School Profile

Created Friday, October 03, 2014
Updated Tuesday, November 04, 2014

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School Information

System Name:	Rockdale County School
School or Center Name:	D.L. Sims Elementary
System ID	722
School ID	0189

Level of School

Elementary (K-5 or Primary, Elementary)

Principal

Name:	Dr. Chara Moore
Position:	Principal
Phone:	770-922-0666 ext 22110
Email:	cmoore@rockdale.k12.ga.us

School contact information

(the persons with rights to work on the application)

Name:	Sonja Camp
Position:	Media Specialist
Phone:	770-922-0666 ext 22125
Email:	scamp@rockdale.k12.ga.us

Grades represented in the building

example pre-k to 6

Pre-K to 5

Number of Teachers in School

42

FTE Enrollment

551

Grant Assurances

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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

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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

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Updated Saturday, November 22, 2014

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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)

Chara N. Moore, Principal
Typed Name of Applicant's Authorized Agency Head and Position Title

11/12/14
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)

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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

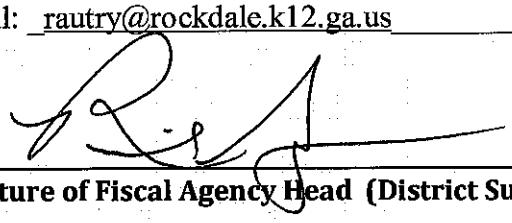
Position/Title of Fiscal Agent's Contact Person: Superintendent

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.

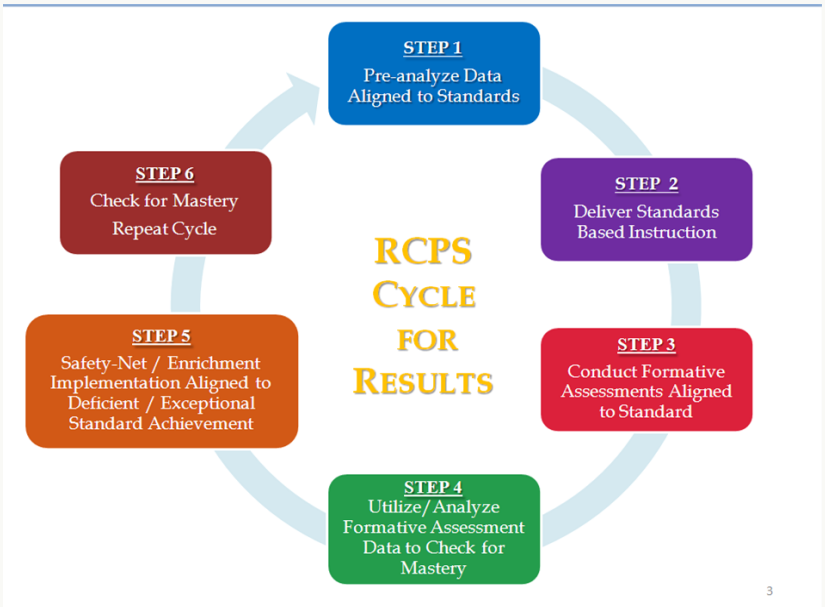
RCPS has a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that will 1) ensure educational equity; 2) accelerate student achievement by supporting each student's unique learning needs and individual interests; and 3) help each student achieve his or her greatest potential through a wide variety of strategies, 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.

I. School Narrative

School History

Sims Elementary is a Title I school in the Rockdale County Public Schools District. Sims is one of the eleven elementary schools, four middle school, three traditional high schools, four specialty high schools, and one Early Learning Center for full day pre-kindergarten. Sims Elementary serves a Pre K to fifth grader population of approximately 551 students. As Georgia's first AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) school, our learners will be afforded the realities of college exposure. Under the leadership guidance of Lowell Biddy, Sims' first school principal, and under the influence of seven principals since Mr. Biddy's retirement, Sims has made academic gains and is working to close the achievement gaps that pose some academic challenges.

Sims Elementary is located on the southern side of Rockdale County. According to the 2010 Census, the median income for the area is approximately $54,704 with only 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. As time has passed, the neighborhoods surrounding Sims have decreased in younger families and there has been an increase in temporary housing (e.g., apartments, government housing). Some apparent changes in our population were in the number of economically disadvantaged students, students with attendance issues, and students requiring additional support academically and behaviorally. To help alleviate some of these changes in making sure that students are successful, the faculty and staff participate in ongoing, collaborative professional learning communities to receive relevant professional learning, analyze data, and plan engaging, rigorous, differentiated lessons. Teachers also participate with Response to Intervention (RTI) teams. Our RTI teams implement research-based interventions to close achievement gaps with students with academic or behavior deficits.

We continue to focus on the students' individual needs by providing a variety of programs before, during, and after school. Intervention and enrichment programs include academic, behavioral, and social facets. Original to its academic blueprint, Sims is an active learning environment that seeks to master, inspire, motivate, and prepare students for global success. The racial diversity of Sims Elementary School is 69.8 % African American, 10.5 % Caucasian, 12.1% Hispanic, 5.1 % Two or More Races, 2.2% Asian, and 0.4% Hawaiian Pacific/Islander.

The faculty and staff of Sims Elementary are committed to exceeding the standards of the rigorous Common Core curriculum and work steadfastly to meet the needs of students. Coupled with interviewing and hiring efforts of our Human Resources Department, Sims' leadership team develops a systematic and rigorous approach to hire the most qualified educators. Our staff includes 48 certified teachers and ten paraprofessionals. We have a principal, an assistant principal, one media specialist, counselor, digital technology specialist, nurse, parent liaison, and four EIP teachers. We receive the part-time services of a speech/language pathologist, social worker, and school psychologist. Twenty five of our 48 staff members hold a master's degree or higher and all are highly qualified. Through the support of an active PTA along with a strong

faculty and staff, Sims has been able to maintain a high level of student achievement by continuously establishing high standards and expectations for all learners.

Administrative and Leadership Team

The administrative team consists of the principal, Dr. Moore and the assistant principal, Dr. Goodridge. Dr. Moore served as our district's English/Language Art coordinator last year and is a former classroom teacher where she stressed the importance of literacy. She is always challenging our students to improve their literacy skills. Dr. Goodridge is a former classroom teacher who impacts students by providing reading strategies during classroom visits. Both administrators model best practices during building professional learning sessions. The administrative team is dedicated to providing a safe learning environment for students to become academically successful. The administrative team works diligently to provide a collaborative environment that analyzes data analysis and incorporates professional learning in order to strengthen instruction. Through weekly collaborative meetings, weekly staff meetings, and professional learning days, the administrative team continues to provide opportunities for improved student achievement.

Our school leadership team consists of administrators, media specialist, counselor, digital learning specialist, academic coach, parent liaison and paraprofessional. The team meets weekly to discuss curriculum and instruction, lesson planning, data analysis, and school goals.

In August, the administration met with the district literacy team to analyze data and determined a need for the SRCL Grant at Sims. 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 team members are listed below.

Name	**Position**
Dr. Chara Moore	Principal
Tamara Goodridge	Assistant Principal
Marchell Harrell	Pre-Kindergarten Teacher
Bernie Kincaid	Kindergarten Teacher
Jennifer Smith	Kindergarten Teacher
Tramaine Robinson-Banks	Special Education Teacher
Karen Kuhner	Special Education Teacher
Talesha Savage	WICOR Writing Specialist
Sonja Camp	Media Specialist

Past and Current Instructional Initiatives

We require our students to learn at high levels, while overcoming any obstacles that may impede their success. Past instructional initiatives to address student needs have included phonemic awareness, technology integration, Writing across the Curriculum, and RTI (Response to Intervention). Our current instructional initiatives are differentiated instruction, increasing parent engagement, and multiple opportunities for participating in PLC's. Our staff works in collaboration with our district leaders and administrative team to implement research-based best practices and to disaggregate data to make adjustments in instructional plans.

Sims Elementary is in its second year as an AVID elementary school. AVID is a program that promotes a college-going culture while providing students with the skills and support necessary in order for them to be successful in post-secondary pursuits. We are proud to be the first, and only, AVID elementary school in the state of Georgia. Since implementing this program in the fall of 2013, we have seen a difference in our students, our staff, and our families. We are implementing AVID strategies (reading strategies, writing strategies, organizational strategies, etc.), but without having our entire staff trained, the implementation is not consistent. With the funding from the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant, we hope to train more of our teachers in these research-based instructional strategies.

Professional Learning Needs

Our current professional learning needs include:

1. Differentiating instruction
2. Data Analysis to adjust instructional decisions
3. A systematic, explicit sequence of literacy instruction
4. Selection of appropriate texts for instructional use
5. Implementing a consistent writing program
6. Reading strategy instructions and implementation
7. Training and selection of appropriate intervention programs

Need for a Striving Readers Project

The Striving Readers grant would be an essential component in assisting our school with implementing our school literacy plan to increase student achievement in text comprehension, fluency, writing and vocabulary. Our teachers will receive effective professional learning that will help facilitate teaching the mastery of literacy skills and data analysis to make informed decisions about intervention methods and instructional adjustments. Our CRCT data shows our school is performing below the county level in all subjects. We need desperate intervention to help provide additional services and resources to our students in order to turn around the current academic trends at our school.

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 Sims 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 (30 questions related to the Building Blocks of Literacy Instruction).
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. Community is not engaged.
    ii. Literacy instruction is not optimized across all content areas.
    iii. The literacy team does not include representatives from all stakeholder groups.

Root Causes: The Literacy Leadership team was recently established and there was not time to decide on how to engage the community. Professional learning has been delivered on how to integrate literacy across content areas; however, teachers need more expertise and/or planning time to implement literacy across content areas.

b. Building Block 2: Continuity of Instruction
    i. Core literacy instruction is not consistent, explicit, or systematic across grade levels.
    ii. There is not a collaboration with our of school agencies to support literacy.

Root Causes: Sims follows the CCGPS and Rockdale County School District curriculum guides as a framework for core instruction. Because this is just a framework, teachers are interpreting literacy instruction in different ways and this leads to inconsistent instruction across grade levels. Teacher do not have the necessary expertise or planning time to incorporate literacy instruction across the content areas consistently. Collaboration with community to support literacy instruction has not been a focus.

c. Building Block 3: Ongoing Formative and Summative Assessment
    i. Inconsistent use of formative and summative date to drive instruction.
    ii. Teachers do not have enough knowledge about diagnostic tools to help with literacy instruction.

Root Causes: Teachers do not have enough expertise regarding formative and summative assessment or planning time in order for this implementation to be consistent.

d. Building Block 4: Best Practices in Literacy Instruction
    i. There is a need for professional learning in explicit literacy instruction and writing instruction across all content areas.
    ii. Core literacy instruction is not consistent, explicit, or systematic across grade levels.

Root Causes: Teachers do not have sufficient expertise for this implementation to be consistent.

e. Building Block 5: System of Tiered Intervention (RTI) for ALL Students
    i. Students are not receiving consistent core literacy instruction in Tier 1.
    ii. There is a need for consistency and regular protocol for school based data teams to identify specific needs and targeted interventions for students in Tie
    iii. There is also confusion about when movement out of Tier 3 should occur.

Root Causes: There is a lack of understanding among teachers and staff about intervention and movement process.

f. Building Block 6: Professional Learning
    i. There is a need for ongoing professional learning in all aspects of literacy instruction for all in service teachers.
    ii. All pre-service teachers need to participate in all literacy professional learning.

Root Causes: Pre-service teachers need to participate in all literacy professional learning. In-service teachers need to participate in literacy specific professional learning.

D. School Staff Involved in Needs Assessment

The Needs Assessment included all certified and classified staff at Sims as well as parents and students. Results from the needs assessment survey show that:

- 58% of SES's teachers feel they do not have adequate materials and resources for teaching grade-level foundational skills that are explicit, systematic, and aligned to the CCGPS AND resources for differentiation of reading skills for students at grade level, below grade level, and above grade level
- 21% of SES's teachers feel they have little or only some confidence in their ability to use data to drive instruction.
- 33% of SES's teachers are not confident in their ability to craft quality text-dependent questions and to teach students to do close reading.

- 27% of SES's teachers are not confident in their understanding of and ability to use Lexiles as a tool in selecting appropriate texts for their students.

E. Disaggregated Data

Sims' overall CRCT scores in 2014 were strong, with 91.4% of students meeting or exceeding standards for Reading; however, discrepancies exist between White Students, SWD, Economically Disadvantaged, Black, and Hispanic Students.

