Striving Readers FAQ

Q: I see it says pretty plainly on the first page of the RFA that eligibility is limited to districts on behalf of feeder systems with <u>a significant number of high school students (65% or greater) who qualify for Free/Reduced meals</u>. Reading this, it sounds like our district — with just over 40% F/R at the high school level — can't apply, regardless of the F/R levels at the middle and elementary levels. Is this correct?

A: That is correct. The F/R percentage for eligibility is 65% at the high school level only.
Please consult the 2017-18 Final Qualifying Data report to check your district's eligibility.

Q: Under Special Instructions: the last sentence: "Of those districts, competitive preference will be given to those who show, through data, that they serve significant numbers of disadvantaged students." Can you tell me what the grant is considering "disadvantaged" Homeless, ELL, Migrant, Special Ed???

A: In the RFA on page 3, "Disadvantaged child" is defined as "a child from Birth to Grade 12 who is at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, including a child living in poverty, a child with disability, or a child who is an English learner. This term also includes infants and toddlers with developmental delays or a child who is far below grade level, who has left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, who is at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who is homeless, who is in foster care, or who has been incarcerated. Other indicators may include, for example, children from migrant families.

Q: Stars for KIDS Now… is that the same as the KIDS Now referred to on page 4?

A: There is a transition from KIDS Now to KY All STARS. Both of these will be employed by SRCL schools that choose this model as some early care providers are operating under one and some are transitioning to the other.

Q: Will the grant be allowed to pay tuition for teachers to the KY Reading Project, Ky Writing Project, National Boards, etc.?

A: Program costs and travel expenses can be used from SRCL funds to pay for these approved professional learning experiences. Other models not listed in the matrix need to be explained and justified in the proposal.

Q: For schools working through Title I with private schools, can/should those schools be partners?

A: Any schools that are a part of the feeder system to the high school should be a part of the proposal. Each district must determine who their partners will be.

Q: I have read the RFA for Striving Readers and have seen the definition of "applicant" on page 3 that says applications come from a K-12 school district. Can a cooperative prepare an application with multiple school districts and have a project coordinator employed at the coop level?

A: Only districts may apply for the SRCL subgrants. Cooperatives, can offer assistance and professional learning, but cannot be the applicant.

Q: We have a couple of elementary schools that feed into different middle schools. How should they be considered in the application process for the Striving Readers Grant? Is the school considered a part of the feeder system if a certain portion of the student body feeds into the high school that qualifies? Is there a minimum ... for example: at least 1/3 of the population must be designated to attend the feeder high school and middle school?

A: There aren't specific minimums for how many students feed into the middle and high school. It is an expectation that schools considered part of a feeder pattern are a part of the application.

Q: The Striving Readers grant lists the Adolescent Literacy Model as one option for MS/HS. Is this the program out of the Center for Teaching and Learning? They list specifically the Adolescent Literacy Model. CCLD has the Adolescent Literacy Project. Just wondering if this is also an option or is the ONLY option Adolescent Literacy MODEL out of the Center for Teaching and Learning.

A: The Adolescent Literacy Model mentioned in the grant's matrix for approved models is a part of the Collaborative for Teaching and Learning (CTL).

Q: On page 3 of the RFA at the top of the page the third bullet down, "Integration of technology"

A: A grant proposal is expected to include information about how the feeder system's literacy plan will integrate technology as a part of their literacy plan. Some examples may be professional learning, curriculum planning, as a means of data collection, and/or as a communication tool.

Q: Can you give some clarity on that wording? "**Eligibility**. To ensure a large number of disadvantaged children are served, poverty will be a key indicator for eligibility for SRCL subgrants. Applicants must have a significant feeder-wide free/reduced priced meals rate as measured by at least 65% or greater at the system's high school, as reported on November 2017 Qualifying Data report."

A: Schools/Districts do not have to contact KDE, but may use the 2017-18 Final Qualifying Data report.

Q: I went to the KDE Qualifying Data website at https://education.ky.gov/federal/SCN/Pages/Qualifying-Data.aspx and downloaded the 2017-2018 Qualifying Data file. Is this the correct file to use to determine eligibility?

Yes, 2017-2018 Qualifying Data file has recently been made available and this is the correct website of its location.

Kentucky Department of Education : Qualifying Data

education.ky.gov

All participating sponsors of the National School Lunch Program are required to report the total number of program eligible participants by category of receiving free …

Q: Both of our qualifying feeder patterns include CEP-qualifying schools—XXXX HS and XXXXX HS. With whom do I consult to determine their eligibility? (Does this consultation have to wait until the Q&A are posted?)

