. Employee Relationships**
- i.** The Applicant must provide the following information with its application and must provide an information update within 30 days of the award of a contract, any subcontract, or any consultant agreement, or within 30 days of the retention of a Subject Individual or former GaDOE employee subject to this clause:
 1. The names of all Subject Individuals who:
 - a. Participated in preparation of proposals for award; or
 - b. Are planned to be used during performance; or
 - c. Are used during performance; and
 - ii.** The names of all former GaDOE employees, retained by the Applicant who were employed by GaDOE during the two year period immediately prior to the date of:
 1. The award; or
 2. Their retention by the Applicant; and
 3. The date on which the initial expression of interest in a future financial arrangement was discussed with the Applicant by any former GaDOE employee whose name is required to be provided by the contractor pursuant to subparagraph (ii); and
 4. The location where any Subject Individual or former GaDOE employee whose name is required to be provided by the Applicant pursuant to subparagraphs (i) and (ii), are expected to be assigned.
 - iii.** "Subject Individual" means a current GaDOE employee or a current GaDOE employee's father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece, husband, wife, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, stepfather, stepmother, stepson, stepdaughter, stepbrother, stepsister, half brother, half sister, spouse of an in-law, or a member of his/her household.

- iv. The Applicant must incorporate this clause into all subcontracts or consultant agreements awarded under this Agreement and must further require that each such subcontractor or consultant incorporate this clause into all subcontracts or consultant agreements at any tier awarded under this Agreement unless GaDOE determines otherwise.
- v. The information as it is submitted must be certified as being true and correct. If there is no such information, the certification must so state.

c. Remedies for Nondisclosure

The following are possible remedies available to the GaDOE should an Applicant misrepresent or refuse to disclose or misrepresent any information required by this clause:

1. Termination of the Agreement.
2. Exclusion from subsequent GaDOE grant opportunities.
3. Other remedial action as may be permitted or provided by law or regulation or policy or by the terms of the grant agreement.

- d. Annual Certification.** The Applicant must provide annually, based on the anniversary date of Agreement award, the following certification in writing to GaDOE. The annual certification must be submitted with the grantees annual end of year program report.

ANNUAL CERTIFICATION OF DISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIPS

The Applicant represents and certifies that to the best of its knowledge and belief that during the prior 12 month period:

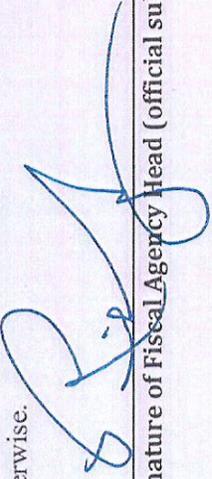
- A former GaDOE employee(s), current GaDOE employee, or Subject Individual(s) has been retained to work under the Agreement or subcontract or consultant agreement and complete disclosure has been made.
- No former GaDOE employee(s), current GaDOE employee, or Subject Individual(s) has been retained to work under the Agreement or subcontract or consultant agreement, and disclosure is not required.

II. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest after Agreement Execution

If after Agreement execution, Applicant discovers a conflict of interest which could not reasonably have been known prior to Agreement execution; an immediate and full disclosure shall be made in writing to GaDOE. The disclosure shall include a full description of the conflict, a description of the action the Applicant has taken, or proposes to take, to avoid or mitigate such conflict. GaDOE may, however, terminate this Agreement for convenience if GaDOE deems that termination is in the best interest of GaDOE.

III. Incorporation of Clauses

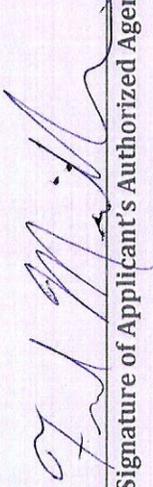
The Applicant must incorporate the clauses in paragraphs A, B, and C of this section into all subcontracts or consultant agreements awarded under this Agreement and must further require that each such subcontractor or consultant incorporate this clause into all subcontracts or consultant agreements at any tier awarded under this Agreement unless GaDOE determines otherwise.



Signature of Fiscal Agency Head (official sub-grant recipient)

Richard Autry, Superintendent
Typed Name of Fiscal Agency Head and Position Title

11/07/2014
Date



Signature of Applicant's Authorized Agency Head (required)

Fred Middleton - Principal
Typed Name of Applicant's Authorized Agency Head and Position Title

11/21/2014
Date

N/A
Signature of Co-applicant's Authorized Agency Head (if applicable)

N/A
Typed Name of Co-applicant's Authorized Agency Head and Position Title (if applicable)

N/A
Date (if applicable)

Fiscal Agent Memo of Understanding

The application is the project implementation plan, not simply a proposal. This project is expected to be implemented with fidelity upon SBOE approval. When completing the application, please remember that sub-grantees will not be permitted to change the project's scope that is originally outlined in the application, scored by reviewers during the application review process, and approved by SBOE. This policy is designed to provide basic fairness to applicants for discretionary sub-grants.

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: Richard Autry

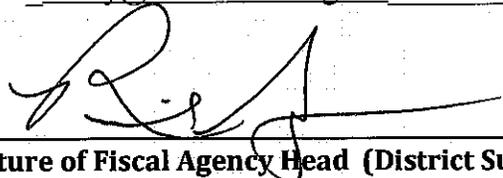
Position/Title of Fiscal Agent's Contact Person: Superintendent

Address: 954 North Main Street

City: Conyers Zip: 30012

Telephone: (770) 860-4211 Fax: (770) 860-4266

E-mail: rautry@rockdale.k12.ga.us



Signature of Fiscal Agency Head (District Superintendent or Executive Director)

Richard Autry

Typed Name of Fiscal Agency Head (District Superintendent or Executive Director)

10/29/2014

Date (required)

Brief History of the System

Rockdale County is located approximately 25 miles east of Atlanta on Interstate 20 and within the Metropolitan Atlanta Region. Despite being the second smallest county in Georgia geographically, Rockdale County ranks 10th in population density and 28th in overall population, with a total population of approximately 85,765 (2010 US Census.) The median household income in Rockdale was \$55,779 in 2010, up 4.07% since 2000, though income growth rate is more than 50% lower than the state average rate of 9.42%. This is substantially lower than the national average rate of 19.17%. Categorized as being on the "urban fringe of a large city," Rockdale is uniquely comprised of 34% suburban, 35% rural and 16% urban class/land structures and is equally represented by both White and African American residents, including significant identification with Hispanic, Asian and East Indian cultures. This is not, however, reflective of our student population. As a result of the county's slow economic growth, we have experienced a large number of home foreclosures and a rapid and steep decline in the tax digest.

Rockdale County Public Schools (RCPS) has 16,300 children enrolled in 22 schools and programs for the 2014-15 school year - 11 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 3 high schools and a variety of specialty schools and programs. RCPS is fully immersed in high rigor and strong academic standards and expectations as evidenced by its remarkable accomplishments in student achievement and closing gaps among subgroups.

System Demographics

RCPS has experienced increasing numbers of students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education. District-wide, the student population is 65% African American, 18% White, and 12% Hispanic. All of our eighteen "traditional" schools are Title I eligible. The free and reduced meal rate in RCPS is currently 71% with some schools as high as 91%, up from 63% in 2009. 99.8% of RCPS certified staff are "Highly Qualified."

Current Priorities and Strategic Planning

RCPS's renewed strategic plan identifies six overarching strategies which will drive district and school initiatives over the next five years.

1. Create a rigorous system of teaching and learning that empowers students to define and achieve their educational success.
2. Create safe and supportive learning environments that inspire and activate the love of learning.
3. Create a culture that nurtures individual uniqueness and embraces the diversity of our school community.
4. Provide optimum resources to support a world-class educational system.

5. Continually maximize the district’s capacity through the individual growth of each person.
6. Engage students, parents, community members and other stakeholders to build an alliance for student success.

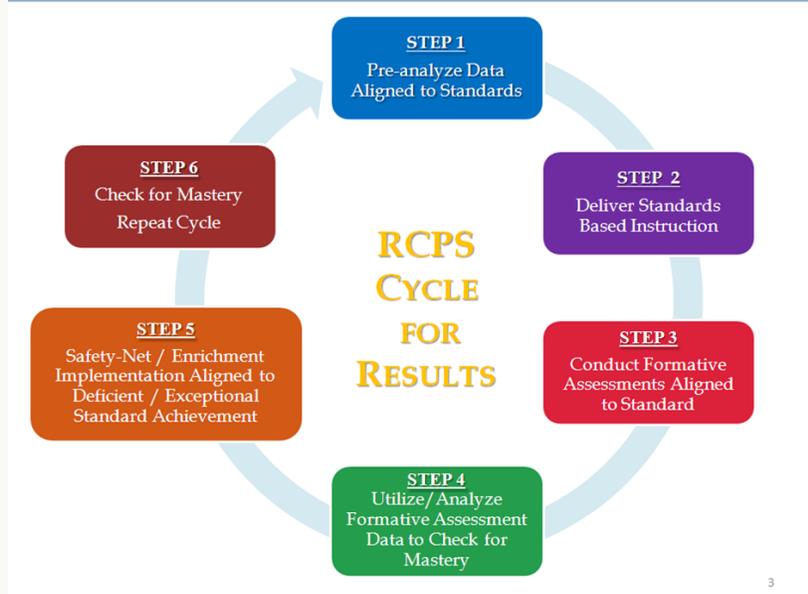
RCPS has a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that will 1) ensure educational equity; 2) accelerate student achievement by supporting each student’s unique learning needs and individual interests; and 3) help each student achieve his or her greatest potential through a wide variety of strategies, supports and resources that are appropriate to his or her interests, abilities and learning styles. RCPS understands that this requires thoughtful, intentional planning and movement toward its goal of increasing literacy, and has identified the practices, policies, supports, systems and technologies needed to reengineer participating schools.

Current Management Structure

Mrs. Shirley Chesser, Chief Academic Officer, will oversee all management of the Striving Readers grant. Ms. Erika Tucker, RCPS English and Language Arts Coordinator, will serve as project manager. A Striving Readers Support Specialist will be identified once the project begins and all will provide technical support to participating schools. All schools in Cohort 4 will implement their own Striving Readers grant with principals, teachers, and literacy teams overseeing day-to-day instruction and monitoring of student progress.

Past Instructional Initiatives

RCPS has prioritized its efforts to fully embrace the Georgia Performance Standards and the supporting tenets of Standards-based Education; thus, we have implemented a content coaching model and now employ district-based coaches. The Cycle for Results is the focal point.



RCPS has developed a framework for K-12 specialty and Choice options. For the first time ever, RCPS implemented four new Choice options for the 2013-14 school year. Thus far, three elementary, two middle schools, and two high schools offer Choice specialty programs, with plans to roll out additional Choice options over the next 3-5 years. In addition, Rockdale Virtual Campus expanded its offerings to enable a high school student to fulfill all graduation requirements through online courses, and welcomed its first full-time students last year.

Literacy Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on Common Core GPS. High schools and middle schools currently use the Pearson Common Core Literature series. Elementary schools are using Story Town.

Literacy Assessments used District Wide

- STAR Early Literacy assessment from Renaissance Learning is the reading assessment for K-2. Grades 3-10 take the Scholastic Reading Inventory. Both assessments are given three times a year.
- In addition, we administer the Write Score mock writing assessment to grades 3, 5, and 8 and 10th, which this year included 2-3 reading passages along with the prompt. The old version with just a prompt and no passages was given twice in the fall to grades 3, 5, 8, and 10.
- The District ELA Benchmarks are given three times a year for grades 1-8, 9th & 10th.
- In addition, we receive data from other assessments such as SLO's, ITBS, CogAT, CRCT, and beginning in December for high school, the new Georgia Milestones assessment.

Need for a Striving Reader Project

Student performance on state tests, such as the CRCT, reveals the need for a more structured enrichment process for the entire student population. On the 2014 CRCT, only 28% of our 6th graders and 41% of our 8th graders scored in the exceeds category on the ELA portion. The performance on the reading portion of the CRCT also highlights an area of improvement. In 5th grade, 40% of the students scored in the exceeds category, but the percentages varied widely, from 26% to 57% across the district. In 7th grade, only 39% of the students scored in the exceeds category, with a county low of 33% at EMS. While we have made great strides in increasing the percentage of students who meet the standards on the CRCT, there are still gains to be made. While our county average on the Georgia 5th grade Writing Assessment was higher than the state average of 80%, eight of our elementary schools scored below the Metro RESA. On the 8th grade writing assessment, we showed a decline district-wide from the previous year's performance. This downward trend is evident in our students' performance on the Georgia High School Writing Test. In examining the two year trend, we showed a decline in all subgroups. Additionally, the increased rigor of Georgia Milestones will only widen this gap.

RCPS Striving Readers is highly responsive to a rapidly changing high-need student population and increasing call for attention to personalized learning, with an overall goal of having a significant impact on improving student outcomes. The *RCPS Striving Reader* program will incorporate a customizable learning path that puts the needs of students first, honors each student as an individual learner, and recognizes that each student has a unique learning style, interests, aspirations, and challenges to learning. It is a deliberate framework that blends professional development, comprehensive literacy assessments, a multi-layered RTI process, and cross-curricular literacy programming for students in seven Rockdale schools and infused into early learning programs.

District Management Plan and Key Personnel

The decision to apply for Georgia’s Striving Reader Comprehensive Literacy Grant was made only after discussion with all elementary school leaders, school staff and district level support personnel. Responsibilities included with the grant application and implementation were fully vetted. The system is committed to applying for, receiving, implementing, and monitoring the grant with integrity and fidelity. Grant funding will provide a vehicle to support many of the goals within our district’s strategic plan. The implementation, monitoring, and reporting of goals and objectives in the grant will be ultimately managed at a district level through the Office of Curriculum and Instruction. The chart below indicates those individuals involved in the district level process.