Sims 2014 (% Meeting/Exceeding)

Test Subject	ALL	SWD	ED	Black	Hispanic	White	EL
Reading	91.4%	74.2	96.1	91.5	90	96	66.7
ELA	86.8%	58.3	85.6	87.1	83.3	88	56.6
Math	80.8%	42.9	81.9	87.1	80	80	66.7
Science	76.4%	33.4	85.7	77.7	63.3	76	22.2
SS	78.2%	40	83.1	79	73.3	75	33.3

F. Areas of Concern Related to Research-Based Practices

a. Building Block 1: Need for Literacy Leadership Team at Sims

Currently:

- Support from community
- This area of concern involves school-based personnel and community stakeholders

Moving Forward:

Include governmental, educational, civic, and business leaders, as well as parents:

- Identify key members of the community, government, civic, business leaders, and members of higher education, as well as parents to serve as members of a community advisory board.
- Seek community members to support and to participate in a network of learning supports such as tutoring, mentoring, after-school programs

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

Currently:

- Cross disciplinary teams exist, but have not assumed responsibility for achieving literacy goals across content areas.
- The writing component: 50% respondents indicated a need for professional learning and materials

Moving Forward:

- Chose and implement a core literacy program for grades K-5 that provides continuity and a carefully articulated scope and sequence of skills that is integrated in a rich curriculum of literacy and informational texts ("The What," p.7)

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

Currently:

- Teachers meet in active, collaborative teams; however, consistent focus on literacy across the curriculum is inconsistent
- Sims is in the process of implementing professional learning for integrating literacy standards across content areas and using information to identify striving readers -21% respondents feel they have little or only some confidence in their ability to use data to drive instruction and 27% of Sims' teachers are not confident in their understanding of and ability to use Lexiles as a tool in selecting appropriate texts for their students.

Moving Forward:

- Professional learning will be delivered to support a core literacy program.
- Professional learning will be implemented in the following areas:
    - Using data to inform instructional decisions and explicit teaching
    - Modeling literacy skills and strategies
    - Foundational skills (the five components of literacy instructions)
    - Differentiating instructions
    - Explicit wiring instructions
      ("The What." P.10)

d. Building Blocks 3 :Identify and Implement Formative and Summative Assessments

Currently:

- Rockdale County Public School assessment are given and data is analyzed to determine instructional needs

Moving Forward:

- Select effective screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic tools to identify achievement levels of students ("The What," p.8)
- Provide training to staff on assessments and interventions for student needs ("The What," p.8)
-

e. Building Blocks 3 & 5: Need for Menu of Interventions

Currently:

- Sims has an established RTI Plan that identifies and places students into tiers

Moving Forward:

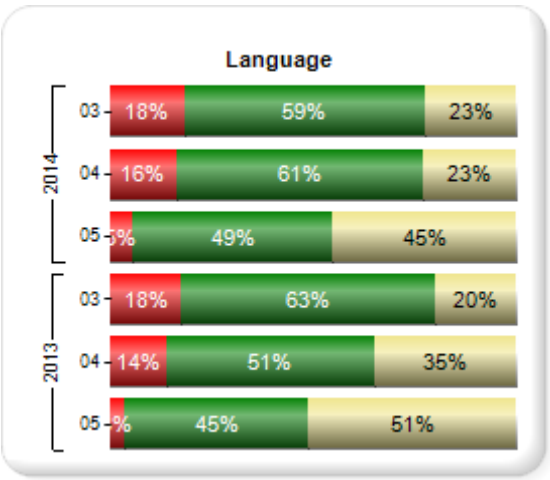
- Introduce more intense interventions
- Secure RTI program that includes an array of interventions for reading and writing difficulties with a progress monitoring piece in place

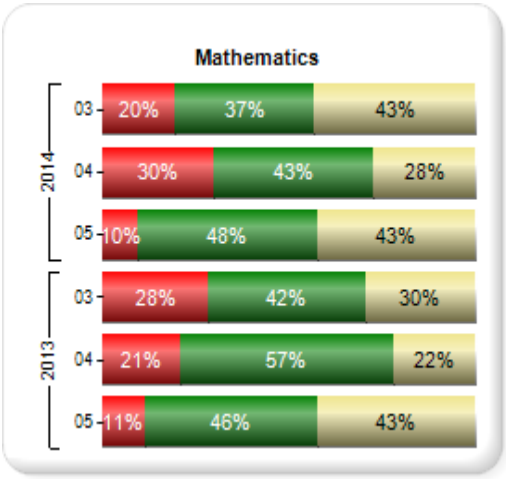
IV. Analysis and Identification of Student and Teacher Data

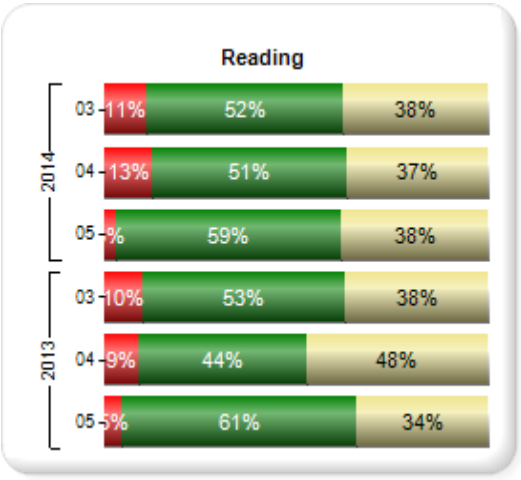
Sims Elementary use the analysis of applicable data along with the literacy needs assessment to develop the goals and objectives identified in the Project Plan section.