A: You may use the 2017-2018 Final Qualifying Data to make the determination. You will not have to consult KDE.

Q: Do we need to complete a separate proposal for each eligible high school feeder pattern?

A: Yes, grant proposals must be submitted for each feeder pattern up to three (3) in a district.

Q: Mr. xxxxxxx, Principal of xxxxxx Independent, contacted me concerning partnering with xxxxx County for the Striving Readers grant. His school is a K-8 independent system within our county. His students feed into our High School for 9-12.   Just trying to wrap my mind around this…would we submit one grant for our district that would include XXXXX or would they submit a separate grant, but partner with XXHS too?

A: The proposals are made on behalf of the feeder system. So if these two districts agree to the terms together, are willing to building a common Literacy Leadership Team, build a plan together, and be monitored and evaluated as a single feeder system, then they may apply together; only one grant proposal that clearly explains this partnership.

Q: What is the free/reduced lunch eligibility percentage requirement at the high school for applying for the Striving Readers grant? Seems like I saw somewhere that it was 65% but I can't remember where I saw that, so I wanted to double check. I don't think we're eligible, but I wanted to make sure.

A: 65% or higher Free/Reduced lunch is the correct percentage for eligibility.

Q: XXXXXX County Schools is very interested in applying for the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant. The RFA states that the high school must have a F/R rate of at least 65%. Our high school's F/R rate is 59%. However, one of my colleagues had been given information from our regional consortium that we were able to use the nutritional program's F/R data (they use the 1.6 multiplier). If we use that data, our F/R rate with the multiplier is 90% for our high school. Nowhere in the RFA is it stated we can use the multiplier. I just need you to clarify which we use: the real F/R rate or the F/R rate with the multiplier.

A: For the SRCL grant eligibility, use the 2017-18 Qualifying Data found here. No calculations need to be made by the district.

Q: I just want to make sure I am very clear before I begin rallying the troops and begin working on the grant. So since our high school and our entire district is CEP we can go ahead and apply even though we are slightly below 65% free/reduced lunch at our high school?

A: Eligibility should be determined by using the 2017-18 Qualifying Data found here. If a high school is at or above 65% F/R according to this data, then the feeder system of which that high school is a part, is eligible to apply regardless of CEP status.

Q: Our district in considering applying for the Striving Readers Grant; however, we do have a question. Is the grant written for a program and professional development only, or will it allow us to provide an interventionist or reading coach for all the feeder schools applying?

A: Most of the funds received will be dedicated to ongoing professional learning based on the school or district's needs. However, because of the scope of this project and the multiple schools involved at each site, districts are allowed to use their funds to pay for up to half of the salary and fringe for a high-quality instructional coach that will benefit either the entire project or a proportional piece of the project.

Q: In the description of the grant, there is a chart that aligns recommended products with grade levels. Are these where the grant money is being requested to be applied for or are you allowing outside groups to work with districts in lieu of these particular recommendations?

A: Each feeder system must assure implementation of approved frameworks and services, those included in the matrix in the RFA, to receive funding.

Q: I am a principal that was interested in the Striving Readers grant; however, I was told today that the districts that are awarded the grants will be required to match the funding. I hadn't seen or heard that until today. Is this a state or federal regulation to require matching funds from the district?

A: The SRCL grant does not require matching funds. A district may choose to show their dedication to the project by matching funds, but it is not required.

Q: Our only high school for the district is sitting at 52% F/R population. Would this data point disqualify us for applying for the grant since the cut off is 65%?

A: To be eligible, the high school in a feeder system must be at 65% F/R or higher according to the 2017-18 Qualifying data found here.

Q: In the Striving Readers grant application, are applicants expected to clearly identify the comprehensive program (page 4) for each level (Early Childhood, Elementary and Middle/High)?

A: Though similar in many respects to other KDE grant competitions, the SRCL grant will not ask districts to describe their literacy plans or choose specific literacy programs or interventions in the grant proposal. Rather, KDE will use the RFA and peer-review process to identify feeder systems that have 1) high numbers and percentages of high-needs students in need of literacy support (needs assessment), and 2) the capacity to develop district literacy plans aligned to the state, to the district, and to each school and early care/education provider. Face-to-face technical assistance will be available Feb 1, Feb 2, and Feb 5 (register here) and three online Q&A sessions in February to assist in proposal development. However, grantees will begin literacy plan development and select their comprehensive literacy programs and intervention after awards are made in April.