Responsibility	Personnel	Supervisor
Purchasing	Project Manager; DeDe Cottingham, Purchasing Manager; and Lisa McMillan, Finance Reporting Manager	Keith Hull, Director of Business Services
Finances	Keith Hull, Director of Business Services	Lee Davis, Chief Financial Officer
Professional Learning	Tammy Smith, Director of Professional Learning	Shirley, Chesser, Chief Academic Officer
Technology	Grover Dailey, Director of Technology	Gene Baker, Chief of Staff
Assessment	Erika Tucker, ELA Coordinator and Laura Grimwade, Director of Research, Assessment and Accountability	Shirley Chesser, Chief Academic Officer
Site Level Oversight	Principals, Literacy Teams	Superintendent and Cabinet
District Level Oversight	TBD, Project Manager and Erika Tucker, ELA Coordinator	Andrea Pritchett, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

The RCPS Striving Readers Program Manager will be responsible for managing the grant operations, implementing related activities, coordinating relevant meetings, preparing and/or disseminating information and surveys to schools and administrators as an evaluation tool to determine project success and needs for improvement, collaborating with district and school level administration in all program implementation(s), collaborating with partners on relevant activities, establishing a plan to ensure sustainability of grant initiatives, establishing goals and objectives of the grant that are aligned with the philosophy within the RCPS strategic plan, overseeing funding for the grant, and collecting and analyzing data to ensure and evaluate the quality of the implementation of the service learning program. RCPS will post the job description for the Project Manager no later than 2 weeks after the start of grant period.

At the building level, each school principal will be responsible for overseeing the grant at his/her school. The Program Manager and District Literacy Team will meet as soon as the grant is awarded to begin planning to prioritize needs, create budgets, and establish timelines for plan implementation. Budget decisions will be made by the literacy team at each school. All requisitions will be approved by the principal of the school and also by the *RCPS Striving Readers* Program Manager. Our established procedures for internal control for federal programs will be followed. All school coordinators will meet monthly to discuss project implementation and progress. Day to day implementation of the literacy plan at each school will involve instructional coaches, assistant principals, lead teachers and the Literacy Team. *Striving Reader* goals and plans will be integrated into our school improvement plans and our system strategic plan.

Experience of the Applicant

Rockdale County Public Schools oversees an annual budget of approximately \$129 million including federal, state, and local funds. As one of the only school systems in Georgia to continue to operate debt-free, RCPS has a well-established internal and external structure for successfully managing large projects as evidenced by its career academy (the largest in the state of Georgia,) virtual campus, Georgia Race to the Top grant, Safe Schools/Healthy Students federal grant, Math-Science Partnership grants, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools federal grant, Governor’s Office Innovation Fund grant and year-round pre-kindergarten Early Learning Center model. RCPS has managed partnerships of similar size and scope, through a participatory planning process with all partners – more specifically, the STARS project (Safe Schools/Healthy Students) brings together community members to create a “Support Team for All Rockdale Students”. The STARS Project has seen improvement in the areas of bullying, mental health services, early childhood education and alcohol/tobacco/ substance abuse prevention. Additionally, Rockdale County is the birthplace of the Georgia System of Care Model – a network of community partners creating a menu of comprehensive, needs-based wrap-around services for children and their families. The RCPS Early Learning Center and its supportive programs allow many of the county’s neediest children to be prepared for success when they begin Kindergarten. Additionally, as a result of sound budgeting and community support/confidence, students are benefitting from enhanced learning opportunities through technology, school safety and improved facilities funded by the fourth E-SPLOST referendum.

These multi-million dollar projects involve large-scale compliance, fiscal, personnel, purchasing and program management activities, and included a variety of evaluative and auditing processes. RCPS also uses a continuous improvement model to ensure the projects are high-quality and operating with fidelity. The proposed activities will be managed within this structure, using existing internal and external groups for communication and feedback to meet stakeholder needs.

RCPS has no audit findings in the last three years to report.

History

Edwards Middle School (EMS) has been a school of excellence since its inception in 1978. Our mission is to provide a diverse and dedicated learning community; we expect excellence, develop life-long learners, and prepare students for a successful transition to high school. We are an institution characterized by a challenging, personalized educational program that encompasses innovative technology, community and parental involvement, quality resources, a laudable staff, and a safe and compassionate environment.

Demographics

EMS serves approximately 1000 students supported by approximately 100 certified faculty and staff members. Our school serves grades sixth, seventh, and eighth, including students with exceptionalities, English language learners, and gifted students. The demographics of the school are as follows: 55.6% African American, 21.4% Hispanic, 18% White, 3% Other, and 2% Asian. EMS is located in Rockdale County, which has a population of 86,919. The median household income for Rockdale County is \$54,704 with an average of 25% of persons holding a Bachelor's degree. There is an estimated 13.9% of persons in the county that live below the poverty line with 69% of EMS students considered economically disadvantaged.

Current Priorities

The main focus of EMS is the continuous implementation of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) with fidelity and rigor. In addition to our continued efforts of applying and enhancing the CCGPS, we are making an effort to vertically align our assessments, so they reflect a logical, consistent sequence for teaching the content from one grade to the next. In an effort to meet our Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) with the implementation of the new

Rockdale County Public Schools
Edwards Middle School
School Narrative

Georgia Milestones Assessment, we are focused on improving skills such as literacy, comprehension, organization, and content knowledge mastery.

Focused Systematic Process for School Improvement Planning

EMS implements TKES and LKES as well as weekly, monthly, and quarterly professional learning development and training at the teacher, school, and county level. Such professional development and training includes content meetings, grade-level meetings, team meetings, building leadership training, positive behavior intervention strategy meetings, quarterly county content, and professional learning meetings. Our focus for improvement focuses on team development, data analysis, causality analysis, solution identification, and measuring and monitoring data procedures which will form the basis for our continuous school improvement plan.

1st Period Reading

EMS is currently implementing a 1st period reading class and a reading remediation connections class. Students are exposed to reading either in 1st period or connections and are grouped homogeneously according to their Lexile measure. This allows teachers to focus on specific skills that students need to master in order to be reading on their appropriate grade-level Lexile band. There is a framework designed for 1st period reading classes that addresses all of the reading standards regardless of Lexile level. While there are clear lessons and classwork transitions such as 15 minutes of silent sustained reading, journal time, and daily reading practice activities, not all of the reading teachers have a reading endorsement. Unfortunately, due to staffing and scheduling, the students enrolled in the reading connections class attend that class for only a semester, which leaves them without reading support for half of the school year.

Strategic Plan

EMS recently completed a new strategic plan and has revised our mission statement. In the plan we identify the best practices to be used in every classroom: implementation of routines and procedures that promote a safe and orderly environment; integration of technology in every subject area; establishment of clubs and organizations to foster social interactions and citizenship; utilization of the expertise of all stakeholders to maximize student progress; and the promotion of critical thinking by actively involving students in the learning process.

Current Management Structure

EMS operates in a traditional middle school system where teachers and students are separated into teams with each team having one of each content area teacher and teams are usually designated a specialty area. EMS operates with site-based administrators. Mr. Robert Trickett and Mrs. Andrea Nelson serve as the assistant principals at EMS. Mr. Trickett taught middle school science prior to becoming an administrator. Mrs. Nelson taught middle school social studies and is certified in middle school Language Arts. Mr. Fred Middleton, principal at EMS, previously taught middle school math before becoming an assistant principal and then a principal.

Past Instructional Initiatives

We have a Response to Intervention (RTI) process that utilizes progress and data monitoring, unpacking of the CCGPS, implementing individualized strategies of intervention to close the achievement gap between subgroups of students. EMS is addressing attendance rates, assessment scores, aligning professional learning with system goals, increasing parent engagement, and enhancing technology as it relates to improved student growth and success.

Literacy Curriculum

Faculty and staff have unpacked standards and spent hours developing units of instruction to determine the expectations for teaching and learning. Units are developed with research-based instructional strategies and are aligned to standards. EMS has developed a curriculum map for teaching reading in which priority standards have been identified and assessments are being developed to increase cognitive rigor using DOK. While the school has increased the amount of time devoted to literacy instruction, a more consistent focus needs to be made to incorporate literacy strategies in all content areas.

Literacy Assessments

EMS engages in the ongoing assessment of students. The assessment system includes the use of national, state, and local assessment measures. Assessment instruments include criterion-reference tests, norm-reference tests, performance-based measures, and formative and summative classroom assessments. SRI is one of the screeners used to identify students who may need further assessment as well as the state criterion-reference test. Teachers analyze data to determine intervention and success plans for each student.

Need for Striving Reader Project

EMS is striving to bridge the gap between instructional and assessment programs. The Striving Reader Project will create a clear focus on supporting professional learning, expanding technology, and increasing literacy support material, which will develop lower readers and accelerate on target/above target readers. EMS has sustained a cooperative, working relationship with the local community and all stakeholders. It is imperative that all children have the opportunity to develop the needed literacy skills in order to reach maximum potential and success. EMS currently has 68% of students who are not at the proficient level in reading. With a sound system in place for children to have their individual needs met, there is no doubt that the

Rockdale County Public Schools
Edwards Middle School
School Narrative

percentage of children who meet and exceed will grow significantly over the course of the activities described in this application.

In August the administration met with the district literacy team to analyze data and determined a need for the SRCL Grant at Salem. A Literacy Leadership Team was established and a needs assessment survey was sent to the entire staff. Based on the results of that survey and the analyzed data, the Literacy Leadership Team developed the School Literacy Plan. The Literacy Leadership Team continues to meet monthly to discuss literacy needs and steps to be taken to correct identified concerns. The Literacy Leadership Team consists of the administration, and members of all departments, including CTAE, special education, and the media center specialist. The team members are listed below.

Name	Position
Fred Middleton	Principal
Bob Trickett	Assistant Principal
Andrea Nelson	Assistant Principal
Errol Frederick	Counselor
Monica Ford	Counselor
Nestor Domingo	Fine Arts Department Chair
Kindra Latimore	English Department Chair
Nancy Kelly	Math Department Chair
Melanie Hooley	Science Department Chair
Christopher Pennamon	Physical Education Department Chair
Connie Jackson-Young	Social Studies Department Chair
Dale Bradford	Registrar
Andrea Nelson	Testing Coordinator
Alexis Wright	Literacy Coordinator

III. Needs Assessment

A. Needs Assessment Description

The Georgia Literacy Needs Assessment Survey for SRCL Cohort 4 was administered to certified staff. Results were compiled and analyzed. In September 2014, the Edwards Middle School Literacy Leadership Team was formed in response to the need for enhanced literacy instruction. The Literacy Leadership Team reviewed student data to determine areas of concern.

B. Assessment Used

- a. The Georgia Literacy Needs Assessment Survey
- b. Benchmark Data and Local Assessment Data for Schools
- c. The School Improvement Survey provided and based on School Keys
- d. Strategic School Improvement Plan

C. Root Cause/Underlying Causes

The Needs Assessment Survey and review of our school literacy achievement data revealed the following needs and underlying root causes:

a. Building Block 1: Leadership

- i. There is a need for a shared responsibility for teaching literacy. 31.7% of teachers at EMS feel as though they do not have ample time to teach literacy effectively, including whole group reading (literature, informational, foundational skills), small group differentiated literacy instruction, writing, language skills, and content area literacy.
- ii. Administration does not utilize a literacy checklist during classroom walkthroughs.
- iii. Professional learning in differentiation has not been provided to the entire staff. 36.6% of teachers at EMS state a need for professional learning in differentiated instruction.

Root Causes: EMS has struggled to keep up with the current changes in curriculum standards, requirements, and testing. Budget restraints and cuts have been detrimental on the ability of schools to pay for workshops, training, and materials and resources.

b. Building Block 2: Continuity of Instruction

- i. Teachers do not have training in literacy strategies. 70% of teachers expressed a need for support in teaching students who struggle to comprehend complex text written at grade-level.

- ii. Literacy is emphasized in ELA classes but not in content classes. 80.4% of teachers would like more professional learning in areas of literacy to meet the needs of the new Common Core.

Root Causes: Common Core requires increased informational texts and writing across content areas. To address these changes, professional development targeted towards preparing teachers for the new literacy demands and rigor of comprehension are needed.

- c. Building Block 3: Ongoing Formative and Summative Assessment
 - i. Teachers do not know how to differentiate instruction based on the data provided by formative assessments. 80.4% of teachers feel they need professional development in the areas of content literacy, differentiation, and writing instruction.
 - ii. Not all teachers have been trained in the data teams protocol and therefore do not understand how to modify instruction based on data. 82.9% of teachers indicate they are not significantly confident regarding the use of data for instruction.

Root Causes: Recent curriculum and assessment changes have caused a need for teachers and administrators to receive professional development in these areas. Teachers in all content areas also need training and materials that assist in content literacy, differentiation, and writing instruction.

- d. Building Block 4: Best Practices in Literacy Instruction
 - i. Content area teachers do not provide explicit literacy instruction consistently. 78% of teachers do not currently schedule for daily explicit literacy instruction per week.
 - ii. A literacy checklist is not utilized during classroom walkthroughs.
 - iii. Recent professional learning has been focused on mathematics.

Root Causes: Teachers need professional development to incorporate literacy instruction across content areas with fidelity. Literacy and writing has long been isolated to the English Language Arts content area.

- e. Building Block 5: System of Tiered Intervention (RTI) for ALL Students
 - i. There are limited resources to provide interventions to students. Only 24.3% of teachers that believe their below-grade-level students have access to effective intervention outside of their classroom
 - ii. All teachers need training in interventions to make the RTI process effective. Only 51.2% of teachers who provide interventions are considered fully trained.