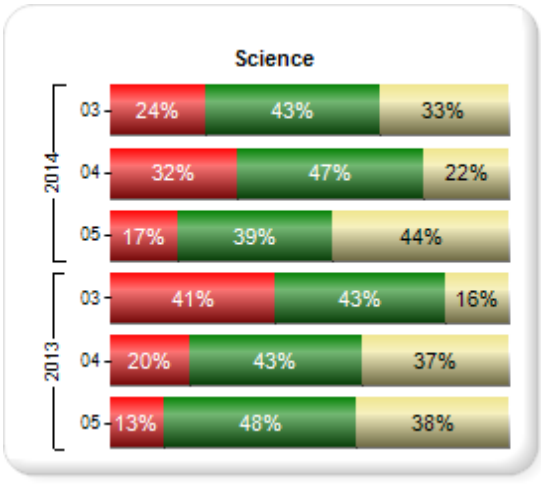
A. Assessments by Grade Level

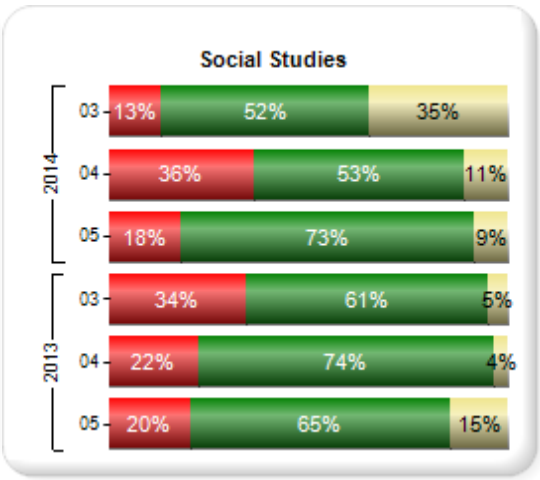
CRCT by Grade Level



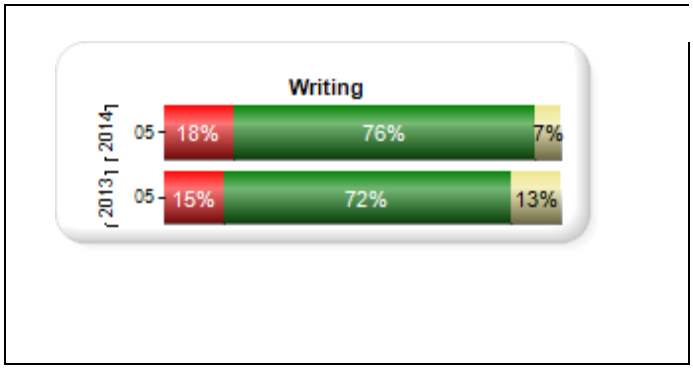






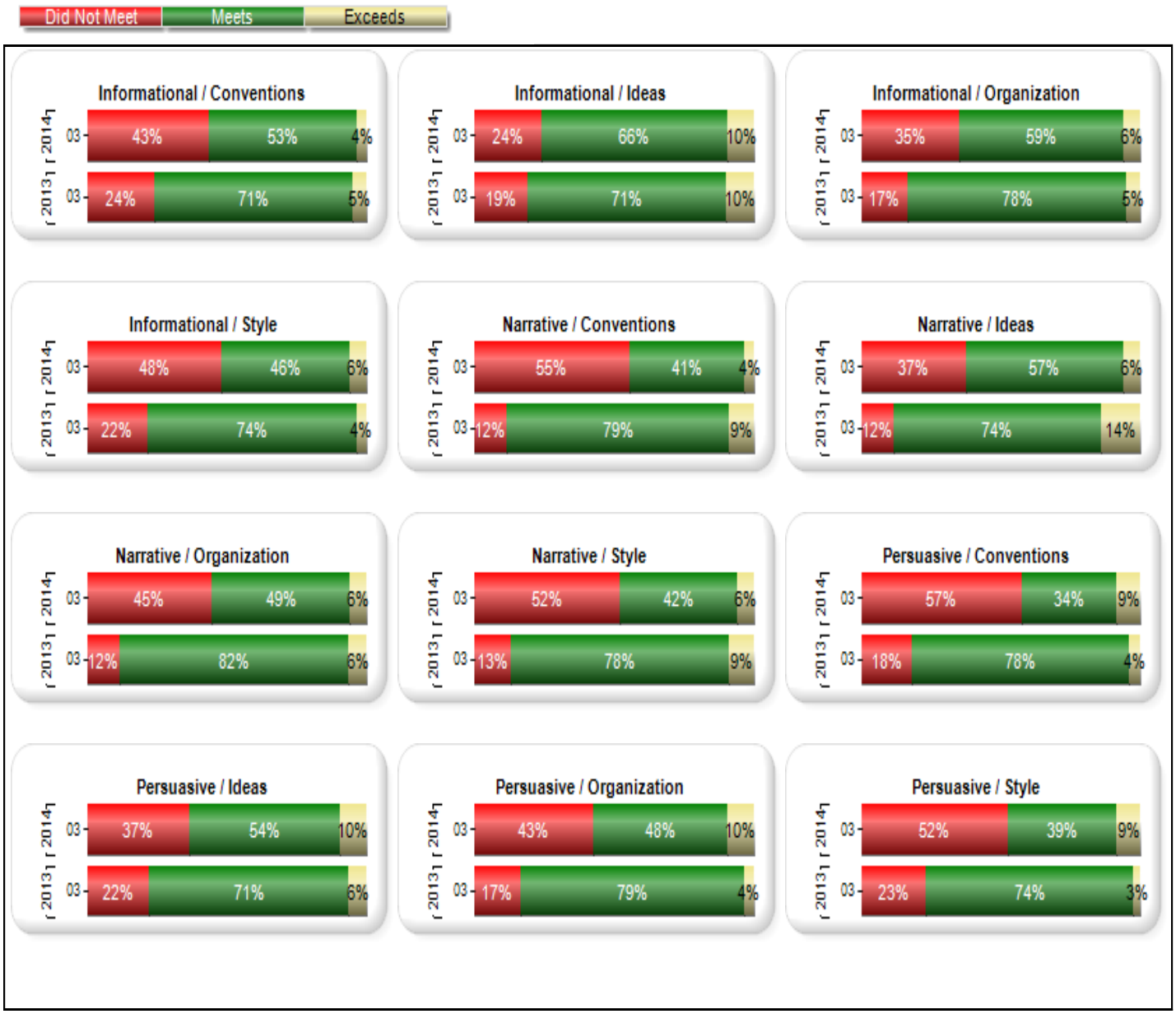


Georgia Writing Assessment: Grade 5



Georgia Writing Assessment: Grade 3

Spring G3WT Results (Main) by Grade Level



B. Disaggregated Data

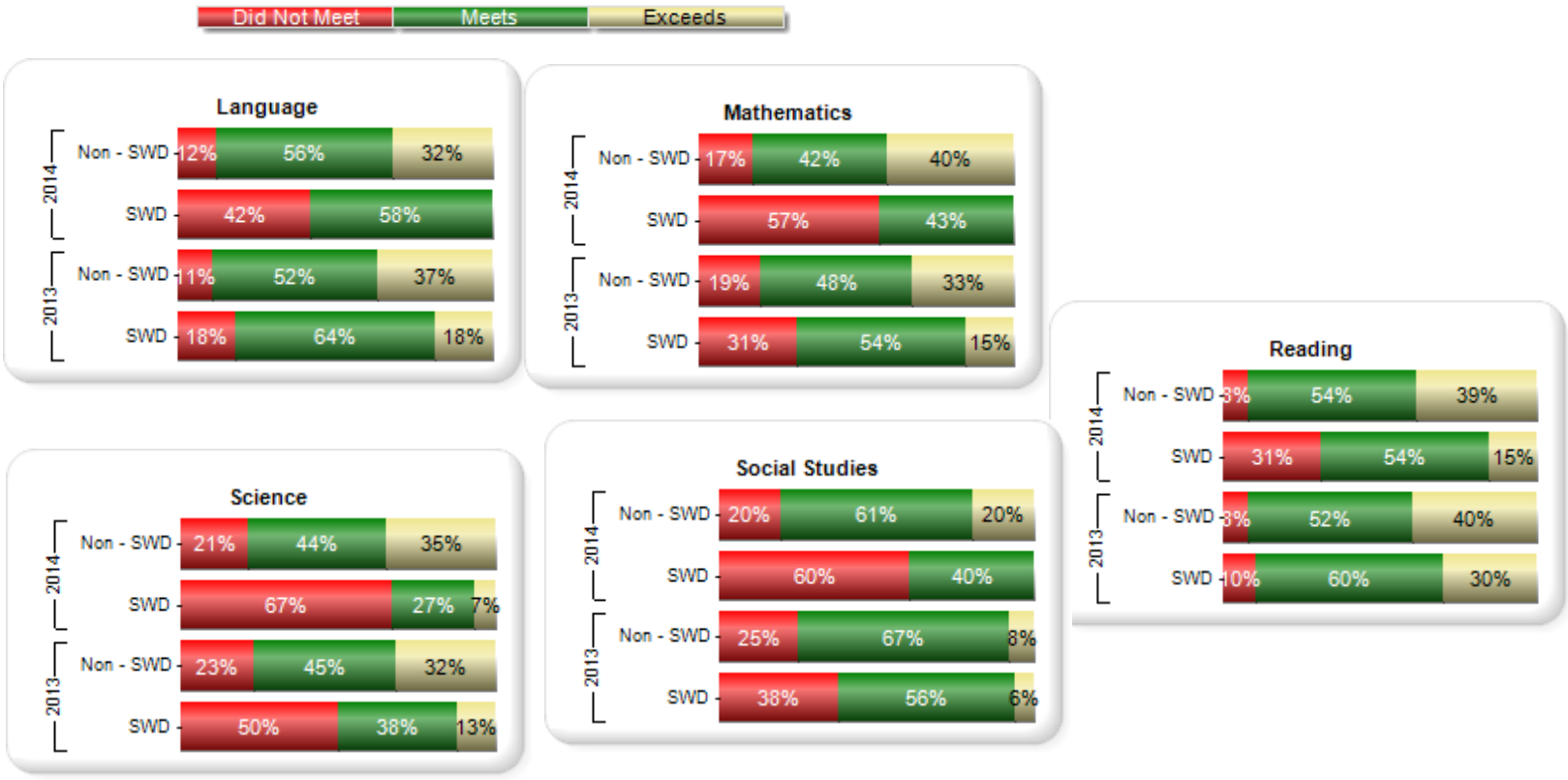
CRCT Ethnicity by Content Area

School Year	Subject	Race / Ethnicity	Did Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds
2013-2014	Language	Asian	20.0 %	40.0 %	40.0 %
		Black, Not Of Hispanic Origin	12.8 %	56.1 %	31.0 %
		Hispanic	16.7 %	60.0 %	23.3 %
		Multi-Racial		40.0 %	60.0 %
		Two Or More Races			100.0 %
		Undefined	40.0 %	40.0 %	20.0 %
		White, Not Of Hispanic Origin	12.0 %	72.0 %	16.0 %
		Combined	13.2 %	56.2 %	30.6 %
	Mathematics	Asian	20.0 %	20.0 %	60.0 %
		Black, Not Of Hispanic Origin	19.6 %	43.9 %	36.5 %
		Hispanic	20.0 %	43.3 %	36.7 %
		Multi-Racial		40.0 %	60.0 %
		Two Or More Races		33.3 %	66.7 %
		Undefined	50.0 %	25.0 %	25.0 %
		White, Not Of Hispanic Origin	20.0 %	40.0 %	40.0 %
		Combined	19.2 %	42.5 %	38.3 %
	Reading	Asian	20.0 %	20.0 %	60.0 %
		Black, Not Of Hispanic Origin	8.5 %	55.3 %	36.2 %
		Hispanic	10.0 %	60.0 %	30.0 %
		Multi-Racial	10.0 %	30.0 %	60.0 %
		Two Or More Races		33.3 %	66.7 %
		Undefined	20.0 %	60.0 %	20.0 %
		White, Not Of Hispanic Origin	4.0 %	52.0 %	44.0 %
		Combined	8.6 %	53.8 %	37.6 %
	Science	Asian	20.0 %	60.0 %	20.0 %
		Black, Not Of Hispanic Origin	22.2 %	46.0 %	31.7 %
		Hispanic	36.7 %	30.0 %	33.3 %
		Multi-Racial	10.0 %	10.0 %	80.0 %
		Two Or More Races		33.3 %	66.7 %
		Undefined	50.0 %	50.0 %	
		White, Not Of Hispanic Origin	24.0 %	44.0 %	32.0 %
		Combined	23.7 %	42.9 %	33.5 %
	Social Studies	Asian	20.0 %	80.0 %	

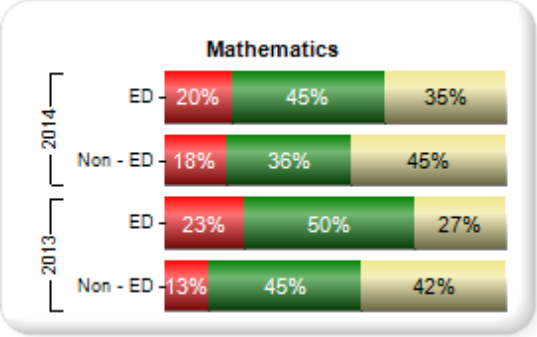
		Black, Not Of Hispanic Origin	21.1 %	63.7 %	15.3 %
		Hispanic	26.7 %	50.0 %	23.3 %
		Multi-Racial	10.0 %	50.0 %	40.0 %
		Two Or More Races		33.3 %	66.7 %
		Undefined	50.0 %	50.0 %	
		White, Not Of Hispanic Origin	25.0 %	45.8 %	29.2 %
		Combined	21.8 %	59.8 %	18.4 %
2012-2013	Language	American Indian Or Alaska Native		100.0 %	
		Asian	11.1 %	44.4 %	44.4 %
		Black, Not Of Hispanic Origin	9.7 %	57.4 %	32.9 %
		Hispanic	13.6 %	50.0 %	36.4 %
		Multi-Racial		45.5 %	54.5 %
		Undefined	17.6 %	41.2 %	41.2 %
		White, Not Of Hispanic Origin	18.2 %	42.4 %	39.4 %
		Combined	11.3 %	52.8 %	35.9 %
	Mathematics	American Indian Or Alaska Native		100.0 %	
		Asian	11.1 %	33.3 %	55.6 %
		Black, Not Of Hispanic Origin	18.6 %	51.3 %	30.1 %
		Hispanic	26.1 %	56.5 %	17.4 %
		Multi-Racial	9.1 %	54.5 %	36.4 %
		Undefined	18.8 %	50.0 %	31.3 %
		White, Not Of Hispanic Origin	30.3 %	27.3 %	42.4 %
		Combined	20.1 %	48.2 %	31.7 %
	Reading	American Indian Or Alaska Native			100.0 %
		Asian	11.1 %	44.4 %	44.4 %
		Black, Not Of Hispanic Origin	5.8 %	57.1 %	37.0 %
		Hispanic	18.2 %	36.4 %	45.5 %
		Multi-Racial		36.4 %	63.6 %
		Undefined	11.8 %	47.1 %	41.2 %
		White, Not Of Hispanic Origin	9.1 %	54.5 %	36.4 %
		Combined	7.7 %	52.6 %	39.7 %
	Science	American Indian Or Alaska Native		100.0 %	
		Asian	11.1 %	55.6 %	33.3 %
		Black, Not Of Hispanic Origin	22.2 %	48.7 %	29.1 %
		Hispanic	30.4 %	39.1 %	30.4 %
		Multi-Racial	36.4 %	27.3 %	36.4 %
		Undefined	18.8 %	43.8 %	37.5 %
		White, Not Of Hispanic Origin	35.3 %	32.4 %	32.4 %
		Combined	24.6 %	44.8 %	30.6 %

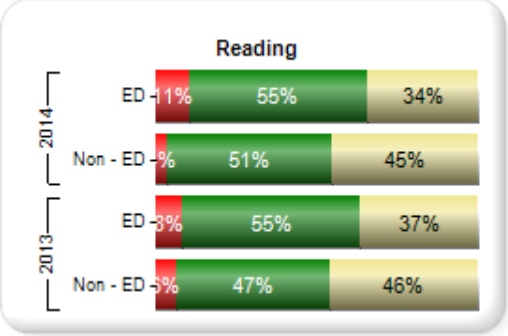
Social Studies	American Indian Or Alaska Native		100.0 %	
	Asian	33.3 %	55.6 %	11.1 %
	Black, Not Of Hispanic Origin	22.8 %	69.0 %	8.2 %
	Hispanic	34.8 %	60.9 %	4.3 %
	Multi-Racial	18.2 %	72.7 %	9.1 %
	Undefined	25.0 %	68.8 %	6.3 %
	White, Not Of Hispanic Origin	32.4 %	58.8 %	8.8 %
	Combined	25.4 %	66.7 %	7.9 %

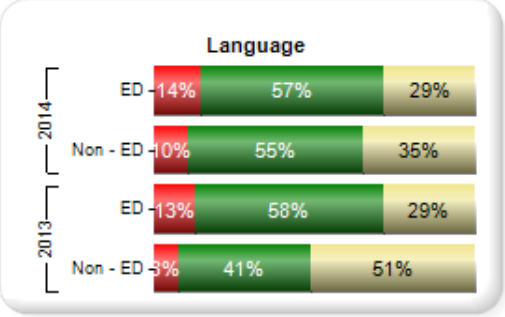
Students with Disabilities

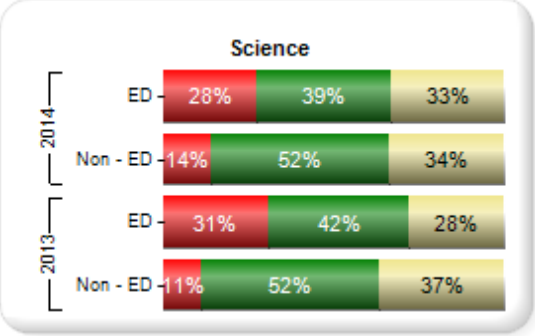


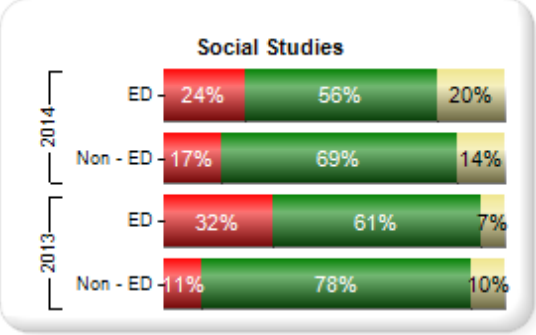
Socio-Economic Status











C. Identified Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

Students at Sims Elementary showed a positive trend in both 3rd grade math and in 3rd grade language, where the exceeds category increased from 20% to 23% over the past two years. This positive trend continued in 5th grade reading, where the exceeds category increased from 34% to 38%.