Q: Assuming in the grant application, applicants are expected to identify a comprehensive literacy program for Early Childhood, Elementary and Middle/High how will this be documented in the budget?

A: Though similar in many respects to other KDE grant competitions, the SRCL grant will not ask districts to describe their literacy plans or choose specific literacy programs or interventions in the grant proposal. Rather, KDE will use the RFA and peer-review process to identify feeder systems that have 1) high numbers and percentages of high-needs students in need of literacy support (needs assessment), and 2) the capacity to develop district literacy plans aligned to the state, to the district, and to each school and early care/education provider. Face-to-face technical assistance will be available Feb 1, Feb 2, and Feb 5 (register here) and three online Q&A sessions in February to assist in proposal development. However, grantees will begin literacy plan development and select their comprehensive literacy programs and intervention after awards are made in April. The budget for the proposal will indicate capacity to support for establishing a local Literacy Leadership Team and developing and implementing a district literacy plan that includes intensive and ongoing professional learning. This Information can be found in the RFA.

Q: Many of the programs listed in the past have be offered at no cost to the participants. In speaking with CCLD, KY Reading Project, KY Writing Project have been provided at no cost to the district or participant. How do you include budget information when this information is not available from CCLD?

A: At this point in the proposal stage, the budget narrative is to indicate the district's capacity to provide oversight of the allocation of funds, understand the method for which you will determine reasonable costs relative to your literacy improvement ideas, and how the district will assure connections between funding and needs. During Literacy Plan Development in April, KDE will offer more support and specificity around each model in the matrix of approved vendors.

Q: Because my school is involved with the LINK grant, I presumed (erroneously) that we would be ineligible to apply for the SRCL when I first heard about it in December. While in a (LINK) grant meeting last week, I discovered that we might be eligible, so…

After printing off the RFA and watching the recorded webinar, I contacted our DPP to determine the percentage of students who qualify for F/R lunch at the High School. It seemed a logical place to start to see if we meet the required 65%. Yesterday, 438/674 students or 64.985% qualified for F/R lunch status. That number concerns me: do reviewers "round up?" What if we lose a couple of qualifying students and that loss drops the percentage below 64.95?

A: Districts should use the 2017-18 Qualifying Data found here to determine eligibility. If a high school in a feeder system is at 65% F/R or high according to the Qualifying Data, then that district may apply on behalf of that feeder system.

Q: If a vendor is a partner in the grant, can the school system pay for their resources, if they are not on the matrix listed in Table 3, on page 4? There are several that offer good literacy programs, but are not necessary listed.

A: Each feeder system must assure implementation of approved frameworks and services, those included in the matrix in the RFA, to receive funding.

Q: I have a question about Qualifying Data for Striving Readers. Some of the high schools in the 2017-2018 Qualifying Data set are not listed out separately. For example, for XXXXXX Co. the Elem/MS/HS are all on one line:

XXXXXXX County High School/MS/XXXXX Elementary School (* CEP Sponsor) 75.55%

A: Typically when schools are listed together it is a building that houses all of those schools. For instance, a K-8 school might be housed in the same building and listed together. Just use the percentage in the 2017-18 Qualifying Data to determine if the listing that includes the high school is at or above 65% F/R.

Q: When we look at the KDE school report cards for most schools, the F/R number listed there is frequently lower than the one listed under Qualifying Data across the board. So looking at XXXXXXX Co. High separately using the school report card puts them at just over 60%, which is below the 65% eligibility line. (That is also the case for some other districts that do have their HS listed separately, but they are good according to the data source specified in the RFP)

How would eligibility work for a district listed like XXXXXX?

A: For the SRCL grant eligibility, use the 2017-18 Qualifying Data found here. No calculations need to be made by the district.

Q: With this grant, will elementary schools apply for the grant separately, or is it the district that applies for the grant?

A: The district will apply on behalf of a feeder system, considering young children and students from birth to grade 12.

Q: On page 7 of the RFA, it lists SIX allowable and required activities. In the proposed subgrant budget, must the applicant included budget items for each of these six areas out of the Striving Readers funds? Can some of these activities be funded out of matching funds?

A: If awarded, the district is required to use the SRCL funds for the activities listed under Allowable and Required Activities, but the district can supplement or match if they choose.

Q: What should be the make up of the district literacy leadership team? Is there a ratio of administrators to teachers? A certain number of teachers from each school? Intervention teachers? Special Needs teachers? How many members are expected on the team?