- iii. Not all teachers have attended data teams training.

Root Causes: The large influx of students who currently do not meet the standards of CCGPS is a strong indicator for the necessity of an intervention program. While teachers are doing whatever is necessary to meet the needs of students, there needs to be formal professional development that adequately prepares teachers with effective strategies and best practice to use with students who show a need for intervention.

f. Building Block 6: Professional Learning

- i. Teachers have had limited training on Lexile scores. Content area teachers have not attended training on Lexile scores. 48.7% of teachers are not confident in their understanding of and ability to use Lexiles as a tool in selecting appropriate texts for their students.
- ii. Professional learning has not focused on integrating technology with writing or literacy instruction. Only 31.7% of teachers are confident in their ability to effectively use the technology they have available to their classroom for literacy instruction.

Root Causes: There needs to be more consistent and effective professional learning that prepares teachers to use technology, resources, and strategies in the classroom. With the changes in the standards and the new demand on the integration of technology, teachers need a consistent, uniform understanding of what students will need to master in order to be successful and productive.

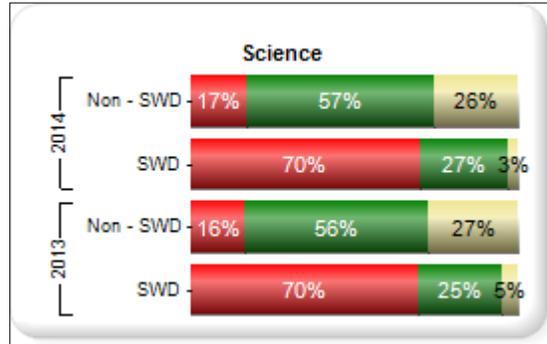
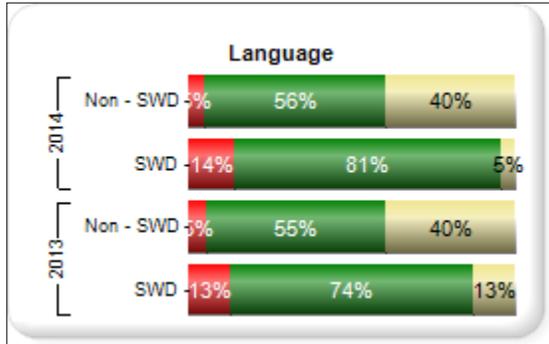
D. School Staff Involved in Needs Assessment

The Needs Assessment included all certified and classified staff at Edwards Middle School.

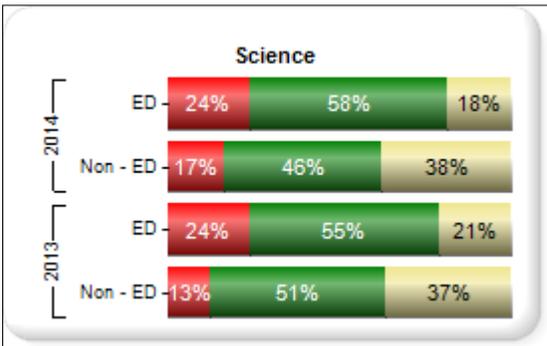
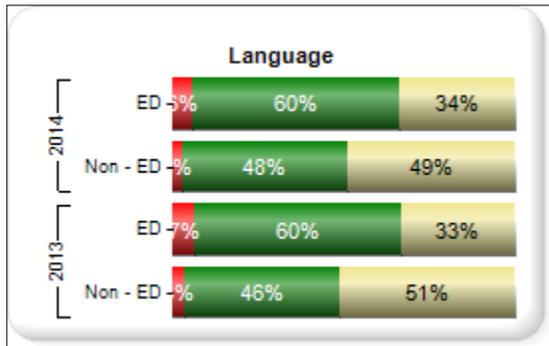
E. Disaggregated Data:

Edwards Middle School's overall CRCT scores in 2014 were strong, with over 91.58% of students meeting or exceeding standards for Reading and Math; however, discrepancies exist between sub-groups. Additional data are provided in the Analysis of Student and Teacher Data section.

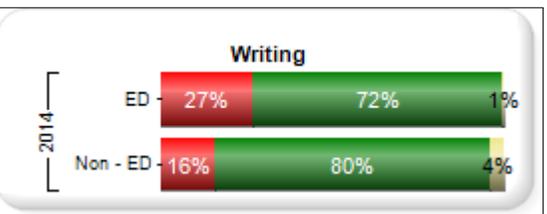
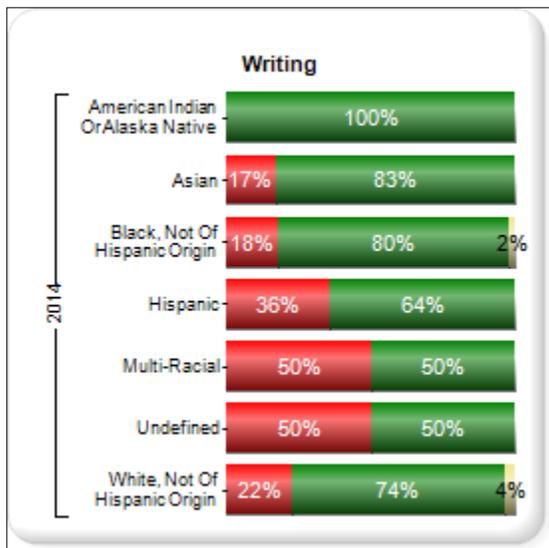
CRCT: Students With Disabilities



CRCT: Socio-economic Status



Georgia 8th Grade Writing



F. Areas of Concern Related to Research-Based Practices

a. Building Block 1: Need for Literacy Leadership Team at Edwards Middle School

Currently:

- Identify and prioritize a list of students to be targeted for intervention or support
- Ensure use of research-based practices aligned with CCGPS
- Evaluate current practices in all classrooms by using an observation or walkthrough tool to monitor literacy instruction

Moving Forward:

- Participate in professional learning in literacy leadership in order to support classroom instruction
- Schedule regular literacy observations to monitor use of literacy strategies, student engagement and learning, and consistent use of effective instructional practices
- Conduct literacy walk-throughs to monitor use of literacy strategies, student engagement and learning, as well as to ensure consistent use of effective instructional practices

b. Building Block 2 & 4: Need for Systematic Core Literacy Program

Currently:

- Utilizing data briefings to discuss statistical evidence from assessments
- Having weekly content meetings for collaborative planning and research-based strategy implementation
- Analysis of formative assessments to determine weaknesses in grade-level, team, and content meetings

Moving Forward:

- Train all teachers on data teams protocols and schedule cross-curricular collaborative meetings
- Identify master teachers and encourage peer observations
- Literacy Leadership Team members will share best practices with the faculty

c. Building Blocks 2, 4 & 6: Need for Professional Learning

Currently:

- Teachers develop a professional goals aligned with TKES.
- Teachers meet weekly with trained professionals in content or grade level teams to plan rigorous lessons, monitor student progress, and determine areas of growth and weakness for both teachers and students.
- Administration provides effective feedback and suggestions on instructional strategies using the TKES checklist during walkthroughs.

Moving Forward:

- Provide ongoing school-based professional development on incorporating literacy strategies in all subject areas
- Share best practices in literacy instruction via PLCs and peer observations
- Monitor the implementation of the school literacy plan through using a literacy checklist during walkthroughs
- Encourage all teachers to share information learned in professional learning sessions

Building Block 1. Engaged Leadership

A. Action: Demonstrate commitment to learn about and support evidence-based literacy instruction in his/her school

The leadership team (principals and assistant principals) serve as the instructional leaders for any school. As such, their goals and focus determine what teachers emphasize in their instruction. “Quality teaching in all classrooms necessitates skillful leadership at the community, district, school, and classroom levels” (“The Why,” p. 144), which is why the administration at Edwards Middle School (EMS) supports the creation and implementation of a school literacy plan that is aligned to the School Improvement Plan. At EMS, the administration routinely observes instructional practices through formative walkthroughs. They also monitor instructional practices via lesson plans. However, in order to create a culture that supports evidence-based literacy instruction in *all* classes, the administration recognizes that additional practices and professional learning are needed.

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 20)

- Study research-based guidelines, strategies and resources for literacy instruction set forth in the “The Why” document of the most current iteration of the Georgia Literacy Plan (“The What,” p. 5)
- Schedule protected time for literacy and teacher collaboration (“The What,” p. 5)
- Provide professional learning based on student data and teacher needs
- Ensure continued excellence in professional learning by continuing to analyze data and adjusting professional learning accordingly
- Ensure continued growth through professional learning by providing opportunities for new staff to receive necessary support in becoming acquainted with programs, materials and previously learned strategies.

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 20)

- Participate in professional learning in literacy leadership in order to support classroom instruction (“The What,” p. 5)
- Schedule regular literacy observations to monitor use of literacy strategies, student engagement and learning, and consistent use of effective instructional practices (“The What,” p. 5)
- Conduct literacy walk-throughs to monitor use of literacy strategies, student engagement and learning, as well as to ensure consistent use of effective instructional practices
- Develop a pipeline of leaders by identifying and training leaders for succession
- Make hiring decisions collaboratively based upon literacy goals

- Provide time and support for staff to participate in job-embedded professional learning (including coaching, if available, peer-mentoring, learning community, grade-level meetings focused on student work, etc.) (“The What,” p. 5)

B. Action: Organize a Literacy Leadership Team

EMS has created a Literacy Leadership Team, which has met to analyze assessment data and the needs assessment survey. Based on that data, the administration recognizes a need to have a fully-functioning Literacy Leadership Team that includes members of the community, parents, and other stakeholders, such as district personnel. The expanded Literacy Leadership Team will support literacy instruction across the building through providing feedback on literacy practices, evaluating formative data to determine school-wide progress toward goals, and serving as literacy coaches for teachers in the building (“The Why,” p. 148). According to “The Why,” p. 156, leadership is key at every level in order to fully support literacy gains. From administrators to teachers to support staff, the faculty of EMS are dedicated to support literacy instruction throughout the building.

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” pages 21 - 22)

- Identify and prioritize a list of students to be targeted for intervention or support
- Ensure use of research-based practices aligned with CCGPS
- Evaluate current practices in all classrooms by using an observation or walkthrough tool (e.g., Literacy Instruction Checklist, GA or some other instrument) to determine strengths in literacy instruction and to identify needs for improvement (“The What,” p. 5)
- Continue to analyze formative and summative student assessment results and refine literacy goals based on the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) (“The What,” p. 5)
- Remain focused on the goals and objectives of the School Improvement Plan to keep staff motivated, productive, and centered on student achievement
- Provide professional learning and support for staff in making the transition to the CCGPS
- Establish a system of communication for sharing information with all partners (e.g., e-mails, newsletters, website)

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 21-22)

- Create a shared literacy vision for the school and community aligned with the state literacy plan (“The What,” p. 5)
- Determine what additional data is needed in order to make informed decisions about the path forward
- Convene Literacy Leadership Team with community stakeholders, afterschool providers, school faculty and parents (“The What,” p. 5)

- Ensure that stakeholders understand literacy goals and their roles in meeting these goals
- Participate on District Literacy Leadership Team
- Join or form a leadership organization to share successes and profit from others' successes
- Visit other schools that have successfully improved student achievement to gain valuable insights and innovative ideas
- Identify stakeholders and partners to be part of the literacy leadership team.
- Analyze multiple forms of student, school, and teacher data, including results of the Literacy Instruction Observation Checklist or its equivalent, to develop a list of prioritized recommendations and goals for improvement
- Select or develop a walk-through observation form, such as Literacy Instruction Observation Checklist, to ensure consistency of effective instructional practices ("The What," p. 5)
- Share student achievement gains with District Literacy Leadership Team and School Board members through online media and traditional outlets
- Pursue external funding sources to support literacy
- Use social media to involve community members and parents in literacy efforts and reach out to those not currently involved
- Establish a system of communication online between out-of-school organizations and teachers, e.g., Boys and Girls Club, YMCA afterschool programming, church teen groups

C. Action: Maximize the use of time and personnel through scheduling and collaborative planning

Reading Next states that literacy instruction for adolescents should extend beyond a single language arts period and be integrated in subject area coursework. EMS's daily schedule supports an "extended time for literacy [...] in language arts and content-area classes" (Biancorosa & Snow, 2006, p. 20, as cited in "The Why," p. 58). However, additional professional learning and resources are needed to provide a consistent focus on literacy in all classrooms.

EMS's administration supports teacher collaboration through protected time for collaborative planning by content area and by grade level teams. The administration recognizes the need for additional collaboration to strengthen vertical alignment, especially as EMS creates and implements a school-wide writing rubric. In order to strengthen the vertical alignment and to ensure that students both arrive at EMS ready to meet the standards and leave EMS prepared for high school, we would like to utilize technology to collaborate with teachers on both ends of the feeder pattern.