Weaknesses

While we continue to make gains in certain areas, we continue to see gaps between our subgroups. On the 2014 CRCT, all subgroups underperformed the Black subgroup on both the language and reading sections of the CRCT in the 2013-2014 school year. Additionally, the gaps between the SWD students and the non-SWD students increased between the 2012-2013 and the 2013-2014 school year. On the 4th grade social studies CRCT, the did not meets category increased from 22% in 2012-2013 to 36% in 2013-2014. This downward performance trend continued in 3rd grade writing, where the did not meets percentage increased for all sections. Based on the data included here, it is evident that the teachers' efforts at Sims are not addressing current student needs.

D. and E. Teacher Data

Currently, Sims has 43 teachers. 23 staff members hold advanced degrees.

F. Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives were based on formative and summative data that Sims Elementary reviews on a regular basis. The school reviews the School Improvement Plan and will make revisions to the plan as needed for the upcoming school year. The addition of the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant, district universal screeners, and diagnostic assessments will be used to determine which research based strategies will address the needs of the students overall.

G. District-Prescribed Data

Benchmark Assessments (% of meets/exceeds)

	2012-2013		2013-2014		2014-2015	
	RCPS	SES	RCPS	SES	RCPS	SES
September						
1st					88%	88%
2nd					80%	65%
3rd			81%	72%	74%	65%
4th			66%	48%	70%	64%
5th			79%	75%	82%	69%
December						

	1st	87%	88%		
	2nd	84%	91%		
	3rd	63%	63%		
	4th	81%	70%		
	5th	80%	77%		
March	1st	87%	83%		
	2nd	91%	90%		
	3rd	77%	66%		
	4th	82%	80%		
	5th	77%	77%	N/A	N/A

H. Professional Learning

All teachers participate in professional learning on a bi-weekly basis along with data team meeting and collaborative planning. All administrators participate in the district Instructional Support Team, which provides administrators and district staff, such as curriculum coordinators, with monthly professional learning. Administrators also attend monthly principal meetings where they engage in and lead professional learning with principals from all over the district. Teachers and administrators attend annual district-wide professional learning days which provide individualized options for various grade levels and subject areas. Participation in school and district collaboratives are required of all teachers.

II. Literacy Plan

Building Block 1. Engaged Leadership

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

Why?

Leadership roles are important within the school environment. The building leadership administrators are kept abreast of research based strategies for literacy instructions and attend professional learning to glean knowledge about literacy leadership in order to instruct and support classroom instruction. The building administrative team participates in weekly faculty meetings to share information with teachers. The building leadership team allots one day every quarter for teachers to collaborate with one another to make instructional plans pertaining to student instructional needs.

All community stakeholders must aspire to change policies, improve the quality of a school's processes, and improve assessments to effectively improve professional learning for educators. ("The Why," p. 30 and 8.B; "The What," p. 5)

What? Current Practices

Sims Administration:

1. Guarantees that data analysis is performed in an effective manner and provides leadership to make sure that all practices and procedures are understood as practiced during the data analysis review
2. Provides collaborative times to meet and discuss data with faculty members on how to improve instructional practices for students
3. Monitor literacy instructional practices within the school
4. Provides opportunities for staff to attend professional learning workshops

("The What," p. 5)

How? Moving Forward

Sims Administration will:

1. Participate in professional learning on literacy leadership instruction to support classroom instruction
2. 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.)
3. 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
4. Provide professional learning based on student data and teacher needs

("The Why," p. 32; "The How," p. 20)

B. Action: Organize a Literacy Leadership Team

Why?
In correlation with Georgia's Literacy Plan: The Why, the goal of our school developed literacy plan is that students at Sims Elementary will become self-sustaining lifelong learners to their communities. As an AVID school, we are preparing our scholars to become 21st century learners. We believe that literacy leadership should be a shared responsibility by stakeholders within the school.

At Sims, our Literacy Task Force will consist of teachers, media specialists, and administrators who are competent advocates promoting literacy by helping students develop strategies and skills for accessing texts and media, expressing ideas in writing, communicating ideas orally, and utilizing sources of information efficiently and effectively.

The Literacy Task Force will analyze data from iReady, Georgia Milestones, SRI, etc. to identify needs and produce goals for students. Scholars will be provided literacy goals and provided strategies on how to meet those goals successfully. Goals will be shared as part of the School Improvement Plan.
("The Why," 8.A. p. 156)

What? Current Practices
Sims Elementary:

1. Employs a Literacy Task Force to address literacy needs
2. Uses technology to communicate with committee members through email, remote storage services such as One Drive and online communities such as My Big Campus.
3. Develops recommendations for improvements by using multiple forms of student, school, and teacher data

("The What," p. 5)

How? Moving Forward
Sims Elementary will:

1. Evaluate current practices in all classrooms using a walk-through tool to determine strengths in literacy instruction and to identify needs for improvements
2. Identify and prioritize a list of student to be targeted for intervention or support
3. Continuation of sharing student achievement gains with parents and local community through community open forums, display of student work, and websites.
4. Utilize technology to maintain communication among team members other schools that have successfully improved student achievement to gain valuable insights and innovative ideas.
5. Incentivize strong leaders on faculty
6. Define priorities and allocated needed resources to sustain them over time
7. Re-assign staff as needed to maximize literacy goals

("The How," p. 21)

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

Why?
Students must find relevance in what they read in order to improve student engagement and motivation. In order to be effective learners, students should be taught seven strategies of effective

reading and the strategies should be taught to build the literacy foundation. Students must be strategic readers in order to learn from library resources, to read the Web, to succeed in class, and in life to help prepare them to compete in a global society. The faculty of SES works together to teach comprehension skills to students in order to ensure that students make meaning, think critically, and produce knowledge from the ideas and information with which they interact.
("The Why," p. 59)

What? Current Practices
Sims Elementary:

1. Time for intervention is built into the school schedule daily
2. Instructional time for literacy has been leveraged by scheduling disciplinary literacy in all content areas
3. Protected time for collaborative meetings

("The What," p. 6)

How? Moving Forward
Sims Elementary will:

1. Ensure that teams meet for collaborative planning and examining student data/work during scheduled time
2. Study flexible scheduling options to include additional time for reading intervention
3. Study formative student assessment results and use the results to continue to determine the impact of efforts to maximize use of time
4. Collaborate with other team members to maximize instructional time through the use of peer observations to analyze lesson.
5. Maximize use of scheduled instructions time by identifying effective strategies for differentiating instruction, promoting active engagement, and teaching key areas of literacy and writing instruction.
6. Maintain anecdotal notes and data portfolios to showcase student and content area successes
7. Share professional learning at team and staff meeting
8. Expand Leveled Bookroom/Library with up to date materials for teacher usage

("The How," p. 22-23)

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

Why?
All faculty and staff members support literacy instruction, including the paraprofessionals. Students are provided with opportunities for literacy instruction before, during, and afterschool by teachers, parent volunteers, and paraprofessionals. Students must be prepared to compete in a global society and must possess strong literacy skills in order to be successful. As our staff feels that it is the responsibility of teaching literacy is shared, all stakeholders participate in giving literacy instruction. Teaching reading comprehension skills is highly effective when teacher use the seven main strategies for reading comprehension.
The seven strategies are as follows:
Visualizing
Questioning
Making Connections

Predicting
Inferring
Determining Importance
Synthesizing/ Creating
("The Why," p. 42-43)

What? Current Practices
Sims Elementary:

1. Analyzes multiple forms of school and student data including Star Reading, SRI, CRCT, benchmark results, iReady, etc. to develop a list of prioritized recommendations and goals for improvements.
2. Faculty and staff participate in targeted and sustained professional learning on literacy instruction, including disciplinary instruction.
3. Provide resources to parents and guardians to help strengthen literacy skills
4. Parent Resource Room for parents to use for literacy needs
5. Sponsor Family Literacy Nights, curriculum nights, and Parent University, and Principal Chats
6. Include academic supports such as tutoring, co-curricular activities, online learning opportunities and/or tutoring, and extended learning opportunities such as summer programs, afterschool and Saturday academics to enhance literacy learning
7. Identify and prioritize a list of students to be targeted for intervention or support

("The What," p. 6 ; "The How," p. 24)

How? Moving Forward
Sims Elementary will:

1. Evaluate school culture and current practices by surveying strengths and needs for improvement
2. Continuation of analysis of multiple forms of teacher data to develop a list of prioritized recommendations and goals for improvement
3. Plan for targeted sustained professional learning for the staff on literacy strategies and deep content knowledge
4. Monitor instruction to ensure consistent use of effective instructional practices that include disciplinary instruction and active student engagement across content areas
5. Select or develop a walk through and or observation form to ensure consistency of effective instructional practices
6. Enlist literacy learning in outside organizations
7. Develop and maintain infrastructure to support literacy

("The What," p. 6; "The How," p. 24-25)

E. Action: Optimize literacy instruction across all content areas

Why?
The integration of literacy skills into the content areas has been made even more explicit in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). The CCGPS provide guidance as well for writing arguments and informative/explanatory texts and in the content areas. Strategic literacy instruction integrated into all curriculum areas is critical for the development of students' ability to use language.

("The Why," p. 31)

What? Current Practices

Sims Elementary:

1. Requires writing to be an integral part of every class daily
2. Participates in professional learning on incorporating literary texts in content areas and conduction short research projects that use several sources
3. Supports continued use of approved assessment tools to assess Lexile levels, place students, and monitor effectiveness of interventions
4. Arranges for reading endorsement classes within district
5. Identifies and/or develops a school-wide writing rubric that is aligned with the CCGPS to set clear expectations and goals for performance
6. Ensures that teachers provide meaningful opportunities for students to write, speak, and listen
7. Ensures continued growth through researching and identifying appropriate literacy instructional strategies across all content areas

("The What," p. 6)

How? Moving Forward

Sims Elementary will:

1. Subscribe to literacy-specific journals for administrators and teachers
2. Provide ongoing training in CCGPS, CCRPI, and Georgia assessments for administrators and teachers as new developments and challenges arise
3. Expand professional learning opportunities on explicit instruction of essential literacy components to administrators and across content areas with training provided by local RESAs
4. Provide incentives for teachers in all content areas to add endorsements (reading, gifted)
5. Research, select, and purchase additional resources for classroom libraries
6. Provide more frequent and comprehensive collaborative and PL (Professional Learning) sessions-- with SR (Striving Readers) funds supporting substitute pay, stipends, materials, and travel expenses for PL activities
7. Improved stakeholder involvement in literacy planning encouraged through practices funded by SRCL (e.g., curriculum nights to involve community; student book clubs, Reading Buddies)

("The How," p. 26)

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.

Why?

Literacy is paramount in Georgia's efforts to lead the nation in improving student achievement. All teachers, therefore, are literacy instructors who must coordinate the development of students' skills in accessing, using, and producing multiple forms of media, information, and knowledge in each content area. Georgia's Literacy Task Force established content literacy as a goal for each Georgia student; consequently, a common understanding of literacy must be recognized and valued by all stakeholders, including all teachers, students, parents, and community members. ALL stakeholders, including educators, media specialists, and parents of PreK, primary, adolescent, and post-secondary students,

are responsible for promoting literacy. Members of the Administrative Leadership Team have identified members of the community to service on a council advisory committee.
("The Why," p. 31)

What? Current Practices
Sims Elementary:

1. Provides a network of learning supports within the community that targets student improvements is active (e.g. tutoring, mentoring, afterschool programs)
2. Invites various business leaders in the community to speak to students
3. Host family nights that engage parents in activities that demonstrate the importance of proficiency in literacy
4. Promote AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) within our school and community

("The Why," Section 1, p. 31; "The What," p. 7)

How? Moving Forward
Sims Elementary will:

1. Continue to enlist members of the various participating entities to provide leadership by:
    - Serving as mentors
    - Speaking to groups of students
    - Publicizing efforts and academic successes within the community
    - Visiting classroom to support teachers and students
    - Adoption of different schools by civic groups
2. Plan and coordinate additional literacy activities involving community leaders and parents for example guest readers during Literary Lunch, Read Across America Week, Read for the Record)
3. Establish a relationship with schools, universities, the workforce, families and the communities.
4. Create a shared vision for literacy for the school and community, making the vision tangible and visible (ex. number of students involved in book clubs, number of words and books read for Accelerated Reader, rewards for improvement in literacy)

("The How," p. 29)

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.)