A: The state guidance around the district/school Literacy Leadership Teams can be found in the Literacy PERKS document. Under "Literacy Team", 7.1 indicates that an SBDM policy must be established to form the Literacy Team and to monitor its work and 7.2 suggests a 6-8 member team which represents the school's demographics. Some suggestions of team members:
☐ Principal
☐ School Writing Leader
☐ Library Media Specialist
☐ SBDM member
☐ A student
☐ A counselor
☐ An Early Care Partner from the community
☐ Technology Coordinator
☐ Title 1 Coordinator
☐ Limited English Proficiency Teacher
☐ Special Education Teachers who collaborate
☐ Representatives from all grades and content areas
The district team will consist of a representation of the overall stakeholders chosen from school teams. Administrators, teachers, and early care providers.

Q: Some of the language in the literature about the grant point to it being a high school only grant. Is this the case? If middle schools can apply, does the high school they feed into have to have 65% of students that qualify for free and reduced lunch?

A: This Striving Readers grant is a comprehensive approach to literacy - from birth to grade 12. Feeder patterns will apply for the grant. The determination for eligibility is based on the high school's free/reduced percentage (based on the 2017-2018 Qualifying Data), but the funding is for the entire feeder pattern. For instance, if a high school qualifies, then the middle school(s), elementary school(s) and early learning providers that feed into that feeder will all be a part of the proposal. If funded, they will work together to build a district literacy plan as well as school plans.

Q: To verify, the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant is only open to districts with 65% of high school students qualifying for Free/Reduced lunch, correct?

A: Eligibility to apply for the SRCL grant is based on the Free/Reduced percentage of the feeder high school. The high school percentage must be at 65% or higher on the 2017-2018 KDE Qualifying Data.

Q: Confirming what I heard yesterday:

- o A district can pay 50% of a 1 FTE coach from these funds and 50% from other funds.
- o A district can pay all of a .5 FTE coach.
- o One district can pay all of a .5 FTE coach and another district can also pay all of that same person to be a .5 FTE coach in their district.

Is this true?

A: If a feeder system determines it necessary to hire a literacy instructional coach, they may use SRCL funds to pay 50% of the salary of that coach. A district can pay all of the salary of a half-time coach and/or share a coach with another district, but all of these scenarios should be clearly explained and justified. The intent of the grant is to provide a much quality professional learning as possible, so districts must make the determination if a literacy coach will be able to serve that purpose.

Q: Sometimes, partner or school signatures are best obtained by different people at different times, depending on relationships… must signatures for each element (principals, school council, partners) all be on the same assurances page? For example, of the seven required partners, could 3 be on one page and 4 on another, or 6 on one and one and another?

A: School signature pages ask that one form be used for each school. If you use more than one page for partner signature pages, just make sure it is clear to the reviewers.

Q: The cover page that requires the superintendent's signature states "Failure to continuously meet compliance requirement and deadlines could result in partial or complete loss of funding of the Read to Achieve grant and may impact future funding." Should this refer to the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant?

A: Yes, it should and you can find that on the amended RFA at this link. Please use the updated signature sheet for the superintendent's signature.

Q: Are we limited on the number that can apply?

A: If a district is large enough to have several high schools and those high schools are at or above 65% Free/Reduced lunch, then up to three (3) feeder systems may apply.

Q: Intent to Apply- What do districts need to put for the name and goals of the project on the intent to apply form that is due by Friday? There is no direction on this in the RFA, on the webpage, nor was it mentioned in the TAS in Frankfort.

A: The Intent to Apply is there as a reference point for KDE to help plan for the number of reviewers needed to review the applications. A district may be quite general at this point about goals and name of project at this point. The content of this form will have no impact on the final application.

Q: Will a Word version of the RFA be made available so we can type in the required forms?
A: No.

Q: We, at xxxxxx, are a Preschool-12 school. What numbers do we need to review to see if we are eligible to apply for the Striving Readers grant?

The 2017-2018 Qualifying Data is the only source needed to make a determination of eligibility. You may find that at this link.

Q: Can we partner within district, in school programs? For example, can schools partner with their 21st Century Community Learning Centers? If so, can the district coordinator sign the partnership or does it have to be the KDE 21st CCLC coordinator?

A: Districts need to make the determination about the best partners for each school. If a partner serves the literacy needs of students at multiple schools, then it is understandable they are partners with the schools they serve. The district coordinator will sign.