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” pages 22 - 23)

- Assess the talents and training of all current staff in the area of literacy instruction before making teaching assignments
- Schedule time for collaborative planning teams within and across the curriculum (“The What,” p. 6)
- Collaborate with other team members to maximize instructional time through the use of peer observations to analyze lessons
- Study formative student assessment results and use the results to continue to determine the impact of efforts to maximize use of time
- Use technology to provide professional learning to new and continuing teachers

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 22-23)

- Provide for 2-4 hours of literacy instruction across content areas for all students (“The What,” p. 6)
- Leverage instructional time for disciplinary literacy by scheduling instruction for disciplinary literacy in all content areas (“The What,” p. 6)
- Maintain anecdotal notes and data portfolios to showcase student and content area successes
- Use media to collaborate with other schools (schools within the feeder pattern and schools in close proximity)
- Video classrooms for self-evaluations, peer observations, share literacy expertise, etc. within and among schools
- Maximize use of scheduled instructional time by identifying effective strategies for differentiating instruction, promoting active engagement, and teaching key areas of literacy and writing instruction
- Share professional learning at team and staff meetings
- Encourage teachers to share stories of success in the community, both online and through traditional outlets

D. Action: Create a school culture in which teachers across the curriculum are responsible for literacy instruction as articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards

Dole, Duffy, Roehler, and Pearson (1991) argue that reading comprehension instruction can be highly effective when teachers focus on seven main strategies for readers (“The Why,” p. 41); however, these strategies are most effective when taught as part of instructional units, not in isolation. While the English/Language Arts teachers at EMS routinely present these strategies to their students, teachers in other content areas are not as skilled at teaching these strategies to students. Therefore, students learn

the skills intermittently and in isolation, leaving them unable to utilize the skills across content areas. The administration at EMS recognizes that additional professional learning is needed in order for reading comprehension instruction to be consistent in all classes and to create a culture of shared responsibility for students' literacy skills.

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” pages 24 - 25)

- Evaluate the school culture and current practices by surveying strengths and needs for improvement (e.g., Literacy Instruction Checklist, GA or some other instrument) (“The What,” p. 6)
- Identify and prioritize a list of students to be targeted for intervention or support
- Provide parents and caregivers with links to websites that provide resources to strengthen literacy
- Include academic supports such as tutoring, co-curricular activities, online learning opportunities and/or tutoring, and extended learning opportunities such as summer programs, after-school and Saturday academies to enhance literacy learning
- Establish a mentoring system for every student who needs additional support from both within the school and from the community

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 24 - 25)

- Participate in state-sponsored webinars and face-to-face sessions to learn about transition to Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS)
- Plan for targeted, sustained professional learning for the staff on literacy strategies and deep content knowledge (“The What,” p. 6)
- Utilize social media to communicate and promote the goals of literacy across the curriculum, e. g.. Twitter, Facebook, Google+, etc.
- Enlist literacy learning in outside organizations
- Provide English language services that extend beyond the classroom.
- Provide family-focused services and outreach that engage parents and family members in literacy programs and services
- Provide a literacy resource room for parents and caregivers in the school
- Utilize all staff to support literacy instruction
- Use technology to assist in incorporating culturally and linguistically appropriate two-way communications with parents and stakeholders

- Incorporate technologies to more creatively and effectively support stakeholder engagement (i.e., blogs, Twitter, electronic newsletters).

E. Action: Optimize literacy instruction across all content areas

With the full implementation of the CCGPS, teachers in all content areas are finding themselves responsible for teaching literacy, including text-based writing, understanding informational texts, etc. In order to ensure the literacy growth of students, teachers need to model literacy strategies, provide explicit instruction on literacy strategies, and provide content-area reading and writing strategies (International Reading Association, 1999, as cited in “The Why,” p. 68-69). In order for EMS’s teachers to support student literacy growth, teachers in all content areas need professional learning on reading and writing strategies.

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 26)

- Identify appropriate strategies to help ELs meet English language proficiency standards
- Support teachers in their use of appropriate strategies to help ELs meet English language proficiency standards
- Provide professional learning on:
 - Incorporating the use of literature in content areas
 - Use of informational text in English language arts classes
 - Writing instruction (narrative, opinion, and informational) in all subject areas
 - Supporting opinions with reasons and information
 - Determining author bias or point of view
 - Text complexity that is appropriate to grade level
 - Text complexity that is adjusted to the needs of individual students
 - Guiding students to conduct short research projects that use several sources
 - Teaching students to identify and navigate the text structures most common to a particular content area (e.g., social studies, cause and effect; science, problem/solution) (“The What,” p. 6)
- Identify or develop a school-wide writing rubric that is aligned with the CCGPS to set clear expectations and goals for performance
- Require the teaching of academic vocabulary in all subjects using a systematic process (“The What,” p. 6)

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 26)

- Create a plan to integrate literacy in all subjects as articulated within CCGPS (“The What,” p. 6)
- Support teachers in the integration of literacy instruction and skill development necessary for achievement in all subjects as articulated within CCGPS
- Ask teachers to identify exemplary samples of student work to model features of quality writing
- Share ways for teachers to guide students to focus on their own improvement

- Differentiate literacy assignments by offering student choice

F. Action: Enlist the community at large to support schools and teachers in the development of college-and-career-ready students as articulated in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards.

EMS's administration and staff have worked diligently over the years to build a strong relationship with the community and other stakeholders. We would like to include members from the community on the Literacy Leadership Team in order to create a shared vision for literacy for our students. We would also like to expand current partnerships in order to provide additional literacy resources and support for our students.

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in "The How" page 26)

- Create a shared vision for literacy for the school and community, making the vision tangible and visible (e.g., number of students involved in active book clubs; graphing scores; rewards for improvement in literacy)

EMS will implement: (as referenced in "The How" page 26)

- Identify key members of the community, governmental and civic leaders, business leaders, and parents to serve as members of a community advisory board ("The What," p. 7)
- Contact potential members and schedule at least two meetings annually
- Identify and contact learning supports in the community that target student improvement
- Open school buildings for adult learners from the community in the evenings, encouraging a community of learners
- Pursue additional funding sources for specialized literacy staff and materials

Building Block 2: Continuity of Instruction

A. Action: Ensure a consistent literacy focus across the curriculum through the use of collaborative teams (See Leadership Sections I. D., E.)

The 2009 NAEP results show that slightly less than 3/4 of Georgia students are proficient readers, and these results echo those for the nation's public schools ("The Why," p. 30). We have found that many of EMS's students do not read at grade level. Additionally, a learner's literacy ability is the root of ALL academic performance, and a direct relationship exists among the language capacities of reading, writing, listening, and speaking ("The Why," p. 31). As such, the Literacy Leadership Team recognizes the need for a consistent focus on literacy instruction across all content area classrooms. Through additional professional learning and strengthened collaborative teams, the teachers at EMS

would have the skills and the support to provide effective, consistent literacy instruction to all students.

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 29)

- Develop administrative awareness of the need to identify gaps
- Meet in disciplinary teams, either physically or virtually, according to regularly established times for collaborative planning and examining student data/work (“The What,” p. 7)
- Study formative student assessment results and use the results to continue to adjust instruction

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 29)

- Prepare agendas and action summaries for all meetings
- Observe model lessons, organize materials, and practice effective instructional strategies using videos where possible
- Use protocols to examine student work (“The What,” p. 7)
- Collaborate with other team members to conduct peer observations and analyze lessons to improve disciplinary literacy instruction using videotaping where possible

B. Action: Support teachers in providing literacy instruction across the curriculum

The students at EMS receive literacy instruction daily in their English/Language Arts classes. While some content area teachers provide students with opportunities to read informational and literary texts and to write text-based responses, the literacy instruction is not consistent across all classes or grade levels. In order for teachers to provide students with “holistic, authentic, and varied” opportunities to write and practice literacy skills, teachers need additional professional learning (NCTE, 2008, p. 2, as cited in “The Why,” p. 44). Additionally, in order to promote consistency between content areas and between classes, the administration will utilize a literacy checklist during informal observations.

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 30)

- Identify the concepts and skills students needed to meet expectations in CCGPS
- Use research-based strategies and appropriate resources to support student learning of the CCGPS
- Monitor the use of instructional strategies to improve literacy through formal and informal observations
- Stay abreast of effective strategies for literacy instruction
- Implement appropriate strategies to help ELs meet English language proficiency standards

- Teach and have students practice writing as a process (pre-write, draft, revise, edit, and publish online and on hardcopy)

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 30)

- Provide awareness sessions for entire faculty to learn about CCGPS for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects
- Discuss exemplary samples with students to model features of quality writing
- Create and implement a school-wide writing rubric (“The What,” p. 7)
- Expand opportunities for students to write, speak, and listen using both face-to-face and online options for listening, viewing and communicating through social media (“The What,” p. 7)
- Develop meaningful opportunities for students to write, speak, and listen using social media for both face-to-face and online options
- Plan a literacy celebration for the entire school
- Use a literacy checklist during informal walkthrough observations

C. Action: Collaborate with supporting out-of-school agencies and organizations within the community

According to “The Why” document, it is vital that literacy programs coordinate with the local community in order to meet student needs (p. 67). In order to “provide students with a sense of consistency between what they experience in and out of school” (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004, pp. 16 & 22, as cited in “The Why,” p. 51), EMS plans to strengthen existing partnerships with community members and to seek out new partnerships with local businesses and civic organizations.

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 32)

- Appoint a person in a leadership role (e.g., administrator, coach, counselor) at the school who will be in charge of transitions for all students
- Develop a survey of needs from parents, students, teachers, and counselors that can be used to match available resources to actual need
- Design avenues to connect students to the proper service providers in the community (“The What,” p. 7)
- Develop and maintain infrastructure to support literacy (accountability, data collection and evaluation across organizations)
- Pursue additional funding sources for specialized literacy staff and materials

- Establish a mentoring system from within and outside the school for every student who needs additional support

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 32)

- Provide for professional learning and resources that support literacy learning in outside organizations.
- Provide English language services that extend beyond the classroom
- Ask local bookstores to donate books to the school
- Continue to foster relationships/networks among schools (particularly within feeder patterns), families, and communities.

Building Block 3. Ongoing formative and summative assessments

A. *Action: Establish an infrastructure for ongoing formative and summative assessments to determine the need for and the intensity of interventions and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction*

Stiggins (2007) argues that while schools and states have created high-quality summative assessments, there is still much work to be done in developing and implementing effective formative assessments that can “[exert] the greatest influence on pupils’ academic lives: day to day in the classroom, where it can be used to help them learn more” (as cited in “The Why,” p. 95). While EMS currently implements the formative benchmark assessments created by Rockdale County Public Schools, additional professional learning is needed on the data teams’ protocol and how to adjust instruction based on the data.

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 36)

- Research and select effective screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic tools to identify achievement levels of all students (“The What,” p. 8)
- Ensure that teachers understand the purpose for and use of formative assessment and how it differs from summative assessment
- Locate or develop common mid-course assessments are used across classrooms and include a variety of formats (multiple choice, short answer, constructed response, essay)
- Evaluate the results of the assessments in order to adjust expectations and instruction in all classrooms
- Continue to provide consistent expectations across classrooms and teachers by identifying or developing common curriculum-based assessments (formal, informal, performance based)
- Continue to purchase assessment and intervention materials aligned with students’ needs
- Define a process for selecting appropriate interventions for struggling readers
- Identify and train all staff who will administer assessments to ensure standardized procedures and accurate data recording (“The What,” p. 8)

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 36)

- Use technology to share relevant student progress data with parents and caregivers in an easily interpreted user-friendly format
- Utilize online options such as Skype and Google+ for collaboration among teachers

- Use online training options to train/retrain all staff who will administer assessments to ensure standardized procedures and accurate data recording (“The What,” p. 8)
- Analyze student data in teacher teams to develop and adjust instructional plans
- Provide assessment measures to identify high achieving/advanced as well as struggling learners who would benefit from enrichment (“The What,” p. 8)

B. Action: Use universal screening and progress monitoring for formative assessment

According to various research, having the “right” assessments in place is only one element of an effective literacy assessment plan (McEwan, 2007; Phillips, 2005; Torgesen, Houston, Rissman, Decker, Roberts, Vaughn, Wexler, Francis, & Rivera et al., 2007, as cited in “The Why,” p. 96). Teachers must have the training to utilize data in a way that allows them to adjust instruction in a timely manner. While teachers at EMS follow the schedule of universal screeners and formative assessments, they do not have a protocol in place for analyzing the data to make decisions about instruction or needed materials. While EMS provides a universal screener (SRI) three times per year, the teachers do not meet to review instruction, scheduling, or interventions based on this data.

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 36)

- Identify literacy skills needed to master CCGPS in each content area
- Include assessment measures to identify high achieving/advanced learners who would benefit from advanced coursework (“The What,” p. 8)
- Analyze student data in teacher teams to develop and adjust instructional plans
- Assign a person or persons responsible for monitoring and maintaining fidelity of all formative assessment procedures and timelines

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 36)

- Use technology to share relevant student progress data with parents and caregivers in an easily interpreted user-friendly format
- Utilize online options such as Skype and Google+ for collaboration among teachers and parents
- Provide continued professional learning to staff who administer assessments to maintain use of standardized procedures and accurate data recording (“The What,” p. 8)

C. Action: Use diagnostic assessment to analyze problems found in literacy screening

According to the Center on Instruction 2009, diagnostic screeners must be given three times per year to judge student progress (“The Why,” p. 97). At EMS, teachers currently use SRI as a diagnostic

assessment three times per year. However, this data is not shared with teachers in all content areas, which prevents a cohesive intervention for students with diagnosed problems. By training all teachers in how to understand Lexile scores, which are reported by SRI, teachers will be better able to address student needs and apply the appropriate interventions.

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 37)

- Develop a protocol for ensuring that students who are identified by screenings receive diagnostic assessment (“The What,” p. 9)
- Identify diagnostic assessments, where possible, that isolate the component skills needed for mastery of literacy standards
- Select interventions that include diagnostic assessments and multiple- entry points to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach (“The What,” p. 9)

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 37)

- Use technology to differentiate learning within content areas (e.g., use Lexiles to match students to text; provide practice opportunities to strengthen areas of weakness; use gloss option on e-books to provide definitions for unknown words; translate material into student’s first language; support students whose disabilities may preclude them from acquiring information through reading)
- Use technology to share relevant student progress data with families in an easily interpreted format
- Use technology for communicating data to the district literacy leadership team in a timely manner

D. Action: Use summative data to make programming decisions as well as to monitor individual student progress

While EMS’s administration utilizes summative data to determine teacher schedules and overall student needs, there is a need for formal data teams training for teachers in order to support their utilization of data and to guide ongoing professional learning (“The Why,” p. 94).