Why?
Collaborative teams are needed for the successful promotion of literacy. Teachers, Administrators, Paraprofessionals, and Media Specialists all work together to establish specific, measurable achievement goals that are aligned with standards and based on data. This collaboration will positively impact our scholars by helping them become successful at accessing a variety of media, using these sources effectively, and expressing their ideas orally and in writing. Educators must have access to all literacy data in order to ensure a consistent literacy focus and be successful in collaborative decision making.
("The Why," p. 27, 31)

What? Current Practices
Administrators have established an expectation of shared responsibility for development of literacy across the curriculum.

Sims Elementary:

1. Provides a scheduled a daily common planning time for teachers to meet. Weekly collaborative planning times are scheduled after school to include all instructional support personnel
2. Provides a quarterly planning time to analyze data and plan focused literacy instruction

("The What," p.7)

How? Moving Forward
Sims Elementary will :

1. Establish vertical, cross-disciplinary teams for planning literacy instruction
2. Place an emphasis on strategic, targeted learning goals for scholars
3. Continue to identify striving readers in order to implement early intervention strategies and activities and monitor their progress
4. Continue to require scholars to interpret and analyze a variety of texts and to write in a variety of genres
5. Incorporate the seven main comprehension strategies (visualizing, questioning, making connections, predicting, inferring, determining importance, and synthesizing the information) across all subject areas

("The Why," p. 32, 37, 38, 43, 44)

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

Why?
The need for effective reading and writing instruction is based on the desire to equip our scholars for life in a global society. Employers are increasingly searching for graduates who are well versed in written communication. Teachers need to be trained on the best practices in instruction of rigorous reading and writing across content areas and grade levels.
("The Why," p. 44, 45, 46, and 49)

What? Current Practices
Sims Elementary:

1. Provides professional learning opportunities lead by both the district representatives and school representatives on knowledge of CCGPS and best practices as related to effective literacy instruction.
2. Uses informational texts for instruction so that literacy skills can be taught across the content areas via the use of webinars and other video links enable teachers to view real life exemplars of successful teaching practices

("The What," p.7)

How? Moving Forward
Sims Elementary will :

1. Continue to provide teachers with professional learning based on "best practices" research which will include differentiated instruction, academically challenging environments, and instructional strategies
2. Provide an instructional coach to model effective literacy lessons in the classroom
3. Establish vertical planning teams to analyze grade-level areas of concern
4. Continue to provide training for teachers in the use of technology to assess scholars and analyze data
5. Provide teacher training on the use of Lexile levels
6. Discuss ways to infuse literacy throughout the day including the use of technology
7. Stay abreast of effective strategies for literacy instruction

("The How," p. 30-31)

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

Why?

In order for our scholars to be contributing members of our community, teachers, parents, and community members must all support the common goal of effective literacy instruction. Community members who provide mentoring and tutoring to students will help to ensure that all scholars have literacy support beyond the classroom.

("The How," p. 28, 33; "The Why," p. 26)

What? Current Practices

Sims Elementary:

1. Uses the AVID Model to promote college readiness and interest among our scholars through visits and community speakers
2. Partners with local daycares, preschools, and middle Schools to aid in student transitions and ensure a shared literacy vision
3. Provides a Parent Resource Room to provide parents with additional resources they can use to aid their children in literacy skills
4. Showcases student work via Open House, Curriculum Nights, and our school website
5. Provides literacy websites and login information to parents to ensure that scholars have additional time to strengthen literacy skills.
6. Provides mentoring and tutoring programs where parents and community members assist striving scholars gain necessary skills to become successful readers

("The What," p.5; "The How," p. 21, 24, 25, 28, 33; "The Why," p. 51)

How? Moving Forward

Sims Elementary will:

1. Continue to partner with daycare, preschool and middle school facilities to ensure smooth transitions for all students
2. Continue to promote parent involvement via mentoring, Curriculum Nights, and use of our Website and links to literacy instruction
3. Continue to plan and implement a Family Literacy Night to increase involvement and demonstrate the importance of proficiency in literacy
4. Continue to promote college readiness through expanding the AVID Model to grades K-5.

5. Develop a survey of needs for parents, students, teachers, and counselors that can be used to match available resources to actual need

("The How," p. 32-33)

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

Why?

In order to effectively learn to read and write, instruction requires both summative and formative assessments. It's vital to ensure key timing components to a comprehensive assessment plan. According to the Center on Instruction 2009, three critical timing categorizations exist:

Beginning of the school year: 1. Students are monitored at different intervals based on needs. A screening helps determine the level of intervention needed to assist individual students. 2. Informal diagnostic assessments helps the educator plan and target specific interventions.

Throughout the year: This process allows the instruction to be adjusted continuously. As new information is assessed, the educator has an opportunity to provide a constant cycle for immediate improvement. Another advantage is to target learning assessed from data driven information found on assessments.

End of the year: The summative assessment component provides grade level expectation. In Georgia, the Georgia Milestone, GHSGT, and the EOCT assesses the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards of specified content areas. ("The Why,"5.A.2; p. 96)

In addition, research-based assessment and intervention materials are purchased to align with individualized needs of each student. Assessments need to include a variety of formats such as multiple choice, short answer, constructed response, and essay. Curriculum-based assessments are used to influence instructional decisions regarding RTI model.

What? Current Practices

Sims Elementary:

1. Uses effective screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic tools (reading fluency and running records such as but not limited to: Easy CBM, SRI, Seeing Stars, and GRASP for students with disabilities) have been selected to identify reading levels and fluency of all students, advanced as well as striving readers. ("The How," p. 34)
2. Provides time for collaborative teams to meet weekly during planning sessions to design pre/post assessments to target the specific interventions for flexible grouping of all learners. This group includes SWD, EIP, and enrichment grouping.
3. Employs a calendar for summative assessments based on local, state, and program guidelines, including specific timeline for administration and persons responsible has been developed by the district. ("The What," p.8) scored writing samples (1-5), weekly spelling inventory, sight words; District ELA/Reading benchmark tests.

How? Moving Forward

Sims Elementary will:

1. Research and select effective screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic tools to identify achievement levels of all students.
2. Distinguish the difference and purpose of formative and summative assessments.
3. Provide a variety of assessments to identify the needs of all learners. (high achieving, striving learners, and enrichment activities).
4. Adjust instructional plans for students based on assessments.
5. Provide timely, effective feedback and commentary to students so they can assess their own learning.
6. Analyze student data in collaborative teams to develop and align instructional plans to meet needs.
7. Target a plan of action to select appropriate interventions.
8. Identify and purchase assessment and intervention material for adjusted instruction.
9. Provide training for staff to administer assessments to ensure fidelity and accurate data record keeping.
10. Design a data collection plan for storing, disaggregating, and disseminating assessment results.

("The How," p. 34)

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

Why?

The Literacy Task Force emphasizes the need to provide universal screeners for all learners. Research-based assessment and intervention materials aligned with the needs of identified students need to be purchased. It must be used to identify the achievement level of all students, advanced as well as striving. ("The Why," p. 124) Professional development must occur in selecting interventions for striving readers.

What? Current Practices

Sims Elementary:

1. Administers Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) to students in the fall, winter, and spring
2. Administers Star Early Literacy to grade levels in the fall, winter, and spring
3. Utilizes a kindergartner readiness screener to each student entering kindergartner.
4. Administers I-Ready assessments quarterly.
5. Uses results from assessments to plan reading and writing instruction.

("The What," p. 8)

How? Moving Forward

Sims Elementary will:

1. Research and select effective progress monitoring tools to measure general-outcome literacy competencies (e.g. phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, written expression, vocabulary).
2. Use effective screening to influences instructional needs regarding the RTI model.
3. Collaborative teams select and create school-wide classroom-based formative assessments to assess efficacy of classroom instruction.

4. Provide timely, descriptive feedback to students with opportunities to assess their learning, revise their learning, and chart their progress in student portfolios ("The How," p. 44).
5. Assessments need to include a variety of formats such as multiple choice, short answer, constructed response, and essay.
6. Provide opportunities for remediation, enrichment, and student/teacher led conferencing.
7. Analyze student data in collaborative teams to create and align instructional plans.
8. Provide Professional Development opportunities for all staff who administer assessments to maintain fidelity of standard procedures and accurate data reporting

("The How," p. 36)

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

Why?

The Georgia Literacy Plan includes a deliberate and comprehensive plan for assessment. Problems found in literacy screenings are followed up by diagnostic assessments that guide student placement and/or inform instruction in intervention programs. The plan promotes the use of on-going, frequent, and multiple measures that will be used as diagnostic and monitoring tools to plan for instruction. It is necessary to examine both summative and formative assessments, to determine how that data positively affects instruction, and to see how formative assessments enhance the overall picture of assessment. ("The Why," p. 5)

"Formative assessments are only effective if they are followed by effective instructional responses or appropriate types of feedback."(Torgesen & Miller, 2009, p.24)

What? Current Practices

Sims Elementary:

1. Utilizes a running records of reading assessments in K-5 two times per year. This data is used to inform guided reading groups and identify students for possible RTI placement.
2. Provides a protocol to ensure that students identified by screenings routinely receive diagnostic assessment

("The What," p. 9)

How? Moving Forward

Sims Elementary will:

1. Recognize and celebrate individual student's incremental improvements toward reaching literacy goals
2. Use student assessment data to assist students and teachers in setting learning goals and in monitoring progress toward those goals.
3. Use technology to differentiate learning within content areas (e.g., use Lexiles to match student to text; provide practice opportunities to strengthen areas of weakness)
4. Select interventions that include diagnostic assessment and multiple entry points to avoid a one- size- fits- all approach.

("The How," p. 37)

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

Why?
The building of literacy must be systematic in order to prevent and remediate learning gaps. The systematic use of summative data in the planning of instruction is integral to the success of both the students and the goal of literacy.
("The Why," p. 105)

What? (Current Practices)
Sims Elementary:

1. Allows classroom teachers to disaggregate quarterly summative data in order to identify and prepare for flexible groups and tiered differentiated instruction
2. Provides time for collaborative teams to meet quarterly to review the summative assessment data and target the specific interventions for flexible grouping of all learners. This group includes SWD, EIP, and enrichment grouping
3. Employs the Administrative team to use the summative data to develop the afterschool tutorial program

("The What," p. 9)

How? Moving Forward
Sims Elementary will:

1. Encourage vertical teams to review summative data to focus on changes that can be made to improve the instruction across the curriculum for all students
2. Share and analyze student work samples as a way to inform instruction during collaborative planning for each grade level team
3. Plan lessons, re-teaching, and intervention activities to target areas of need
4. Analyze assessment data to identify teachers who need support

("The How," p. 37-38)

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

Why?
One of the cornerstones of any Longitudinal Data System (LDS) is the ability to track student progress over time. Perpetual success is not an accident. In order for students to be consistently and perpetually success from semester to semester and from year to year, there must be a systematic and perpetual approach to data analysis as it relates to improved practices in teaching and consequently, student learning.

("The Why," p. 121)

What? Current Practices
Sims Elementary:

1. Implements a school wide progress monitoring program that allows to use the data to adjust small group instruction within the classroom, as well as grade level differentiated tiered intervention and enrichment.
2. Creates progress monitoring teams to work with grade levels on the use of benchmark summative data for the purpose of tiered intervention and enrichment curriculum planning.

("The What," p. 9)

How? Moving Forward

Sims Elementary will:

1. Develop a protocol for making decisions to identify the instructional needs of students
2. Teachers will be trained to use the decision-making protocol to identify student instructional needs and group them by instructional commonalities
3. Implement protocol with fidelity

("The How," p. 39)

Building Block 4. Best Practices in Literacy Instruction

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

Why?

