

WV Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade Level Reading
Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy
2017-2018 Campaign Partner Grant Request for Proposals
WV Leaders of Literacy: Campaign for Grade Level Reading
Transformative System of Support for Early Literacy

Project Information		
Name of Project: Candidate/Teacher Literacy Collaborative for Improving Letter/Sound Recognition Instruction		
Indicate the level of award requested for this project:		
X Up to \$25,000		
Organization: Shepherd University		Submission Date: 7/13/2017
Contact and Position: LeAnn Johnson		
Email: LJohnson@shepherd.edu		
Persons and/or Organizations Contributing to this Plan		
Name	Email	Position
LeAnn Johnson	ljohnson@Shepherd.edu	Director of Teacher Education
Margaret Kursey	mkursey@k12.wv.us	Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction, Berkeley County Schools
Melissa Hollen	mhollen@k12.wv.us	Director of Federal Programs, Berkeley County Schools
Beverly Hoffmaster	bhoffmas@k12.wv.us	Elementary Instructional Specialist K-2, Berkeley County Schools
Terresa Kepner	tfontana@shepherd.edu	Early Education Specialization Coordinator

Section Two (for Proposals of up to \$25,000)

Name of Project:

Candidate/Teacher Literacy Collaborative for Improving Letter/Sound Recognition Instruction

Dates/timespan for project: Fall, 2017 and Spring 2018 Semesters

Description of Proposed Project:

Internationally recognized workshop presenter, Katie Garner, will be brought in to conduct two 1-day workshops for elementary and early education teacher candidates and their cooperating teachers (<http://thesecretstories.com>).

During the fall workshop, teacher candidates and cooperating teachers will be introduced to a

variety of brain based multi-modal teaching tools for transforming the reading and writing abilities of early grade learners. These methods target the interpretation of phonetic patterns in simultaneous visual, auditory and kinesthetic formats. By providing learners with sound/symbol connections through multiple pathways, neural-connections, in personally relevant and familiar frameworks, abstract letter/sound skills are more easily accessed by learners.

Following the initial workshop, teacher candidates will collaboratively craft follow-up lessons with their cooperating teachers that incorporate the content from the workshop in meeting the literacy learning needs of their young students.

University supervisors will observe and evaluate a cross section of these lessons. Post observation conferences will focus on analysis of student learning data demonstrating the effectiveness of teaching.

A second workshop held in the spring semester, will extend learning from the previous workshop as teacher candidates and their cooperating teachers deepen their understanding of the reciprocal nature of sound-to-symbol and symbol-to-sound relationships for both reading and writing and engaging in critical thinking as they encourage young learners to make diagnostic choices to address exceptions to phonics rules in transforming daily reading and writing instruction.

As with the fall workshop, follow-up collaborative application, observations, and analysis of student learning data will take place. Additionally, teacher candidates will record their teaching for real-time self-analysis of their development as high quality teachers who can meet the needs of diverse learners.

As a result of the training and follow-up application, both teachers and teacher candidates will gain the knowledge and skills needed to deliver effective instruction that will improve the phonics skills of young learners in both reading and writing.

Participating cooperating teachers, will be eligible to enroll in EDPD 699, a graduate level special topics option that requires application of content learned in a professional development setting to lessons with PreK-third grade students. Credit towards certification will be provided for enrolled teachers who work with a Shepherd University teacher candidate in a field setting as they apply content from the workshops to daily lessons with students. Progress monitoring of student learning on specified standards-based objectives will be a required component of these lessons as will self-analysis of instructional quality.

Narrative of the intended audience:

More than two decades of research demonstrates that the greatest impact on student achievement is teacher quality (Highower, et. al., 2011; Rice, 2003). This project will ensure that PreK to Third Grade students have high quality teachers who have a deep understanding of how the brain works in developing critical phonics skills. Training that leads to quality instruction will not only address already certified teachers but will focus on ensuring that teacher candidates placed in those teachers' classrooms will be well equipped to provide instruction that will allow young learners to grow as readers and writers as they crack the code of written language.

Recent policy 5100 testing changes address concerns about teacher candidates' knowledge of both content and pedagogy when working in our public school classrooms. However, simply requiring teacher candidates to pass more PRAXIS tests at an earlier point in their training does not ensure that they know how to implement their knowledge of literacy with actual students. Additionally, conversations about potential policy changes are now including the potential for mandating experiences in collaboratively taught settings.

This project will provide training in brain-based literacy methods that will address collaborative

pairings of teacher candidates with experienced PreK to 3rd grade classroom teachers to ensure that instruction delivered to PreK-3rd grade students is effectively implemented in age appropriate ways for increasing student learning. Because Berkeley County has had previous training sessions with the same presenter, increases in teacher candidate and teacher skills will blend seamlessly with current reading initiatives for maximum learning in PreK to 3rd grade.

Cooperating County School District:

Berkeley County Public Schools has previously held trainings with this presenter and endorses the methods to be taught as effective for learners in their PreK to third grade classrooms. Consequently, instruction provided in the proposed workshops will seamlessly fit into the current literacy initiatives in area primary schools.

Collaboration with County:

Berkeley County's READS 2020 Literacy Grant Instruction Goal 1 is to annually increase the percentage of children reading proficiently by the end of third grade. One of the strategies under this goal is to conduct professional development trainings for Pre K – 3rd grade teachers on grade level specific foundational reading, writing, and formative assessment. This grant would benefit the county's cooperating teachers and future teachers by providing training in the area of phonics instruction. This training would enhance the county's core reading instruction by supplementing the phonics component with this multi-modal, brain-based bag of teaching tools. Also, it will transform the reading and writing abilities of early grade learners, especially struggling readers.