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 36)

- Discuss assessment results with students to set individual goals
- Analyze assessment data to identify teachers who need support

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 36)

- Evaluate the capacity of technology infrastructure to support test administration and disseminate results

- Using online training options, offer professional learning on strategies to address specific skills identified as school-wide or subject area weaknesses
- Administer summative assessments at scheduled intervals
- Include specific times on the school calendar for analyzing summative assessment data
- Provide professional learning on the data teams protocol so that teachers know how to use data to adjust instruction (“The What,” p. 9)

Action 3.E.: Develop a clearly articulated strategy for using data to improve teaching and learning (See V. A.)

The administration at EMS routinely collects and analyzes data, which is then presented to district-level personnel during quarterly data briefings. While the administration has received training in how to access and analyze data, teachers have not been trained and do not consistently use the information to improve teaching strategies. Professional learning is needed in the data teams’ protocol and how best to implement proven strategies based on the data provided by our formative screeners (“The Why,” p. 96). Currently, data is accessible through the State Longitudinal Data System, but teachers need training and practice with how to collate and analyze this data.

The administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 38)

- Identify participants for data teams for specific grade bands and content areas
- Develop procedures and expectations for staff to review and analyze assessment results (“The What,” p. 9)

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 38)

- Identify participants for data team at system level
- Schedule collaborative planning time for data meetings at a minimum of once/month
- Continue to build collaborative data meetings into the monthly calendar
- Using online options to continue to train new members of the meetings in the expectations and function of the established protocols (“The What,” p. 9)

Building Block 4. Best Practices in Literacy Instruction

A. Action: Provide direct, explicit literacy instruction for all students

Research has proven the need for reading instruction in visualizing, inferring, determining importance, etc. (Dole, Duffy, Roehler, and Pearson, 1991, as cited in “The Why, p. 41-43). However, these strategies are

often taught in isolation by English/Language Arts teachers, leaving students unable to apply these strategies “flexibly and with purpose” (Duke and Pearson, 2002, as cited in *The Why*, p. 41). The administration at EMS recognizes the need for *all* content area teachers to receive professional learning in order to be able to explicitly teach literacy strategies and provide students with opportunities to determine which strategy to use and when.

Teachers at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 40)

- Examine student data to identify areas of instruction with greatest needs such as word identification, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (“The What,” p. 9)
- Plan and provide professional learning on direct, explicit instructional strategies to build student’ vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills within each content area.
- Provide professional learning on the tenets of explicit instruction such as:
 - use of data to inform instructional decisions and explicit teaching
 - selection of appropriate text for strategy instruction
 - telling students specific strategies to be learned and why
 - modeling of how strategy is used
 - guided and independent practice with feedback (“The What,” p. 10)
- Ensure daily literacy and discussion of when and where strategies are to be applied
- Provide instructional and assessment accommodations/adaptations for English language learners according to their English proficiency levels, and accommodations for students with exceptionalities according to their needs and talents.
- Review teacher and student data to improve instruction

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 40-41)

- Research and select a core program that will provide continuity based on a carefully articulated scope and sequence of skills that is integrated into a rich curriculum of literary and informational texts
- Compile and examine classroom observation data using a checklist to gauge current practice in literacy instruction
- Allocate which aspects of literacy instruction students are to receive in each subject area (“The What,” p. 10)
- Provide training to all pertinent staff in the use of the core program
- Using online options where feasible, provide professional learning on research-based differentiated instructional strategies that support diverse needs

- Use technology for students to read, collaborate, and publish works
- Address both academic and workplace literacy skills across all content areas and provide students with knowledge of a variety of career pathways
- Collaborate with and obtain additional support from other educators on differentiated instruction via online communities of educators
- Share effective differentiated lessons and differentiation strategies in teacher team meetings
- Create and participate in an online professional community to share ideas, questions, lesson plans, and video/podcasts of classes, strategies, and instruction
- Provide opportunities for teachers to learn more about how to make adolescent curriculum more accessible to all learners

B. Action: Ensure that students receive effective writing instruction across the curriculum

Today's students are inundated with opportunities to write and collaborate in informal contexts, such as with Twitter, Facebook, and Youtube. However, this interactive, collaborative writing is not reflected in their educational lives. However, in order to prepare students to be fully prepared for the writing demands of the 21st century business world, teaching one writing method is no longer effective ("The Why," p. 44). Today's students need to be adept at collaborating online, synthesizing research into a proposal, adapting writing styles to meet the needs of the audience, and using technology to create and share information across the world. Not surprisingly, the NCTE argued that "instructional practices, writing genres, and assessments should be *holistic, authentic, and varied*" (NCTE, 2008, p. 2, as cited in "The Why," p. 44). In order for students to be prepared for the increased writing demands of the 21st century, we must provide them with direct, varied, collaborative, technology-infused, and effective writing instruction in all content area courses.

Teachers at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in "The How" page 42)

- English language arts (ELA) teachers are consistent in using content rubrics and portfolios aligned to CCGPS
- ELA teachers create authentic text based constructed and extended response tasks and assignments
- Use of Write Score sporadically based on school and county funding

EMS will implement: (as referenced in "The How" page 40-41)

- Create a plan that describes how technology will be used for production, publishing, and communication across curriculum and communities ("The What," p. 10)

- Use technology for students to collaborate and publish works (“The What,” p. 10)
- Design a vertically and horizontally articulated writing plan consistent with CCGPS (“The What,” p. 10)
- Identify and/or develop programs, protocol, and/or materials necessary to implement the plan at each level
- Develop a coordinated plan for writing instruction across all subject areas to include: explicit instruction, guided practice, independent practice, and assessments (“The What,” p. 10)
- Provide professional learning on best practices in writing instruction in all subject areas

C. Action: Teachers work to develop and maintain interest and engagement as students progress through school.

It comes as no surprise that research lists engagement as having a key effect on student performance and as a vital component of reaching struggling readers (“The Why,” p. 131). Middle school is a particularly difficult time to reach students and keep them engaged in reading and learning. Research shows that providing students with choice, as well as providing them with opportunities to experience success, greatly impacts student engagement (“The Why,” p. 59). While teachers at EMS attempt to provide students with opportunities for choice in reading assignments, limited class sets of novels, especially high-interest, young adult novels, prevent teachers from utilizing this option in keeping students engaged and reading.

Teachers at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 41)

- Providing students with opportunities to self-select reading material and topics for research
- Increasing opportunities for collaborating with peers
- Voluntary participation in the Reading Bowl
- Grouping of reading classes based on Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) scores to promote student engagement and understanding

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 41)

- Taking steps to provide students with an understanding of the relevance of their academic assignments to their lives
- Increasing access to texts that students consider interesting
- Scaffolding students’ background knowledge and competency in navigating content area texts to ensure their confidence and self-efficacy

- Leveraging the creative use of technology within the learning process to promote engagement and relevance
- Ensure that incentive programs are voluntary, not tied to grades, uses as student motivation, and uses minimal incentives

Building Block 5. System of Tiered Intervention (RTI) for All Students

A. *Action: Use information developed from the school-based data teams to inform RTI process (see Section 3. E.)*

EMS follows district protocol for the RTI process, including teachers, administrators, and parents in the process. The RTI team analyzes all relevant data, including summative assessments, district formative benchmarks, and universal screeners. Because research shows that it is critical that we provide ongoing professional support for teachers and interventionists if we expect the intervention strategies to work (Gersten et al., 2007, as cited in “The Why,” p. 132), it is imperative that EMS’s teachers are fully trained in how to analyze data. With this research in mind, EMS will use funding from the SRCL grant to provide professional learning in intervention strategies and the data teams’ protocol for all teachers and support staff.

RTI coordinator at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 43)

- Determine percentage of students currently being served in each tier at each grade level (“The What,” p. 11)
- Articulate goals/objectives at building and system level based on identified grade-level and building needs, as well as system needs
- Develop protocols for identifying students and matching them to the appropriate intervention (“The What,” p. 11)
- Monitor to ensure that interventions are occurring regularly and with fidelity
- Monitor results of formative assessment to ensure students are progressing

RTI coordinator will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 43)

- Budget for recurring costs of data collection, intervention materials, and technology used for implementation
- Purchase, train, and implement data collection
- Analyze data for individuals to identify students in need of intervention according to established protocols (“The What,” p. 11)
- Develop standardize protocols for the collection of critical information to determine students’ literacy competence in various content areas and response to interventions
- Schedule and conduct grade-level data-analysis team meetings

- Provide building and system-level support of the process
- Use technology to provide ongoing support for data collection and analysis such as videotaping, videoconferencing, and online collaboration, for example

B. Action: Provide Tier I Instruction based upon the CCGPS in all grades to all students in all classrooms (See Sections 4. A & B)

Research shows that “standards-based learning environments which are implemented with fidelity are necessary to ensure all students have access to quality instruction” (“The Why,” p. 132). Research also shows that “80-100% of students are successful in the general education classroom” if literacy instruction is consistent (“The Why,” p. 132). In order to consistently provide instruction for Tier 1 students, teachers at EMS need ongoing professional learning on proven intervention strategies. The administration also recognizes a need for updated resources to support interventions.

Teachers at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 43-45)

- Ensure that teachers within each subject area plan together to implement jointly adopted literacy instruction (close reading, for example)
- Ensure that teachers develop and agree upon common classroom-based formative assessments within each subject area to ensure consistent expectations across classrooms
- Ensure that teachers regularly meet, either face-to-face or online, to debrief on the progress of implemented lessons and to plan necessary changes
- Use data from universal screening process to identify general weaknesses in instruction Tier I as well as struggling students
- Establish protocols to ensure consistent progress monitoring, data collection, and reporting
- Ensure that communication between teachers and administrators is ongoing and effective

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 43-45)

- Examine student data to determine the current percentage of successful students in the areas of literacy
- Develop a plan to strengthen Tier I instruction of disciplinary literacy in each content area
- Provide professional learning on GA DOE resources for RTI, universal screening, team teaching, and school-wide understanding of assessment data and anticipated levels of student mastery (“The What,” p. 11)
- Schedule time for student progress conversations across (vertical) as well as within (horizontal) grade levels

- Provide professional learning to support literacy, either face-to-face or online (“The What,” p. 11)
- Use technology to track and endure the movement of students between Tier I and Tier 2 based on response to interventions
- Provide sufficient resources such as time, training cost, materials, and implementation of interventions

C. Action: Implement Tier 2 needs-based interventions for targeted students

At EMS, formative assessments, such as the district benchmarks, and universal screeners are used to determine student progress toward mastery of the standards (“The Why,” p. 133). However, additional collaboration is needed between classroom teachers and interventionists in order to consistently provide interventions for students. Additional resources are needed to provide more flexibility in the implementation of strategies.

Teachers and counselors at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 45-46)

- Establish protocols to ensure consistent progress monitoring, data collection, and reporting
- Ensure adequate time for planning and implementing interventions
- Monitor student movement between T1 and T2
- Provide sufficient resources (time, training cost, materials and implementation of interventions) (“The What,” p. 12)
- Study schools successful in closing the achievement gap
- Encourage the use of technology to ensure proactive communication between students and teachers, parents and teachers, e.g., cell phones, texting, email

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 43-45)

- Plan and provide professional learning for interventionists on appropriate use of supplemental and intervention materials; diagnosis of reading difficulties; direct, explicit instructional strategies to address difficulties; charting data; graphing progress (“The What,” p. 12)
- Schedule times for collaborative discussion and planning between content area T1 teachers and interventionists (teachers or para-educators) (“The What,” p. 12)
- Use technology to track and endure the movement of students between T1 and T2 based on response to interventions

D. Action: In Tier 3, ensure that Student Support Team (SST) and Data Team monitor progress jointly

Students move to Tier 3 if they do not respond to the specific accommodations and instruction provided in Tier 2. These students may need to meet with a reading teacher or work in a special small

group in order to improve learning and skills. Students may read materials that are scaffolded at a lower Lexile level and progress toward higher levels, or they may have modified assignments. EMS currently uses several reading programs as intervention strategies for students reading below grade level such as I-Ready and Read 180. We continue to set and monitor goals, and determine whether students need additional testing to determine whether they have a specific learning disability or other difference in learning. Grant funding would provide for reading-specific training for teachers across content areas, which would allow EMS to provide flexible instructional support to students in Tier 3 without hiring an additional teacher.

Teachers and counselors at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 45-46)

- In addition to everything that occurs at T1 and T2, data teams (expanded to include school psych, ESOL teacher, SLP, etc.) meet to:
 - discuss students in T3 who fail to respond to intervention
 - receive professional learning on Student Support Team processes and procedures as outlined in the GA DOE manual and guidance
 - verify implementation of proven interventions
 - ensure that interventionist has maintained fidelity to intervention protocol prior to referral (“The What,” p. 12)

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 45-46)

- T3 SST/data teams meet at least once a month to discuss student progress based on daily interventions that include a minimum of four data points (“The What,” p. 12)
- Ensure that T3 includes proven interventions that address behavior
- Data is used to support response to intervention
- Use technology to track and endure the movement of students between T1 and T2 based on response to interventions

E. Action: Implement Tier 4 specially-designed learning through specialized programs, methodologies or instructional based upon students’ inability to access the CCGPS any other way

If and when a student does not respond to the three levels of interventions under RTI, they are recommended for special education testing in order to receive appropriate accommodations which would assist the student in being successful. Students that meet the requirements for Tier 4 are given individualized education plans (IEP) that focus on the student’s strengths and weaknesses. The IEP specifies strategies that are focused on providing the student with the least restrictive learning environment with the appropriate accommodations that would allow for their success. Each Tier 4 student is assigned to a case manager who manages, intervenes, and supervises their educational career and growth.