An important component of an effective literacy assessment plan includes having the right assessments in place. Teachers need to be able to investigate and apply information gathered to make appropriate determinations of students' strengths and weaknesses. Direct instruction, modeling and practice in reading comprehension must be implemented daily. Allowing students to select text that will motivate and maintain reading persistence is an important factor. Using writing to support and strengthen literacy standards is also a necessary component. Constructing small group work sessions that will encourage positive classroom social environments while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of reading is pertinent. These initiatives are important for maintaining the state of Georgia's plan to ensure students obtain the literacy skills needed to compete globally.
("The Why," p. 96)

What? Current Practices

Sims Elementary:

1. Use data to drive instruction and follow the cycle for results as set for Rockdale County Public Schools
2. Display reading word walls and utilize ways during daily instruction
3. Structure small group instruction that allows for same ability and flexible groups
4. Implement technology by using computer based programs and websites
5. Examine student data to identify areas of instruction with greatest needs (e.g. word identification, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension)
6. Plan and provide professional learning on differentiated instructional options for literacy assignments

("The What," p. 9 ; "The How," p. 40-41)

How? Moving Forward

Sims Elementary will:

1. Research and select a core program that will provide continuity based on a carefully articulated scope and sequence of skills that in integrated into a rich curriculum of literary and informational texts
2. Provide families access to resources that differentiate support for students
3. Provide teachers training and support in continued for best practices in literacy instruction

4. Continue to address both academic and workplace literacy skills across all content areas and provide students with knowledge of a variety of career paths
5. Share effective differentiated lesson and differentiation strategies in team teacher meetings
6. Use videotaping of differentiated lessons to share with other educators

("The How," p. 40-41)

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

Why?

Using writing to support and strengthen literacy standards is a very necessary component of literacy instruction. Students must meet the high demands that society deem necessary for the 21 century workplace. The state of Georgia's writing assessment is administered to students in grades three, five, eight and eleven. These writing assessments provide important data for teachers, students and parents. These type assessments allow teachers to analyze student writing performance which is important for developing instruction that will help to strengthen areas of weakness and challenge those students that exceed on the exam. At Sims Elementary School, we recognize that in order to provide students with appropriate writing interventions, we must first identify student levels of success and monitor progress through the use of a formative writing assessment multiple times per year. The SRCL grant would be used to purchase a formative writing assessment and to train teachers in implementing appropriate writing instruction based on identified needs. ("The Why," p. 37, 117)

What? Current Practices

Sims Elementary:

1. Uses coordinated plans to develop writing instruction across all subject areas that include explicit instruction, guided practice and independent practice through WICOR(Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading) strategies
2. Provides times for teachers to provide instruction in and opportunities for students to write coherent information or explanatory texts through writing activities such journals, quick writes, student data notebooks, and AVID binders (note-taking)

("The What," p. 10)

How? Moving Forward

Sims Elementary will:

1. Provide professional learning on best practices in writing instruction in all subject areas
2. Design a vertically and horizontally articulated writing plan consistent with CCGPS
3. Create a plan that describes how technology will be used for production, publishing , and communication across the curriculum

("The How," p. 42)

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

Why?

Based on the research recommendations, teachers must take decisive steps to improve motivation and engagement in the classroom. Planning and instruction must take into account students interests, unique learning abilities, styles and diverse backgrounds. Constructing small group work sessions that will encourage positive classroom social environments while simultaneously emphasizing the

importance of reading is pertinent. Using technology to promote engagement through interactive books and other technology will also assist in sustaining student interest.
("The Why," p. 59)

What? Current Practices
Sims Elementary:

1. Implements Book It program (K-5)
2. Implements Read Across America program
3. Implements Read for the Record with Community Leaders
4. Implements daily Literary Lunch
5. Provide students with opportunities to self-select reading materials and topics for research
6. Take steps to provide students with an understanding of the relevance of academic assignments for their lives

("The What," p. 11)

How? Moving Forward

1. Provide professional learning opportunities for teachers that will integrate writing into all subject areas, provide guidance and support of best practices, align with the CCGPS, and cultivate experiences that utilize technology in the writing process
2. Sustain opportunities for students to self-select reading material and topics for research
3. Allow teachers to explore ways to use peer collaboration with and discuss within the contexts of PLCs (e.g. literature circles)
4. Leverage the creative use of technology
5. Scaffold students' background knowledge and competency in navigating content area texts to ensure their confidence and self-efficacy
6. Increase access to text that students consider interesting

("The How," p. 41)

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.)

Why?
As students become more diverse in home background, ethnicity and cultures, the effective intervention strategies used by educators must also become just as varied. These strategies must be based on student data, both summative and formative, in order to guarantee intervention that is targeted at the specific need. Georgia's Performance Standards set the bar; effective strategies and targeted interventions guarantee the bar will be met. A clear purpose and plan must exist for the student to grow as a learner.
("The Why," p. 139-140)
The Response to Intervention (RTI) is a protocol of academic and behavioral interventions designed to provide early, effective assistance for ALL underperforming students. Research-based interventions are implemented, and frequent progress monitoring is conducted to assess student response and

progress. When students do not make progress, increasingly more intense interventions are introduced. ("The Why," Section 6; p. 123-125). Therefore, collaborative teams comprised of teachers, administrators, and parents in our school serve as the driving force for instructional decision making. These teams use information to initiate/revisit the RTI process. Grade level/school RTI teams meet to analyze data and design instruction and interventions based on the needs of individual scholar. Scholars are monitored weekly to determine if interventions are working. Grade levels meet again after data is collected to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions. Intensity levels of interventions are decreased or increased based on the information from progress monitoring. Building level support for teachers and students is provided throughout the school year.

What? Current Practices

Sims Elementary:

1. Provides protocols for identifying students and matching them to the appropriate intervention
2. Monitor interventions frequently to ensure that they occur regularly and with fidelity
3. Review formative assessments frequently to ensure students are progressing and adjust instruction to match their needs

("The What," p. 11)

How? Moving Forward

Sims Elementary will:

1. Provide professional learning to ensure that all stakeholders fully understand analyzing data, designing instruction, intervention strategies, and progress monitoring.
2. Provide protected teacher planning to implement consistent targeted instruction.
3. Encourage use of common assessment criteria to identify and monitor skill areas.
4. Provide protected time for planning and implementing strategies to meet the needs of our scholars.
5. Ensure that schedules promote discussions and planning between horizontal and vertical grade levels to promote readiness for the next grade level.

("The How," p. 43)

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

Why?

Interventions at Tier 1 include the instructional practices in use in the general education classroom. Teachers routinely address student needs and environmental factors to create the optimal learning environment. Tier 1 interventions include seating arrangements, fluid and flexible grouping, lesson pacing, collaborative work, demonstrations of learning, differentiation of instruction, and student feedback. ("The Why," p. 126)

What? Current Practices

Sims Elementary:

1. Examines student data to determine instructional areas of greatest need
2. Reflect targeted skill and instruction in teachers' lesson plans Assess and track literacy instruction in each subject area using a checklist
3. Teachers participate in ongoing professional learning

("The What," p. 11)

How? Moving Forward

1. Provide professional learning to ensure that all stakeholders fully understand interventions from the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) resources for RTI specifically Tier 1 interventions including seating arrangements, fluid and flexible grouping, lesson pacing, collaborative work, demonstrations of learning, differentiation of instruction, and student feedback
2. Provide protected teacher planning to plan and implement consistent targeted instruction.
3. Encourage understanding of assessment data and anticipated levels of student mastery
4. Provide protected time for planning and implementing strategies to meet the needs of Tier 1 students

("The How," p. 43)

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

Why?

Interventions at Tier 2 are typically standard protocols employed by the school to address the learning and/or behavioral needs of identified students. These protocols are typically implemented in a specific sequence based on the resources available in the school. During the intervention, the teacher uses specific research-based practices to address the group's reading needs while keeping a clear focus on the GPS, grade level expectations in the content areas, and transfer of learning to the general classroom. Collaboration between the intervention teacher and the general teacher team is required. During the intervention, progress monitoring is used to determine the student's response to the intervention. The progress monitoring tool and frequency of implementation are collaboratively determined by the teaching team and the intervention teacher. Based on the progress monitoring data, the school standard protocol process may require individual students to continue in the intervention, move to another Tier 2 intervention, or move to Tier 1 interventions. For a few students, the data team may consider the need for Tier 3 interventions based on individual responses to Tier 2 interventions. ("The Why," p. 125-126)

What? Current Practices

Sims Elementary:

1. Examines student data to determine instructional areas of greatest need at Tier 2
2. Implement lesson plans to reflect targeted skill and instruction
3. Use checklist to assess and track literacy instruction in each subject area
4. Participate in ongoing professional learning

("The What," p. 12)

How? Moving Forward

Sims Elementary will:

1. Monitor student movement between T1 and T2
2. Provide sufficient resources (time, training, cost, materials, and implementation of interventions)
3. Ensure adequate time for planning and implementing interventions
4. Continue to plan and provide professional learning for interventions of appropriate use of supplemental and intervention materials and diagnosis of reading difficulties
5. Monitor effectiveness of standard intervention protocols in place for students

("The How," p. 45)

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

Why?

Interventions at Tier 3 are tailored to the individual and in some cases small group. The Student Support Team should choose interventions based on evidence-based protocols and aggressively monitor the student's response to the intervention and the transfer of learning to the general classroom. ("The Why," p. 126)

What? Current Practices

Sims Elementary:

1. Examines student data to determine instructional areas of greatest need at Tier 3
2. Create lesson plans to reflect targeted skill and implement instruction
3. Assesses and tracks literacy instruction in each subject area using a checklist
4. Participate in ongoing professional learning

("The What," p. 12)

How? Moving Forward

Sims Elementary will:

1. Provide professional learning to ensure that all stakeholders fully understand interventions from the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) resources for RTI specifically Tier 3
2. Provide protected teacher planning to plan and implement consistent targeted instruction.
3. Encourage understanding of assessment data and anticipated levels of student mastery
4. Provide protected time for planning and implementing strategies to meet the needs of Tier 3 students.
5. In addition to everything that occurs at T1 and T2, data teams (expanded to include school psychologist, ESOL teacher, SLP, etc.) meet to discuss scholars who fail to respond to intervention.

("The How," p. 46-47)

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

Why?

Interventions at Tier 4 are specially designed to meet the learning needs of the individual. These specially designed interventions are based on the GPS and the individual learning and/or behavioral needs of the individual. ("The Why," p. 106)

What? Current Practices

Sims Elementary:

1. Makes a referral and completes forms in packet that include consent from parents, background questionnaire, main referral info from teacher, and areas to be assessed to be sent to the psychologist at the county office.
2. Provides tests and methods to answer the referral questions.

3. Reports results to the parent and RTI/IEP team, along with any recommendations for strategies, interventions or accommodations.
4. Provides an opportunity for the psychologist to look into the basic and applied areas of academics, such as word reading, fluency and reading comprehension, computation and applied reasoning, writing and listening comprehension. Should a special education referral be made in the future for that child, this is what would be used along with classroom progress monitoring data to determine if the child has a disability of some sort.

Depending on the nature of the referral, classroom observations, general and specific testing in the areas that were noted by the RTI team is completed. For instance, if there are concerns about overall intellectual, academic or adaptive functioning, the psychologist will gather info about those areas using general tests of cognition (like a WISC, KABC or CTONI – sometimes one is more appropriate than another), academic testing (e.g., KTEA or WIAT), and a combination of formal (Vineland, ABAS) and informal (teacher/parent observations) assessments of adaptive behaviors. In the case of a student where we suspect average overall functioning, but perhaps areas of specific weakness or processing deficits, the psychologist will give various tests that assess these (again, like a WISC, WAIS, WJ, SB, BG, or KABC). The idea here is to use the *Cattell-Horn-Carroll* and *Gf-Gc* theories of broad and narrow cognitive abilities to get an idea which processing areas, if any, are giving the child problems, such as visual-motor, visual-spatial, processing speed, short-term memory and long-term retrieval, as well as fluid reasoning and crystallized knowledge.
("The What," 5E; p. 12-13)

How? Moving Forward

1. Develop a plan taking into consideration suggestions from GA DOE resources for RTI tier 4
2. Provide professional learning to ensure that all stakeholders fully understand interventions from the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) resources for RTI specifically Tier 4
3. Provide protected teacher planning to plan and implement consistent targeted instruction.
4. Special education, ESOL, gifted teachers, participate in professional learning communities to ensure strict alignment with delivery of CCGPS, even in separate settings
5. Special education, EL, or gifted case managers meet plan and discuss students' progress regularly with general education teachers
6. Encourage understanding of assessment data and anticipated levels of student mastery
7. Provide protected time for planning and implementing strategies to meet the needs of Tier 3 students.
8. In addition to everything that occurs at T1 and T2, data teams (expanded to include school psychologist, ESOL teacher, SLP, etc.) meet to discuss scholars who fail to respond to intervention.

("The How," p. 46)

Building Block 6. Improved Instruction through Professional Learning

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

Why?

