

Literacy Connections: The New Mexico Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Initiative

Abstract

New Mexico's Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) project, *Literacy Connections*, supports the implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement of the five core components of the state's literacy framework in the neediest LEAs in the state. While New Mexico has one of the highest percentages of disadvantaged students in the country and is saddled with some of the nation's lowest educational outcomes, the state is on a path of significant education reform characterized by ambitious goals and a clear reform agenda. The SRCL project builds on the strong foundation that the state has established in early childhood education through a \$37 million systems-building grant and a K–12 reform agenda articulated in the state's ESSA plan. The funding from the SRCL grant will support the creation of local *Literacy Connection Teams* to work to vertically integrate evidence-based literacy programs and practices in competitively-chosen districts that will support the state in meeting literacy performance goals outlined in the state's ESSA plan.

The funding will have a significant impact on children and students in the state and will serve approximately 30,000 students from at least 12 districts chosen through a competitive subgranting process. The competitive process is designed to select high-need districts with a strong desire to support vertical literacy integration and that propose a high-quality local literacy plan that aligns with the state framework. Districts receiving subgrants will range in size from large urban districts to very small district of less than 400 students and will also include districts applying as a consortium. The state will create a compendium of evidenced-based literacy practices and provide training and technical assistance to the subgrantees to support: (1) Leadership; (2) Comprehensive Assessment; (3) Evidence-based interventions and practices; (4) Exemplarily teacher supported through Professional Development; and (5) Family Engagement as outlined in the state literacy framework. The state will work closely with subgrantees in implementing their local literacy plans, and will use the state's current assessment and accountability infrastructure to closely monitor the subgrantees and engage them in a continuous quality improvement process.