Teachers and counselors at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 47)

- School schedules are developed to ensure least restrictive environment (LRE) (“The What,” p. 12)
- Consider assigning a case manager to each student with (IEP) (i. e., the case manager should maintain contact even if the student is served by a different special educator in multiple settings (such as team taught) so that communication with student and parents is seamless)
- Special education, ESOL, and gifted teachers participate in professional learning communities to ensure strict alignment with delivery of CCGPS, even in separate settings
- Case managers regularly participate in open houses, parent conferences and college and career planning activities
- Student data supports the exit of students from T4

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 47)

- Special education, EL, or gifted case managers meet plan and discuss students’ progress regularly with general education teachers
- Most highly qualified and experienced teachers support the delivery of instruction for students with the most significant needs (i.e., best Math II teacher teams with best special education teacher for team-taught instruction) (“The What,” p. 13)

Building Block 6. Improved Instruction through Professional Learning

A. Action: Ensure that pre-service education prepares new teachers for all the challenges of the classroom

“Teachers possess the greatest capacity to positively affect student achievement, and a growing body of research shows that the professional development of teachers holds the greatest potential to improve adolescent literacy achievement” (Greenwald et al., 1996, as cited in “The Why,” p. 141). In order for professional learning to have the greatest impact, however, it must be ongoing and include adequate human and material resources (“The Why,” p. 142). EMS’s administration recognizes the importance of hiring highly-qualified teachers with literacy experience but also the need to provide ongoing professional learning to all teachers, including pre-service teachers assigned to EMS. They are committed to providing professional learning for new teachers and pre-service teachers assigned to EMS as well as for the staff as a whole.

Teachers and administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 48)

- Provide professional learning, where necessary, for postsecondary faculty

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 48-49)

- Meet with representatives from Professional Standards Commission to enlist support for ensuring that preservice teachers receive coursework in disciplinary literacy within content areas (“The What,” p. 13)
- Ensure that mentoring teachers are fully trained in providing instruction in disciplinary literacy
- Continue to monitor and support the integration of disciplinary literacy
- Provide building and system-level administrators with professional learning on the need to integrate disciplinary literacy instruction into the content areas in order to help them make informed hiring decisions
- Develop protocols for evaluating implementation of the new coursework

B. Action: Provide professional learning for in-service personnel

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC, 2001) argued that substantiated academic growth will occur only when professionals receive ongoing, targeted professional learning (“The Why,” p. 142). Because the most effective professional learning addresses the use of data to make instructional changes, deepens teachers’ content knowledge, and provides opportunities for teacher collaboration (“The Why,” p. 142), EMS’s administration is committed to providing ongoing professional learning that is collaborative and provides teachers with the necessary skills to use data to drive instruction. At EMS, teachers meet weekly in content areas to discuss the standards and instructional practices; however, professional learning that targets literacy strategies and best practices are still needed, especially across all content areas. Teachers also need professional learning on and time to analyze data and modify teaching strategies based on the data.

Teachers and administrators at EMS will reinforce current practices including: (as referenced in “The How” page 48-49)

- Encourage every teacher to develop a professional growth plan based on a self-assessment of professional learning needs
- Hire an instructional coach to provide site-based support for staff as funds permit (“The What,” p. 13)
- Revisit and revise professional learning yearly based on student mastery of CCGPS and classroom observations
- Partner experienced teachers with pre-service and beginning teachers
- Provide program-specific training in intervention programs before the beginning of the year to prepare teachers and staff for implementation (“The What,” p. 13)

EMS will implement: (as referenced in “The How” page 48-49)

- Schedule and protect time during the school day for teachers to collaboratively analyze data, share expertise, study the standards, plan lessons, examine student work, and reflect on practice (“The What,” p. 13)
- Use teacher data (surveys and interest inventories; teacher observations) as well as student data to target professional learning needs
- Provide training in administering and interpreting results of assessments in terms of literacy
- Analyze student data to evaluate effectiveness of current professional learning on student mastery of CCGPS in all subgroups
- Use formal and informal observations to monitor and improve literacy instruction (e.g., Literacy Instruction Checklist, GA or some other equivalent instrument)
- Videotape important professional learning sessions for staff to review and share with colleagues within and out of the school

**Rockdale County Public Schools
Edwards Middle
Analysis and Identification of Student and Teacher Data**

Edwards Middle School used the analysis of applicable data along with the literacy needs assessment to develop the goals and objectives identified in the Project Plan section.

Over the past two years, the percentage of students meeting/exceeding the standard in reading has increased. However, an area of growth is the percentage of students meeting the standard in Science and Social Studies, and all students need improvement in the exceeds category. Of particular concern is the low performance of Black and Hispanic students in Science.

A. Assessments by Grade Level

CRCT

School Year	Subject	Grade Level	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds
2013-2014	Reading	06	2%	55%	43%
		07	8%	58%	34%
		08	1%	49%	50%
	Science	06	24%	64%	12%
		07	23%	41%	36%
		08	20%	60%	20%
	Social Studies	06	20%	46%	34%
		07	20%	37%	43%
		08	14%	52%	34%
2012-2013	Reading	06	6%	41%	53%
		07	5%	65%	30%
		08	1%	52%	47%
	Science	06	27%	57%	16%
		07	16%	45%	39%
		08	18%	61%	21%
	Social Studies	06	24%	40%	36%
		07	15%	40%	45%
		08	10%	45%	45%

Rockdale County Public Schools
 Edwards Middle
 Analysis and Identification of Student and Teacher Data

Georgia Writing Assessment

School Year	Subgroup	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds
2013-2014	Total Population	24%	75%	2%
	SWD	57%	43%	
	Non-SWD	21%	77%	2%
	ED	27%	72%	1%
	Non-ED	16%	80%	4%
	White	22%	75%	4%
	Black	18%	80%	2%
	Hispanic	36%	64%	
	Multi-racial	50%	50%	
2012-2013	Total Population	15%	81%	4%
	SWD	53%	47%	
	Non-SWD	13%	83%	4%
	ED	16	80	4
	Non-ED	12	84	4
	White	13%	83%	4%
	Black	17%	79%	4%
	Hispanic	11%	86%	3%
	Multi-racial	18%	73%	9%

B. Disaggregated Data

Ethnicity Data by Grade Level

School Year	Subject			
2013-2014				
6th		Race/Ethnicity	Did Not Meet	Meets/Exceeds
	Reading	Asian		100%
		Black	1%	99%
		Hispanic	3%	97%
		Multi-racial	12%	88%
		White		100%
	Science	Asian		100%
		Black	25%	75%
		Hispanic	18%	82%
		Multi-racial	13%	87%
		White	33%	67%
	Social Studies	Asian		100%

Rockdale County Public Schools
 Edwards Middle
 Analysis and Identification of Student and Teacher Data

		Black	19%	81%
		Hispanic	19%	81%
		Multi-racial	12%	88%
		White	31%	69%
7th		Race/Ethnicity	Did Not Meet	Meets/Exceeds
	Reading	Asian	25%	75%
		Black	1%	99%
		Hispanic	6%	94%
		Multi-racial	8%	92%
		White	8%	92%
	Science	Asian	25%	75%
		Black	23%	77%
		Hispanic	19%	81%
		Multi-racial	17%	83%
		White	27%	73%
	Social Studies	Asian	25%	75%
		Black	21%	79%
		Hispanic	13%	87%
		Multi-racial	25%	75%
		White	4%	96%
8th		Race/Ethnicity	Did Not Meet	Meets/Exceeds
	Reading	Asian		100%
		Black	1%	99%
		Hispanic	2%	98%
		Multi-racial		100%
		White		100%
	Science	Asian		100%
		Black	21%	79%
		Hispanic	27%	73%
		Multi-racial	14%	86%
		White	7%	93%
	Social Studies	Asian		100%
		Black	15%	85%
		Hispanic	17%	83%
		Multi-racial	12%	88%
		White	4%	96%
School Year 2012-2013	Subject			
6th		Race/Ethnicity	Did Not Meet	Meets/Exceeds
	Reading	Asian		100%
		Black	5%	95%
		Hispanic	4%	96%
		Multi-racial	18%	82%
		White	11%	89%

Edwards Middle School
 Analysis and Identification of Student and Teacher Data

Rockdale County Public Schools
 Edwards Middle
 Analysis and Identification of Student and Teacher Data

	Science	Asian		100%
		Black	30%	70%
		Hispanic	27%	73%
		Multi-racial	36%	64%
		White	18%	82%
	Social Studies	Asian		100%
		Black	27%	73%
		Hispanic	27%	73%
		Multi-racial	27%	73%
		White	13%	87%
7th		Race/Ethnicity	Did Not Meet	Meets/Exceeds
	Reading	Asian		100%
		Black	3%	97%
		Hispanic	7%	93%
		Multi-racial	14%	86%
		White	5%	95%
	Science	Asian		100%
		Black	14%	86%
		Hispanic	23%	77%
		Multi-racial	14%	86%
		White	14%	86%%
	Social Studies	Asian		100%
		Black	13%	87%
		Hispanic	24%	76%
		Multi-racial	14%	86%
		White	12%	88%
8th		Race/Ethnicity	Did Not Meet	Meets/Exceeds
	Reading	Asian		100%
		Black	1%	99%
		Hispanic	2%	98%
		Multi-racial		100%
		White	2%	98%
	Science	Asian		100%
		Black	24%	76%
		Hispanic	11%	89%
		Multi-racial	10%	90%
		White	15%	85%
	Social Studies	Asian		100%
		Black	13%	87%
		Hispanic	3%	97%
		Multi-racial		100%
		White	9%	91%

Rockdale County Public Schools
 Edwards Middle
 Analysis and Identification of Student and Teacher Data

Students with Disabilities

School Year	Subject	Subgroup	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds
2013-2014	Reading	SWD	13%	78%	9%
		Non-SWD	2%	53%	45%
	Science	SWD	70%	27%	3%
		Non-SWD	17%	57%	26%
	Social Studies	SWD	59%	37%	4%
		Non-SWD	14%	46%	40%
2012-2013	Reading	SWD	10%	69%	21%
		Non-SWD	2%	53%	45%
	Science	SWD	70%	25%	5%
		Non-SWD	16%	56%	28%
	Social Studies	SWD	70%	20%	10%
		Non-SWD	12%	44%	44%

Socio-Economic Status

School Year	Subject	Subgroup	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds
2013-2014	Reading	ED	3%	57%	40%
		Non-ED	1%	46%	53%
	Science	ED	24%	58%	18%
		Non-ED	17%	45%	38%
	Social Studies	ED	19%	49%	31%
		Non-ED	14%	33%	53%
2012-2013	Reading	ED	3%	60%	37%
		Non-ED	2%	40%	58%
	Science	ED	24%	55%	21%
		Non-ED	13%	51%	36%
	Social Studies	ED	19%	45%	36%
		Non-ED	10%	33%	57%

C. Identified Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

Overall, students show gains in meeting/exceeding the standard in Reading. Students in the economically disadvantaged subgroup continue to increase in Reading and Science. Our economically disadvantaged students are remaining relatively consistent in their performance on the CRCT; however, they are still outperformed by their non-ED peers.

Weaknesses

Many of our students, especially students with disabilities, are not meeting standards on the Science and Social Studies portions of formative and summative assessments. Our Black and

**Rockdale County Public Schools
Edwards Middle
Analysis and Identification of Student and Teacher Data**

Hispanic students continue to be outperformed by their peers. Our 6th grade students are scoring below basic on the Scholastic Reading Inventory, which indicates a need for a systematic, data-driven approach to how we provide literacy instruction at EMS. Additional training and resources are needed to support our teachers in addressing literacy across all content areas.

D and E. Teacher Data

Teacher Data

Years of Experience	Administrators	Teachers
0-3	0	22
4-10	2	29
11-15	0	7
15 or more	1	0
Certificate Level		
BT-4	0	3
BT-5	0	1
T-4	0	16
T-5	0	24
T-6	3	9
T-7	0	5

G. District-Prescribed Data

Universal Screeners (SRI)

School Year	Grade Level	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
2013-2014	6	56%	33%	8%	3%
	7	46%	35%	13%	6%
	8	31%	35%	22%	12%
2012-2013	6	84%	14%	2%	0%
	7	70%	21%	5%	3%
	8	48%	34%	14%	4%

**Rockdale County Public Schools
Edwards Middle
Analysis and Identification of Student and Teacher Data**

Benchmark Assessments (*% of meets/exceeds*)

School Year	Grade Level	Subject	Benchmark 1	Benchmark 2	Benchmark 3
2013-2014	6	English/Language Arts	86%	76%	87%
		Science	72%	74%	70%
		Social Studies	92%	70%	70%
	7	English/Language Arts	77%	82%	74%
		Science	71%	76%	67%
		Social Studies	79%	71%	74%
	8	English/Language Arts	81%	90%	83%
		Science	88%	83%	88%
		Social Studies	89%	74%	70%
2012-2013	6	English/Language Arts	83%		90%
		Science	69%	74%	66%
		Social Studies	84%	56%	77%
	7	English/Language Arts	78%		77%
		Science	72%	81%	78%
		Social Studies	84%	70%	79%
	8	English/Language Arts	87%		91%
		Science	87%	85%	91%
		Social Studies	89%	89%	94%

F. Goals and Objectives

Our goals are to improve meets and exceeds scores in Science and Social Studies for all students; improve meets and exceeds scores in Reading for students with disabilities and ESOL students; and increase writing instruction in all content areas. Objectives include providing professional learning based on student data, creating and implementing a shared literacy vision for the school and community, using data to target students for intervention or support, and providing consistent literacy instruction for all students.