With an ever-changing global society it is pertinent for students to have a strong literacy foundation. According to The National Assessment of Education Progress report in 2013, thirty-eight percent of America's students were prepared for college. With such a low percentage of college ready students, it is vital for educators to take a critical look at current practices and set attainable goals for future alterations. Therefore, a mandated, yet necessary change (as evidenced in the Common Core State Standards) is vital for student success.

Due to the research conducted throughout the last few years, many colleges and universities have altered teacher preparation courses to produce more teachers steeped in theory with methods for the application of instructional strategies.
("The Why," p. 150)

What?
Current Practices at the school and district level:

1. Pre-service teachers attend new-teacher orientation with content coordinators, literacy coaches, and mentor teachers. ('The What," p. 13)

How? Moving Forward
Sims Elementary School will:

1. Partner with 1 or more local universities (i.e., Georgia State University, University of Georgia, Atlanta Metropolitan State College, etc.) to dialogue about efforts needed to increase classroom-ready teachers at Sims Elementary School
2. Increase the number of pre-service teachers learning at Sims Elementary School through internships and student teaching ("The How," p. 49)

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

Why?
According to the National Association of Education in English, one of the seven ways to support literacy instruction is to continuously provide opportunities for teachers to develop an understanding of how students learn to read, how students learn to read to learn, and effective reading instruction practices. This practice of providing continuous opportunities for teachers can be accomplished through the securing of a literacy coach ("The Why," p. 144). The International Reading Association suggests that literacy coaches have three specific roles:

1. Create and supervise long term professional development with continuity between theory and practice and assess the implementation of those methodologies.
2. Provide leadership for school-wide literacy program
3. Provide professional learning opportunities for teachers by instructing teachers on the implementation of the reading program ("The Why," 7.E p. 150)

What? Current practices
Sims Elementary School:

1. Encourages newly hired teachers to attend monthly meetings with mentor-teachers to analyze data, plan instruction, reflect upon current practices, and learn effective implementation strategies

2. Encourages all teachers to attend weekly faculty PLC meetings to discuss data, learn differentiated ways to teach, reflect upon current practices
3. Requires all teachers attend professional learning opportunities provided by the district.
4. Requires all teachers to meet with the instructional coach once a week to plan instruction and reflect upon current practices
5. All teachers attend trainings with the Response to Intervention Coach to learn about effective methods and strategies to use to help students who are having difficulty with reading.
6. Encourages all teachers to attend professional development sessions based on self-assessment and administrative walk-throughs ("The What," p. 13)

How? Moving Forward:

Sims Elementary School will:

1. Hire a literacy coach to provide on-going professional develop in reading instruction.
2. Secure partnership(s) with reading consultant(s) to increase teacher and support staff understanding of effective reading instruction methodologies.
3. Provide teachers, support staff, and/or administrators with opportunities to attend literacy related conferences.
4. Meet quarterly in grade-level and/or vertically aligned teams to analyze data, introduce new and/or review existing literacy instruction practices, provide support through the planning process.
5. Participate in on-going professional development about the effective use of assessment practices
6. Partner with one or more local universities and/or Metro RESA to offer coursework on reading instruction in an effort to increase the number of teachers with a reading endorsement
7. Provide intensive training on guided reading, use of level bookroom, and other essential components of effective reading instruction
8. Utilize peer-observations to model effective practices, reflect upon current practices, and support teachers through the coaching model of pre-conferencing, observation, and post-conferencing with reflection.
9. Utilize classroom observations (conducted by administrators and/or peer-teacher) to identify areas of growth and successes within reading and/or writing instruction.

("The How," p. 48-49)

V. Project Plan, Procedures, and Goals, Objectives, and Support

A, B, and C: Implementation Plan

Sims Elementary School's goals, objectives, and tasks are informed by the research and Building Blocks in the "What" and "Why" documents.

Goal 1: Increase student reading comprehension, fluency, and writing achievement for students ("The What," p. 10)	**Goal 2: Provide teachers and administrators with access to high quality professional learning in literacy instruction ("The Why," p.142)**	**Goal 3: Implement a literacy program that provides the components of effective reading instruction ("The Why," p. 64)**
Objective 1: Enlist members of community at large (universities, organizations, and agencies) to support literacy in the community ("The What," p.7) • Action 1: Establish relationships with local universities, families and the communities to work at school to improve student achievement via tutoring and mentoring • Action 2: Expand the literacy leadership team to include community members, parents, and teachers in all disciplines. • Action 3: Use social media to share school literacy goals with community at large		
Objective 2: Support teachers in providing literacy instruction across the curriculum ("The What," p. 7; "The Why," p. 32, 37) • Action 1: Increase writing time and coordinate a writing plan in all content areas • Action 2: Schedule disciplinary literacy in all content areas • Action 3: Develop and Implement an instructional program that aligns with CCGPS across content areas • Action 4: Provide classroom teachers with leveled libraries in classroom • Action 5: Provide ongoing professional learning to all teachers in reading strategies		
Objective 3: Provide direct and explicit literacy and writing instruction for students using instructional strategies ("The Why," p. 27, 31, 37, 44, 152) • Action 1: Provide complex texts appropriate to grade level and adjusted to the needs of individual students through a variety of resources (books, computers, e-readers) in classrooms and media center • Action 2: Provide ongoing professional learning on how to match readers to leveled texts • Actio3: Purchase interesting reading materials in order to allow students to select reading materials • Action 3: Provide professional learning in reading strategies in order to ensure that students increase Lexile levels over the course of each school year • Action 4: Create and implement a school-wide writing rubric (The How, p. 42) • Action 5: Provide professional learning to all teachers in the best practices in writing instruction ("The How," p. 42)		
Objective 4: Provide teachers with access to ongoing formative and summative assessments data to make instructional decisions and to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies used ("The What," p. 8; "The Why," p. 24, 36, 38)		

- Action 1: Use data to identify at risk students and provide appropriate intervention ("The How," p. 36)
- Action 2: Adjust instruction to provide intervention for students based on assessment data ("The How," p. 36)
- Action 3: Purchase any necessary assessment materials and train teachers to administer any new assessments, such as a formative writing assessment given multiple times per year

Objective 5: Provide on-going literacy-based professional learning for all staff ("The What," p. 13; "The Why," p. 19, 155)

- Action 1: Train teachers to integrate reading strategies in all content areas during instructional time
- Action 2: Train staff members in evidence based literacy strategies focusing on text comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary
- Action 3: Train teachers in how to provide differentiated instruction within content areas
- Action 4: Train teachers in how to match students to appropriate texts based on Lexile scores and assessment data
- Action 5: Monitor effectiveness of ongoing professional learning through reviewing lesson plans, conducting walkthroughs using a literacy checklist, and through analyzing student data

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**
GKIDS	1,3	GKIDS	1,3
ACCESS	1,2,3	ACCESS	1,2,3
SRI	1,2,3	SRI	1,2,3
iReady	1,2,3	iReady	1,2,3
Benchmarks	1,2,3		1,2,3
Ga Milestones	1,2,3	Georgia Milestone	1,2,3
		CogAT	1,2,3
		ITBS	1,2,3
Write Score	1,2,3	Write Score	1,2,3

D and E: Tiered Instruction and RTI Model

Sims Elementary School will provide literacy instruction in a tiered instruction protocol through a differentiation model. The model presented below includes writing and literacy blocks. In addition, literacy instruction will be provided across content areas.

Grade Level	**Kindergarten**	**First**	**Second**	**Third**	**Fourth**	**Fifth**

Tier Time	10:55-11:45	8:35-9:25	11:55-12:45	12:50-1:40	9:35-10:25	7:35-8:25
Tier 1	Content Blocks	Content Blocks	Content Blocks	Content Blocks	Content Blocks	Content Blocks
Tier 2	Time for Enrichment Groups (T.I.E Time)	Time for Enrichment Groups (T.I.E Time)	Time for Enrichment Groups (T.I.E Time)	Time for Enrichment Groups (T.I.E Time)	Time for Enrichment Groups (T.I.E Time)	Time for Enrichment Groups (T.I.E Time)
Tier 3	T.I. E and Content Blocks with Intervention Teacher	T.I. E and Content Blocks with Intervention Teacher	T.I. E and Content Blocks with Intervention Teacher	T.I. E and Content Blocks with Intervention Teacher	T.I.E and Content Blocks with Intervention Teacher	T.I. E and Content Blocks with Intervention Teacher
Tier 4	Intensive Skill Intervention	Intensive Skill Intervention	Intensive Skill Intervention	Intensive Skill Intervention	Intensive Skill Intervention	Intensive Skill Intervention

F: Inclusion of all Teachers and Students

Our School Literacy Plan will include all teachers, students, and grade levels at Sims Elementary School. All students will receive grade-level core literacy instruction and appropriate interventions.

G: Practices Currently in Place

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

Current practices in place at Sims Elementary School:

- Formative and summative assessments
- Informal assessments
- Classroom walkthroughs
- Learning targets posted in classroom
- Classroom observations
- Professional learning communities
- RTI process

H: Goals Funded with Other Sources

District funds will continue to pay for formative and summative assessments such as CRCT/Milestones, benchmarks, GKIDS, SRI, and STAR Early Literacy, 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.

I: Sample Schedule

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

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GRADE LEVEL	7:05 to 7:35	7:35 to 7:55	7:55 to 8:45	8:45 to 9:35	9:35 to 10:30	10:30 to 11:00	11:00 to 11:30	11:30 to 12:00	12:00 to 12:30	12:30 to 1:00	1:00 to 1:50	1:50 to 2:05	2:05 to 2:25
PREK	Morning Work/ Breakfast	PREK Curriculum 7:35 –9:35			PREK Curriculum *Wellness @9:45*	Lunch 10:25 – 10:55 Pre-K Curriculum				specials 12:10-12:55	Rest 1:00-1:30 PREK Curriculum	Reflection DLIQ 1:50-2:05	Dismiss
K	Morning Work/ Breakfast	Integrated Literacy 7:35 – 8:40	Numeracy 8:45-9:40		Wellness/Lunch 9:45-10:50	T.I.E Time 10:55-11:45	Read Aloud 11:50-12:05	*Specials 12:10-12:55*			Integrated Writing 1:00-1:55	Reflection DLIQ 1:55-2:05	Dismiss
GRADE 1	Morning Work/ Breakfast	Integrated Writing 7:35-8:30	T.I.E. Time 8:35-9:25		Integrated Literacy *9:30-10:20*	Specials 10:25-11:10	SCI/SS 11:15-11:40	Wellness/Lunch 11:45-12:40			Numeracy 12:45-1:45	Reflection DLIQ 1:50-2:05	Dismiss
GRADE 2	Morning Work/ Breakfast	Integrated Literacy 7:35 -8:35	Numeracy 8:40-9:10	Specials 9:15-10:00	Numeracy 10:05-10:50	Wellness/ Lunch 10:55– 11:50	T.I.E. Time 11:55-12:45				Integrated Writing 12:45-1:45	Reflection DLIQ 1:50-2:05	Dismiss
GRADE 3	Morning Work/ Breakfast	Specials 7:35 – 8:25	Numeracy 8:25-9:20	Integrated Writing 9:20-10:20	Wellness/Lunch 10:25– 11:30	Integrated Literacy 11:35 -12:45					T.I.E Time 12:50– 1:40	Reflection DLIQ 1:45-2:05	Dismiss
GRADE 4	Reflection DLIQ Morning work Breakfast	Rotation 1 7:35 – 9:35		T.I.E.TIME 9:35 – 10:25	Wellness/Lunch *10:30– 11:20*	Specials 11:25 12:10	Rotation 2 12:10 –2:10						Dismiss

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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
GKIDS	Kindergarten	Measure/monitor mastery of skills	CCGPS	Quarterly
Georgia Writing Assessment	3 and 5	Measure mastery of writing standards	Writing	1 time per year
Early STAR	K,1, and 2	Diagnostic	CC	3 times per year
SRI	3, 4, and 5	Universal Screener	Reading Fluency and Comprehension	3 times per year
CRCT/Milestones	3,4, and 5	CRCT/Milestones	CCGPS	1 time per year
ITBS	3 and 7	Norm-Reference Gifted Screening	All Content Areas	1 Time per year
CogAT	2 and 4	CogAT	CCGPS	1 time per year
Benchmarks	K-5	Formative	CCGPS	4 times a year
iReady	K-5	Diagnostic	CCGPS	monthly
Unit Assessment Tests	K-5	Mastery Guide Instructions	CCGPS	Weekly/Bi Weekly
Phonological Awareness, Letter Name Correspondence, Letter Sound Correspondence	K-1	Diagnostic	Phonological Awareness Skills, Letter Names and Letter Sounds	1 time per year

B. Comparison of Current Assessments to SRCL Assessments

Sims will continue to follow the district protocol for administering assessments. Sims will also continue to use data from iReady to determine student intervention needs on a school level. As a Striving Reader Comprehensive Literacy School, we would add DIBELS Next. DIBELS Next will be administered three times per school year and student progress will be tracked. Data will be used to determine instruction for students.