H. Professional Learning

All teachers participate in school-level and district-level professional learning communities. All administrators participate in the district Instructional Support Team, which provides administrators and district staff with monthly professional learning. Administrators attend monthly principal meetings where they engage in professional learning with principals from across the district. Teachers and administrators attend annual district-wide professional learning days which provide individualized options for various grade levels and subject areas.

Project Plan, Procedures, and Goals

A, B, and C: Implementation Plan

Edwards Middle School’s goals, objectives, and tasks are informed by the research and Building Blocks in the “What” and “Why” documents. Goals and objectives are aligned with EMS’s School Improvement Plan and the district Strategic Plan.

<p>Goal 1: Improve meets and exceeds scores in Science and Social Studies for all students.</p>	<p>Goal 2: Improve meets and exceeds scores in Reading for students with disabilities and ESOL students.</p>	<p>Goal 3: Increase writing instruction in all content areas.</p>
<p>Objective 1: Provide professional learning based on student data and teacher needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 1: <i>Provide professional learning on data teams protocol</i> • Action 2: <i>Identify professional learning needs based on data analyzed during data teams meetings</i> • Action 3: <i>Purchase updated science and social studies materials for all grade levels</i> • Action 4: <i>Purchase any necessary assessment materials and train teachers to administer any new assessments</i> 		
<p>Objective 2: Create a shared literacy vision for the school and community aligned with the state literacy plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 1: <i>Schedule regular literacy observations to monitor use of literacy strategies, student engagement and learning, and consistent use of effective instructional practices</i> • Action 2: <i>Conduct literacy walk-throughs</i> • Action 3: <i>Provide time for cross-curricular collaboration in regards to literacy</i> • Action 4: <i>Invite community members to participate in literacy team</i> 		
<p>Objective 3: Identify and prioritize a list of students to be targeted for intervention or support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 1: <i>Use data to identify students needing intervention</i> • Action 2: <i>Provide targeted instruction for identified students</i> • Action 3: <i>Provide complex texts appropriate to grade level and adjusted to the needs of individual students through a variety of resources (books, computers, e-readers)</i> 		
<p>Objective 4: Provide consistent, explicit literacy instruction for all students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 1: <i>Provide professional learning for all teachers in literacy strategies</i> • Action 2: <i>Research and select a core literacy program</i> • Action 3: <i>Provide professional learning on differentiated instruction</i> • Action 4: <i>Purchase informational and literary texts for all content areas</i> • Action 5: <i>Purchase culturally diverse materials for all grade levels</i> • Action 6: <i>Create a building-wide writing rubric and provide professional learning on writing instruction</i> • Action 7: <i>Identify and provide professional learning on technology to be used with writing instruction</i> 		
<p>Objective 5: Use information developed from the school-based data teams to inform the RTI process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 1: <i>Provide professional learning for all teachers on the data teams process</i> • Action 2: <i>Provide professional learning on differentiation for all teachers</i> • Action 3: <i>Provide training to new teachers on data collection and the RTI process. (The How, p. 43)</i> 		

- Action 4: *Research and purchase materials and resources to support interventions*

As stated in our goals, state assessments will be the summative measure of our plan. Implementation will be formatively monitored and measured as summarized below:

Formative Measures	Goals	Summative Measures for Students	Goals
4.5 assessments	1,2,3	<i>Georgia Milestones</i>	1,2,3
ACCESS	1,2,3	ACCESS	1,2,3
SRI	1,2,	SRI	1,2,
Benchmarks	1,2,3	Benchmarks	1,2,3
Write Score	1,2,3	Write Score	1,2,3
		ITBS	1,2

D and E: Tiered Instruction and RTI Model

Edwards will provide literacy instruction in a tiered instruction protocol through a differentiation model. The model presented below is incorporated daily school-wide. In addition, literacy instruction will be provided across content areas.

Grade Level	Tier 1 Personnel	Tier 2 Personnel	Tier 3 Personnel	Tier 4 Personnel
6-8	Core Teachers (All students receive 110 minutes of literacy instruction daily.)	Core Teachers, Reading Specialist, Paraprofessional 110 - 155 minutes	Core Teachers, Reading Specialist, Paraprofessional 110 - 155 minutes	Core Teachers, Reading Specialist, Paraprofessional ESOL Teacher, Inclusion Teacher and Paraprofessional, Speech/Language Pathologist 45 additional minutes

F: Inclusion of all Teachers and Students

Our School Literacy Plan will include all teachers, students, and grade levels at Edwards Middle. All teachers and support staff will be attend provided professional learning. All students will receive grade-level core literacy instruction and appropriate interventions.

G: Practices Currently in Place

EMS engages in the ongoing assessment of students. The assessment system includes the use of national, state, and local assessment measures. Assessment instruments include criterion-reference tests, norm-reference tests, performance-based measures, and formative and summative classroom assessments. SRI is one of the screeners used to identify students who may need further assessment as well as the state criterion-reference test. Teachers analyze data to determine intervention and success

plans for each student. Interventions and instructional strategies are in place, but are not consistent between or across grade levels.

H: Goals Funded with Other Sources

District funds will continue to pay for formative and summative assessments such as CRCT/Milestones, benchmarks, SRI, and Write Score which will support our goal and all objectives. No charges to the grant will be made for in-place instructional materials or district-wide professional development. District funding of ESPLOST technology funding will support our plan.

Additional technology, software, literacy materials, and professional development are needed to support literacy objectives. Stipends or substitutes to release teachers for professional development will also be needed.

I: Daily Schedule

8th Grade		7th Grade		6th Grade	
8:15-8:40	Homeroom	8:15-8:40	Homeroom	8:15-8:40	Homeroom
8:45-9:45	1st Period Literacy/Math	8:45-9:45	1st Period Literacy/Math	8:45-9:45	1st Period Literacy/Math
9:48-10:45	2nd Period Core Content	9:48-10:30	2nd Period <i>Connection A</i>	9:48-10:45	2nd Period Core Content
10:48-12:25	3rd Period Core Content	10:33-11:15	3 rd Period <i>Connection B</i>	10:48-12:25	3rd Period Core Content
12:28-1:10	4th Period <i>Connection A</i>	11:18-12:15	4th Period Core Content	12:30-1:25	4th Period Core Content
1:13-1:55	5th Period <i>Connection B</i>	12:18-1:55	5th Period Core Content	1:30-2:25	5th Period Core Content
1:58-2:55	6th Period Core Content	1:58-2:55	6th Period Core Content	2:28-3:10	6th Period <i>Connection A</i>
2:58-3:55	7th Period Core Content	2:58-3:55	7th Period Core Content	3:13-3:55	7th Period <i>Connection B</i>

J: Reference Research-Based Practices in “What” and “Why”

See references in Section A: Implementation Plan

VI. Assessment/Data Analysis Plan

A. Current Assessment Protocol

Assessment	Grade Level Assessed	Purpose	Skills Assessed	Frequency
Georgia Writing Assessment	8 th	Measure mastery of writing standards	Writing	1 time per year
SRI	6 th , 7 th , and 8 th	Measure mastery of reading ability	Reading	3 times per year
CRCT/Milestones	6 th , 7 th , and 8 th	Measure mastery of content standards	ELA, Science, S.S, Math	1 time per year
ITBS	7 th	Norm reference ability measure	Student ability	1 time per year
Benchmarks	6 th , 7 th , and 8 th	Measure mastery of content standards	ELA, Science, S.S, Math	3 times per year
Explore	8 th	College and career readiness indicator (ACT)	College/career readiness	1 time per year
ReadiStep	8 th	College and career readiness indicator (PSAT)	College/career readiness	1 time per year
Write Score	6 th , 7 th , and 8 th	Measure of mastery of writing standards	Writing	1-2 times per year

B. Comparison of Current Assessments to SRCL Assessments

The assessments currently in use at EMS will align seamlessly with SRCLs required assessments. We will continue to use SRI in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades for reading ability screening and monitoring, ACCESS for ELL screening, and will transition with the state from CRCT to Georgia Milestones. With the addition of SRCL grant funding, we will be able to implement the Write Score formative assessment more consistently, providing the formative writing assessment two times per year across all grade levels.

C. Implementation of New Assessments into Current Assessment Schedule

With the implementation of the grant, our school will follow the schedule for literacy assessments as listed below. State tests will continue as mandated. Items that are bolded will be purchased using SRCL grant funding.

Assessment	Grade Level Assessed	Persons Responsible	Frequency
SRI	6 th , 7 th , and 8 th	Classroom teachers	3 times per year
Benchmarks	6th, 7th, and 8th	Classroom teachers	3 times per year

Rockdale County Public Schools
 Edwards Middle School
 Assessment and Data Analysis Plan

Georgia Milestones	6 th , 7 th , and 8 th	Classroom teachers	1 time per year
Write Score	6th, 7th, and 8th	Classroom teachers	3 times per year
ACCESS	6 th , 7 th , and 8 th	ESOL teachers	1 time per year
ITBS	7 th	Classroom teachers	1 time per year
Explore	8 th	Classroom teachers	1 time per year
ReadiStep	8 th	Classroom teachers	1 time per year
CRCT	<i>Replaced by the Georgia Milestones</i>		

D. Assessments that may be discontinued as a result of SRCL Implementation

We will continue to implement SRI screening, benchmark assessments, and state-mandated testing such as the CRCT/Milestones. ACCESS testing will be done for ELL students. With grant funding, we will be able to expand the Write Score assessment to include multiple administrations at all grade levels.

E. Professional Learning for Teachers for Assessment Implementation

In order to fully utilize the Scholastic Reading Inventory, teachers will need professional learning in understanding Lexiles and in matching students’ reading levels to texts. A system team will be trained by SRI by a Scholastic consultant, and all schools will receive additional on-site support. EMS will also need professional learning and training in Lexile and authentic text based assessments in order to adequately prepare students for the Georgia Milestones and Write Score assessments.

F. Presentation of Data to Parents and Stakeholders

Parents/guardians receive information about school-level data at the Title I Annual Meeting each fall. In addition, data points are shared with families through PTO meetings and parent-teacher conferences. The Rockdale County Public School District compiles data summaries on assessment results of each school to report to the media.

G. Data Used to Develop Instructional Strategies

Data will be used to inform and guide instruction in the classroom. Teachers will use data to select strategies to be used to differentiate instruction with the classroom. Data will also be used to determine small groups, select instructional strategies, and to monitor effectiveness of interventions. Data will be used to inform students and parents of progress toward goals and to adjust goals based on student progress. (“Why,” p. 96)

H. Assessment Plan and Personnel

EMS will administer initial SRI screening in August of the new school year, again in December, and again in May. The Reading Coordinator will be responsible for scheduling testing and tracking SRI data. This data is currently used for reading class placement but will also help guide instructional practices in all content area classes following training for all staff members. This process will be overseen by the school’s testing coordinator.

Rockdale County Public Schools
Edwards Middle School
Assessment and Data Analysis Plan

ACCESS testing will be done by the ESOL teachers to identify the language strength of students once a year which usually occurs around February. This will be monitored by the county ESOL director and testing coordinator.

Benchmarks, Write Score, and Georgia Milestones will be administered by content teachers and will be closely monitored by the testing coordinator and testing director. Benchmarks will be administered three times per year: once in September, as the final exam in December, and as a progress check in March. Write Score testing will be administered twice a year, once in September and again in March.

Resources, Strategies, and Materials

A. Resources Needed to Implement the Literacy Plan

- Research-based literacy instructional materials
- Professional learning –consultant fees, stipends, or release time (subs), and materials
- Literary and informational texts on various levels (for specific content areas) for classrooms and media center
- Updated reading materials (specific focus on student interests) for the media center and classroom libraries
- Travel expenses for conferences and training
- Training on the analysis of Scholastic Reading Inventory data
- Research-based intervention materials and/or software with necessary professional learning (to include all content areas)
- Trained intervention specialists
- Grant administrator/district-based literacy specialist
- Family involvement activities
- Transportation for extended day/year activities
- Stipends for extended day and summer programs
- Classroom computers
- Portable lab of interactive tablets with appropriate applications
- Online databases to support and enhance student research

B. Activities that Support Literacy Intervention Programs

- Dedicated scheduled time for intervention
- Flexible, needs-based grouping
- Formative assessment in writing
- Use of data to drive instruction
- Research-based intervention materials
- Professional learning on strategies for teaching academic content vocabulary
- Parent education through family academic night

C. Shared Resources

- 3 computer labs
- 182 book sets
- 2 projector carts
- 29 Elmos
- 38 Interwrite pads
- 58 Clicker sets

D. Library Resources

- 19,000 books in the media center
- 19 average age of books in the media center
- 964 videos in the media center
- Destiny (the library catalogue system)
- 6 magazine subscriptions
- 19 computers in media center
- 3 projectors in the media center

E. Activities that Support Classroom Practices

- Formative and summative assessments
- Vocabulary instruction in all content areas
- Technology-enhanced lessons
- Collaborative grade-level and subject-level planning including resource staff (school-wide and county-wide)
- Building level professional learning at faculty meetings

F. Strategies Needed to Support Student Success

- Strategies for increasing student engagement
- Scholastic Reading Inventory –full use of data
- Effective use of flexible grouping based on formative data
- School-wide writing rubric
- Writing in all content area classes
- **Professional Learning in the following areas:**
 - Reading strategies
 - Writing instruction across content areas
 - Understanding Lexiles and matching readers to texts

- Strategies for student engagement and motivation
- Integration of technology in instruction (especially for student collaboration and production)
- Literacy across all content areas
- Effective data usage for planning instruction, implementing interventions, and monitoring student progress
- Interventions for all tiers of RTI
- Differentiation and small group instruction

G. List of Current Classroom Resources

- 1 desktop computer for teacher use
- 30 textbooks
- 1 projector

H. Alignment of SRCL Funding with District Funding

Resources, Strategies, and Materials	SRCL will fund...	Other Funding Sources
Professional Learning	Literacy specific PL costs—consultant fees, stipends, materials, and travel costs	Title II funds will be used to provide district-wide professional learning
Instructional Technology	Literacy specific technology—e-readers, electronic texts, databases, laptop cart	ESPLOST funds will be used to upgrade school computers and wireless connectivity and to purchase tablets for the 1-to-1 initiative according to district schedule
Instructional Materials	Explicit literacy materials, such as informational and literary texts	District funds will continue to be used to purchase district-supplied materials, such as textbooks
Literacy Assessments	Professional learning in the analysis of data provided by universal screeners	District funds will continue to be used to purchase universal screeners that are currently in place
Family Literacy Materials	Literacy materials to be used during family/parent workshops and to be checked out by parents	
Extended Day/Year Activities	Provide stipends to teachers for extended day activities and to provide literacy camps during non-school times	District funds will be used to pay for extended day personnel related to the regular activities of the school

I. Explanation of Proposed Technology

As Rockdale County Public Schools uses Esplost funds to move to one-to-one technology, EMS is on the later end of being phased in, which is still several years away. Currently under construction, we are updating our ability and increasing our capacity to facilitate an increase in technology use and availability. Currently, EMS has 155 computers available for approximately 1000 students. We are requesting a laptop cart that can be used as a shared resource in the building which could be checked out from the Media Center. The laptops should be able to connect wirelessly and operate Microsoft Office 2010 or later.

Along with the laptop cart, EMS is also requesting 15 E-readers that students/teachers could check out of the Media Center. Technology will used to for students to learn, collaborate, and publish works according to CCGPS standards. This increased technology will allow students to have more access to resources and strengthen their ability to read, use, and comprehend electronic sources and work on computer usability skills.

VIII. Professional Learning Strategies

A. Past Professional Learning

Topic/Focus	Time Frame	Participants	Facilitator/Provider	Delivery Format
<i>Writing Workshop Training</i>	<i>October 2012</i>	<i>All ELA teachers</i>	<i>Mary Greco, ELA Coordinator</i>	<i>2 day session</i>
<i>Lexile overview</i>	<i>August 2013</i>	<i>All teachers</i>	<i>School reading coordinator</i>	<i>1 day session</i>
<i>Reading Across the Curriculum</i>	<i>August 2012 – December 2013</i>	<i>All ELA teachers</i>	<i>Dr. Mary Felton, Literacy Coach</i>	<i>Weekly 1 day sessions</i>
<i>Writing Across the Curriculum</i>	<i>August 2012 – December 2013</i>	<i>All ELA teachers</i>	<i>Dr. Mary Felton, Literacy Coach</i>	<i>Weekly 1 day sessions</i>
<i>Summer ELA Academy</i>	<i>June 2014</i>	<i>April Swain, EMS representative</i>	<i>GA DOE</i>	<i>2 days (16 hours)</i>
<i>Pearson Textbook Training</i>	<i>July 2014</i>	<i>All ELA teachers</i>	<i>Pearson representative</i>	<i>1 day</i>
<i>Assessment Reimagined</i>	<i>October 2014</i>	<i>All ELA teachers</i>	<i>Curriculum coordinators</i>	<i>2 days (16 hours)</i>
<i>Units of Study: Writing</i>	<i>September 2014</i>	<i>3 selected ELA teachers</i>	<i>Heinemann representative</i>	<i>1 day (8 hours)</i>

B. Percentage of Staff Attending Professional Learning

All instructional staff attended assigned professional learning.

C. On-Going Professional Learning

Topic/Focus	Time Frame	Participants	Facilitator/ Provider	Delivery Format
<i>Review of student work</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>All certified teachers</i>	<i>RCPS Professional Learning Staff School level content administrators</i>	<i>PLC-content level teams</i>
<i>Technology</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>All certified teachers</i>	<i>Instructional Technology Data Specialist</i>	<i>PLC-content level teams</i>
<i>Benchmark Data Review</i>	<i>January and March 2015</i>	<i>All ELA teachers</i>	<i>Erika Tucker, ELA Coordinator</i>	<i>PLC-content level teams</i>
<i>Time to Teach</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>All certified teachers</i>	<i>Odia Hinds</i>	<i>Presentation/workshop (pilot program)</i>
<i>De-escalation Training</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>All certified teachers</i>	<i>P & I specialist</i>	<i>PLC-grade level teams</i>
<i>My Big Campus Training</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>All certified</i>	<i>Digital Learning</i>	<i>PLC-grade level teams</i>

		<i>teachers</i>	<i>Specialist</i>	
<i>Office 365 and Sharepoint Training</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>All certified teachers</i>	<i>Digital Learning Specialist</i>	<i>PLC-content area teams</i>
<i>SRI Data review</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>All certified teachers</i>	<i>Reading Coordinator</i>	<i>PLC-grade level teams</i>
<i>Special Education: Goal Setting Strategies</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>All special education teachers</i>	<i>Learning Support Coach</i>	<i>PLC-grade level teams</i>

D. Professional Learning Needs

- Understanding Lexile scores
- Matching readers to texts based on Lexile information
- Core literacy program
- Interpreting and using assessment data
- Differentiating instruction
- Writing across the curriculum
- Vertical alignment
- Reading strategies
- Creating text-dependent units, including constructed response tasks

E. Evaluation of Professional Learning

- Participants provide feedback on PL sessions via survey
- Formative and summative assessment data, along with district walkthrough data
- Teacher lesson plans and TKES observation data

F. Professional Learning Plan

Topic	Project Goal(s)	Objectives
Understanding Lexile scores	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teachers will receive ongoing training on using Lexile scores to guide instruction. • Teachers will use Lexile data to plan instruction and guide collaborative discussions.
Data teams training	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teachers will receive data teams training. • Teachers will be provided with collaborative planning time to discuss

Rockdale County Public Schools
 Edwards Middle School
 Professional Learning Strategies

		relevant data.
Writing across the curriculum	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers will incorporate writing into their curriculum. All teachers will use the school-wide writing rubric.
Matching readers to texts based on Lexile information	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers will receive training on using Lexile scores to guide instruction. We will purchase additional information and literary texts to meet student needs.
Reading strategies	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers will receive training on reading strategies. Teacher leaders will pursue reading endorsements. Use of reading strategies will be monitored via walk-throughs.
Vertical alignment	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers will participate in vertical teams to align instruction and expectations across grade levels. Vertical team meetings will be created to include feeder schools.
Creating text-dependent units, including constructed response tasks	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers will attend professional learning on creating text-dependent units. All teachers will incorporate constructed response tasks in each unit.
Differentiating instruction	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers will attend professional learning on differentiating instruction. Materials will be purchased to support

		differentiation.
Core literacy program	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A core literacy program will be researched, purchased, and implemented. • All teachers will receive training on a core literacy program.

Goal 1: Improve meets and exceeds scores in Science and Social Studies for all students.

Goal 2: Improve meets and exceeds scores in Reading for students with disabilities.

Goal 3: Increase writing instruction in all content areas.

G. Effectiveness of Professional Learning

The ultimate measure of the effectiveness of professional learning will be student achievement data because effective professional learning is linked to higher student achievement (The Why, p. 7). However, it may take time to see significant growth in student achievement. Therefore, we plan to include additional measures for determining the effectiveness of professional learning. Those measures are listed below:

- Observe teachers using the Georgia Literacy Instruction Observation Checklist three times per year.
- Create and implement a professional learning rubric aligned to goals and objectives.
- Use teacher data (surveys and observations) to identify key areas for professional learning.
- Use teacher data (surveys, observations, and lesson plans) to monitor effectiveness of professional learning.

**Rockdale County Public Schools
Edwards Middle School
Sustainability Plan**

The needs assessment process has afforded Edwards Middle School’s literacy team the opportunity to have critical conversations about what can be done to meet the needs of our students. Conversations and survey results have consistently led us to believe that professional learning opportunities are not only essential to ensuring our literacy efforts are sustained far beyond the expiration of grant funding.

a. Extending the Assessment Protocol

All current assessments, such as benchmarks and the SRI, will continue to be funded by the district. Using SRCL grant funds, the SRI and formative writing assessments will be expanded to include more scheduled administrations of the assessments. The use of the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) allows access to historical data collected by the state. There is no cost to the school or district to access and utilize this resource; however, SRCL grant funds will be used to train teachers in accessing and analyzing the data in SLDS.

b. Developing Community Partnerships

In order to create and support a shared view of student literacy, we will expand partnerships in our community. During the grant writing process we have already begun looking outside of the school to help build our students’ literary proficiency. Establishing and maintaining community partnerships will allow us to continue to support literacy efforts beyond the life of the grant.

c. Sustaining the Literacy Plan

Edwards is focused on sustaining the initiatives outlined in the School Literacy Plan beyond the life of the grant. We will review the goals of the grant, as well as the School Literacy Plan, annually with all staff. We will continue to formatively and summatively assess our students’ literacy levels and growth through the use of benchmarks, SRI, and the Milestones. We will analyze relevant data to determine which materials and professional learning are not having the desired effectiveness on student learning. Our district’s grant writing department will allow us to utilize data collected during this process to seek and apply for additional grant funds.

e. Extending Professional Learning

An identified key component of our literacy initiative is ongoing teacher professional development. By recruiting and developing leaders at Edwards, we ensure that our literacy initiative has continuous support even as new teachers are hired. Allowing select teacher leaders to redeliver content and support teachers allows for ownership and sustainability.

g. Expanding Lessons Learned with other Schools and New Teachers

Edwards Middle School’s literacy plan was crafted utilizing Georgia’s Literacy Plan as well as our School Improvement Plan. The result of these efforts has led to the creation of a literacy plan that can be adapted and replicated to improve literacy achievement across our district. Teachers and administrators in our district meet monthly to share best practices and receive direct support

**Rockdale County Public Schools
Edwards Middle School
Sustainability Plan**

from the curriculum department as well as Cabinet members. Because our literacy initiative is centered around professional development, we hope to build capacity within our school and to encourage teacher leaders to redeliver content to others at district professional learning days, collaboratives, and New Teacher Orientation.

d and f. Maintaining Resources and Technology

Edwards will enlist the support of the Digital Learning Specialist, Media Specialist, and Instructional Technology Support Specialist to ensure the software programs and technology are running effectively and to support teachers in monitoring students' progress.

Because the district is dedicated to supporting a 1-to-1 technology initiative, any technology purchased through the SRCL grant will be subsumed under the district's technology replacement plan. We will allocate money from our Title I and school-level budgets to replace literacy resources as needed.

Rockdale County Public Schools
Edwards Middle School
Budget Summary

As a result of a comprehensive review of literacy efforts at Edwards Middle School, needs have been assessed and identified, data and available resources have been analyzed, and plans have been made to utilize funding from the Striving Reader Comprehensive Literacy Grant. Based upon the Fall 2014 FTE count of 886 and an estimated award of \$600 per student, the total funds received over a five year time frame are anticipated at \$531,600.

Literacy needs to be funded through the grant are outlined below:

Curriculum Needs (approximately 20%): In order to meet students' literacy needs across the curriculum, grant funding will be used to purchase the following items:

- Leveled texts for classrooms and media center across all content areas
- Consumable materials
- Informational texts for all content areas
- Updated young adult materials for media center to support student choice in reading materials

Professional Learning Needs (approximately 50%): Professional learning is key to providing students with effective literacy instruction. Staff members, including teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators, must have adequate training in order to effectively provide and monitor literacy instruction. While initial training is imperative to the successful implementation of any new initiative, follow-up training to support new staff is also vital in the sustainability of initiatives.

- Consultant fees (e.g., writing across the curriculum, understanding Lexile scores, matching readers to leveled texts, reading strategies, creating constructed response assessments, etc.)
- Instructional materials for training
- Stipends for off-contract training
- Funding for substitutes

Response to Intervention (approximately 15%): Rockdale County Public School System recognizes a lack of uniformity in the implementation of the Response to Intervention (RTI) process across the district. Efforts are necessary to insure the consistency of the effective use of data to inform instruction and the application of intervention strategies to improve student learning. In order for the RTI process to truly impact student learning and achievement, teachers and interventionists must be provided ongoing professional learning and support.

- Screening and assessment tools—Scholastic Reading Inventory (funded by the district)
- Intervention resources, materials, and programs
- Progress monitoring tools
- Formative writing assessment

Personnel Needs (approximately 5%): In light of recent financial constraints and the impact that has had on the number of personnel employed by the district, using grant funding to hire a literacy specialist for the district would be beneficial. In addition, a grant administrator will be necessary during the first two years of grant implementation in order to monitor funding and implementation.

- District grant administrator for the first two years of the grant
- Literacy specialist for the district (to assist with monitoring implementation and effectiveness of SRCL initiatives)

Technology Needs (approximately 10%): While the SRCL grant is not a technology grant, the innovative use of technology will promote student engagement and motivation while also enhancing instruction. Rockdale County Public School System is committed to providing students with 1-to-1 technology, but the technology plan spans multiple years, with several schools and students not receiving individual devices for several years. Because RCPS is using ESPLOST funds to purchase 1-to-1 technology for every student in the district, we are not requesting technology funds for computers or tablets. However, the SRCL grant will allow Edwards Middle School to provide students with access to technology to support and enhance literacy instruction and to increase student engagement.

- E-readers and electronic texts
- Online databases
- Software (such as online reading programs)