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.

Assessment	Grade Level Assessed	Persons Responsible	Frequency
DIBELS Next	**1-5**	**Classroom teachers**	**3 times per year**
Early STAR	K, 1, 2	Classroom teachers	3 times per year
Phonological Awareness, Letter Name Correspondence, Letter Sound Correspondence	K-1	Replace with DIBELS Next	
iReady	K-5	Classroom teachers	3 times per year
Unit Assessments	K-5	Classroom teachers	Ongoing
SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory)	3-5	Classroom teachers	3 times per year
Formative Writing Assessment	**2-5**	**Classroom teachers**	**3 times per year**

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

No assessments will be discontinued as we implement the Striving Readers Critical Literacy grant. We will continue to implement universal screeners (e.g. SRI) to monitor progress of students.

E. Professional Learning for Teachers for Assessment Implementation

Teachers will need professional learning on the DIBELS Next. 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 on SRI by a Scholastic consultant, and all schools will receive additional on-site support. We will use the online training options for DIBELS Next, which will be redelivered at each school. Refresher training will be provided for teachers on administering diagnostic test to insure fidelity. Teachers will be trained to use the data to create differentiated lessons in the classroom. Teachers will also receive training on how to analyze the data provided by the formative writing assessment and how to adjust lessons to meet the needs identified by the assessment.

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 Title Parent Meeting, school website, 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

Data from universal screeners will be analyzed three times a year to identify areas of instruction needed by students (phonological awareness, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, word identification, etc.) Teams of teachers will administer DIBELS Next and other formative and summative assessments. All assessments and protocols will be overseen by the school testing coordinator in conjunction with the district testing director.

Results from student assessment data will be used for the following purposes:

- Establish learning goals for students
- Identify students' strengths and weaknesses so that grouping can be determined for targeted instruction
- Evaluate effectiveness of the instruction in meeting the goals for each student so that instruction can be adjusted accordingly
- Identify areas of need for professional learning opportunities
- Inform process of intervention

("The Why," p. 96)

VII. 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 (specific focus on student interests) for
- classrooms and media center
- Updated reading materials 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
- Stipends for extended day and summer programs
- Online databases to support and enhance student research
- Core literacy instructional program materials for K-5
- Professional learning materials for staff
- Professional learning for support staff (paraprofessionals, etc.) on how to use intervention materials and instructional strategies to address student needs

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

Sims Elementary School has the following resources that are shared within the school:

- Leveled readers
- 2 flip cameras
- Document cameras
- Computer lab with 26 computers

- iPads (217 iPads)
- Laptops (30 teacher)
- Laptop cart (19 computers designated for 5th grade classrooms)
- Response Clickers
- Internet access
- Storytown strategic intervention materials
- Science lab kits
- Listening centers
- Software

D. Library Resources

- 15,723 books in the media center
- 20 years average age of books in the media center
- 830 videos in the media center
- Pebble Go, TumbleBooks-online databases available to students
- 17 of magazine subscriptions
- 5 computers in media center
- 1 projector 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

- Smartboard
- Projector
- Storytown literacy resources and leveled readers
- Laptops (20 student shared laptops for 4th grade)
- Boom boxes
- Desktop computers (average of 4 computers per classroom)
- Access to some electronic books

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—ereaders, electronic texts	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	District funds will be used to pay for extended day personnel

	provide literacy camps during non-school times	related to the regular activities of the school

I. Explanation of Proposed Technology

We need 21st century technology in our classrooms to help prepare our student to compete in a global society. We need access to applications and software so our students will be able to engage in digital activities. The SRCL funding will allow Sims to be able to integrate writing in disciplinary literacy. SRCL funding will also allow Sims to purchase materials, K-5 resources and other needed components for professional learning. Increased access to technology will also allow teachers to provide multiple modes of text through technology resources and provide multiples means of action and engagement.

VIII. Professional Learning Strategies

A. Past Professional Learning

Topic/Focus	Time Frame	Participants	Facilitator/Provider	Delivery Format
AVID Weekly/ Advanced ED	August 2013	All certified teachers	AVID onsite Coordinator/ Principal	Small group interaction and discussion
TKES Orientation Video, Social Studies and Math PLC	August 2013	All certified teachers	Administrative Team	Small group interaction and discussion
Advanced Ed and TKES Familiarization	September 2013	All certified teachers	Administrative Team	Small group interaction and discussion
Costa Critical Questioning	November 2013	All certified teachers	AVID onsite Coordinator	Small group interaction and discussion
Book Study/TKES Familiarization/ Differentiated Instruction	December 2013	All certified teachers	Administrative Team/ RCPS Professional Learning Staff	Small group interaction and discussion
CRCT Testing	April 2014	All certified teachers	Administrative Team	Small group interaction and discussion
Benchmark 3 Review and Data Teams	April 2014	All certified teachers	RCPS Professional Learning Staff	Small group interaction and discussion
Cultural Competency	April 2014	All certified teachers	School Counselor	Small group interaction and discussion

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
WICOR-izing Lesson Plans	4 weeks	One teacher per grade level	AVID District Director	Small group during after school PLCs

Office 365	1 week	All certified teachers and support staff	Digital Learning Specialist	After School PLCs
My Big Campus	1 week	All certified teachers and support staff	Digital Learning Specialist	Small group interaction and discussion
SLDS	1 week	All Certified teachers	Administrative Team	Small group interaction and discussion
Time to Teach	3 weeks	All certified teachers and support staff	RCPS Staff	Small group during after school PLCs
Differentiated Instruction	3 weeks	All certified teachers	RCPS Professional Learning Staff	Small group during after school PLCs
Learning Reimagined	Weekly	All certified teachers	Administrative Team	Small group interaction and discussion
Grade Book	1 day	All certified teachers	Digital Learning Specialist	Small group interaction and discussion
SchoolNet Reports	1 day	All certified teachers	Administrative/Digital Learning Specialist	Small group interaction and discussion
Reporting and Disaggregating data in School Net	2 weeks	All certified teachers	Administrative Team/ Digital Learning Specialist	Small group interaction and discussion
iPad training	1 day	All certified teachers	Digital Learning Specialist	Small group interaction and discussion
iReady Training	1 week	All certified teachers	Digital Learning Specialist	Small group interaction and discussion

D. Professional Learning Needs

- Understanding Lexile scores
- Core literacy program
- Interpreting and using assessment data
- Differentiating instruction
- Writing across the curriculum
- Vertical alignment
- Using data to inform instructional decisions and explicit teaching

- Selecting appropriate texts appropriate for instruction

E. Evaluation of Professional Learning

- Participants provide feedback on PL sessions via a 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
DIBELS NEXT training	Provide teachers and administrators with access to high quality professional learning in literacy instruction ("The Why," p.142)	2,3
Writing in the Content Areas	Increase student reading comprehension, fluency, and writing achievement for students ("The What," p. 10)	2, 3,5
Text Complexity	• Increase student reading comprehension, fluency, and writing achievement for students ("The What," p. 10) • Implement a literacy program that provides the components of effective reading instruction ("The Why," p. 64)	1,2,3,4,5
Differentiated Instruction/ Interventions For RTI Tiers	• Increase student reading comprehension, fluency, and writing achievement for students ("The What," p. 10) • Implement a literacy program that provides the components of effective reading instruction ("The Why," p. 64)	3,4,5

Engagement Strategies	Provide teachers and administrators with access to high quality professional learning in literacy instruction ("The Why," p.142)	1,3,5
Strategies for Teaching Writing	Increase student reading comprehension, fluency, and writing achievement for students ("The What," p. 10)	2,3,5
Use of Lexiles in Classroom Instruction	• Provide teachers and administrators with access to high quality professional learning in literacy instruction ("The Why," p.142) • Implement a literacy program that provides the components of effective reading instruction ("The Why," p. 64)	2,3,4,5
Technology in the Classroom	• Implement a literacy program that provides the components of effective reading instruction ("The Why," p. 64) • Provide teachers and administrators with access to high quality professional learning in literacy instruction ("The Why," p.142)	2,3,5

The goals and objectives from the School Literacy Plan were used to develop the Professional Learning Plan.

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.

IX: Sims' Sustainability Plan

While Sims created its literacy plan, careful thought was given to aligning our literacy goals with the school's strategic plan and current School Improvement Plan. Our focus as we developed our literacy plan was centered on building content knowledge through reading complex nonfiction; reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from literary and informational text, and incorporating technology to promote engagement, collaboration, and publishing of writing. While developing our literacy plan, sustainability was at the forefront of our minds.

A. Clear Plan for Extending Assessment Protocols

Formative and summative assessments will continue to be administered beyond the grant period through district funding. The continuation of the universal screener for the Scholastic Reading Inventory will require only a yearly maintenance fee. Grant funding will be used to offset this fee, but funding will be continued through a combination of Title 1 and district funds for year 6 and beyond. At the conclusion of the grant, we will continue funding of benchmarks through local funding. We will seek a combination of funding sources to provide the subscription for SRI, including local funding (both school and district) as well as Title 1 funding.

B. Plan for Developing Community Partnerships and/or Other Sources to Assist With Funding

Sims actively seeks the support of the greater community to support learning at our school, forming partnerships with local businesses and community organizations. The work of our Parent Liaison reaches beyond our schools to engage families. We will seek out additional grants in order to sustain our literacy plan beyond the funding of the Striving Readers Grant.

C-F. Extending the Training to New Teachers and Maintaining Technology

Sims' teachers and administrators will receive professional development by way of district personnel and consultants. We will use the train the trainer model. The literacy team members and selected teachers will be responsible for training new staff on these approaches. Additionally, we will have master teachers who will model instructional practices for new teachers.

Sims 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.

Sustaining the Literacy Plan

We will review the goals and expectations of the grant, as well as the School Literacy Plan, annually with all staff. We will continue to utilize formative and summative assess our students' literacy levels and growth through the use of DIBELS Next, benchmarks, SRI, and the Milestones. 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 out of our Title I and school-level budgets to replace

literacy resources as needed. We will analyze student data, teacher feedback, and TKES observations to finalize which materials and professional learning are not having the desired effectiveness on student learning.

G. Expanding the Lessons Learned through the SRCL Grant

By continuing to be active members of the district collaboratives, Sims will be able to expand the lessons learned through the SCRL grant by sharing struggles and successes with educators throughout our district. Through quarterly meetings with the District Literacy Team, we will share best practices with all schools in the district, not just those that receive the SRCL grant. We will encourage our teachers to present at district professional learning days, during New Teacher Orientation, and at district collaboratives. By videotaping master teachers, we will be able to share the instructional strategies implemented using SRCL grant funds to all schools in the district.

X. Budget Summary

As a result of a comprehensive review of literacy efforts at Sims Elementary 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 551 and an estimated award of $425 per student, the total funds received over a five year time frame are anticipated at $234,175.

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

Curriculum Needs: 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
- Consumable materials
- Print materials such as informational texts, graphic novels, novels, Common Core aligned periodicals (e.g. *Time for Kids* and *Scholastic News*) and non-print literacy materials for media center to meet needs of Common Core
- Purchase of a formative writing assessment and to provide training for teachers to implement appropriate writing instruction based on identified student need

Professional Learning Needs: 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
- Instructional materials for training
- Stipends for off-contract training
- Funding for substitutes
- Reading Endorsements for identified teachers

Response to Intervention: 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—DIBELS Next
- Intervention resources, materials, and programs

- Progress monitoring tools

Personnel Needs: 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.

- 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: 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 Sims Elementary School to provide students with access to technology to support and enhance literacy instruction and to increase student engagement.

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

Literacy Events: Funding will be used to promote literacy within our community through school wide literacy events. Materials will be purchased to increase student motivation and to promote family literacy events.