Due to its location, Shepherd University places teacher candidates in classrooms in four states (West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania). However, despite these many options, the majority of elementary teacher candidates complete their field experiences in Berkeley County because of its commitment to participating in the development of new teachers. Margaret Kursey, Berkeley County Deputy Superintendent is an active member of Shepherd's Education Program Advisory Committee. Paula Hoffman, and Betty Anne Powell who oversee university placements in designated schools throughout Berkeley County meet and communicate regularly with Shepherd's Director of Teacher Education, LeAnn Johnson, and Field Placement Coordinator, Helen Baker.

Additionally, Shepherd University is dedicated to strong inservice and preservice professional development options that engage teachers and teacher candidates alike.

During the 2014-15 school year Shepherd University conducted an Improving Teacher Quality Grant in the area of elementary writing in Berkeley County. This year-long project provided intensive training for primary grade teachers in Writers Workshop using the Lucy Caulkins Writing Curriculum. Parallel instruction was provided to teacher candidates who were then paired with trained cooperating teachers. Improved writing skills and improved knowledge of writing pedagogy in teacher/teacher candidate collaborative pairs resulted in improved writing instruction for young students. This continues to play an active role in writing instruction in the county and to the writing pedagogy courses at Shepherd.

The annual Literacy Leaders Conference held on campus each spring draws an average of 165 teachers and teacher candidates with significant numbers of Berkeley County teachers coming as both participants and workshop presenters. Additionally, the KDP Education Honor Society hosts a professional development day each semester in which master teachers, many from Berkeley County, are brought on campus to provide a series of workshops for teacher candidates. The elementary program, requires all teacher candidates to engage in at least one professional development activity each semester to augment the training they receive in their regular coursework and to emphasize the importance of continuous engagement in professional development as professionals.

The ongoing relationship and strong connections between the university and the county serve the

county by providing new teachers each year who are not only well prepared as educators, but who also have experience with and knowledge of the literacy initiatives of Berkeley County. This is one reason why Berkeley County regularly seeks Shepherd graduates to fill openings for teachers each year. Positive interactions between teachers and teacher candidates during their education preparation at Shepherd allows new teachers to seamlessly become part of school teams right from the start.

Data used to necessitate the proposed project:

PreK-Third Grade Student Data

The total percentage of kindergarten children entering school at the Developing, At Standard, or Above Standard level on the Early Learning System was only 14.50% for phonics and word recognition and 16.83% for phonological awareness. Additionally, according to the WVGSA, the percentage of children reading proficiently by the end of 3rd grade only increased by 3% from 48% in 2014-2015 to 51% in 2015-2016. The county goal is to increase the percentage of students who reach reading proficiency by third grade 5% each year. While improving, unfortunately, this data shows that Berkeley County did not meet the goal. Consequently, data definitely demonstrates a need for focusing on foundational reading skills, especially in the area of phonics instruction.

Teacher Candidate Data

A strong sequence of coursework, extensive field placement experiences with dedicated facilitating teachers, and the addition of a variety of professional development options that present teacher candidates with content beyond that typically covered in class has led to a tradition of highly qualified graduates. Data on student teacher preparation indicates that Shepherd early and elementary education teacher candidates exhibit strong literacy content knowledge as shown by passing scores on the applicable Praxis Content Tests (See Tables 1 and 2). Furthermore, instructional skills as measured by first submission (without feedback or revision) of the new Teacher Performance Assessment done during student teaching shows that Shepherd Teacher Candidates have strong ability to translate this knowledge to actual performance (See table 3).

**Table 1 Early Education--155
Passing Score**

	Cohort Size	n	Mean 1st Attempt Score	Difference Between Passing and Mean Score	Mean Attempts to Pass
Fall 16	1	1	200	45	1
Spring 16	3	3	179	24	1
Fall 15	3	3	181	26	1
	7	7	186.67	31.67	1

Table 2 Elementary Education Literacy Content Tests

Cohort Size	n	Mean 1st Attempt Score	Difference Between Passing and Mean Score	Mean Attempts to Pass
-------------	---	------------------------	---	-----------------------

Elementary ELA--157 Passing Score

Fall 16	15	8	169	12	1.13
Spring 16	17	16	169	12	1.33
Fall 15	11	10	170	13	1.1
	43	34	169.33	12.33	1.19

Elementary Teaching Reading--Passing Score 162

Fall 16	15	5	177	15	1
Spring 16	17	16	176	14	1
Fall 15	11	8	174	12	1
	43	29	175.67	13.67	1

Cohort size differs from the number of students who took the content test. Prior to Fall, 2017, these tests were not required for student teaching or program completion. Consequently, out of state students often opted to take alternative tests required by their respective states.

Table 3: Elementary Education Teacher Candidate WV Teacher Performance Assessment (WVTPA)

		Mean Scores—First Attempt Elementary		Mean Scores—First Attempt Early Ed	
		Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2016	Spring 2017
Task 1	Implications of Contextual Factors	2.31	2.21	2.5	4
	Implications of Classroom Factors	2.25	2.74	2	3.5
	Implications of Content Factors	2.25	2.11	2	3.25
	Implications of Individual Student Factors	2.06	2.31	2	5
Task 2	Big Idea or Core Principle	2.25	2.68	2.5	4
	Standards	2.25	2.63	2	3.5
	Learning Objectives	2	2.32	2.5	3.75
	Anticipated Student Challenges	2.25	2.37	3	3.5
Task 3	Alignment with Learning Objectives	2.12	2.84	3	3.5
	Assessment Criteria/ Technical Soundness	1.75	2.42	2	3.25
	Variety of Assessments	2.12	2.68	2.5	3.25
Task 4	Planning Instruction	2.06	2.47	3	3.5
	Consultation	NA	3.21	NA	4
	Instructional Strategies	1.75	2.53	3	3.25
	Rationale for Best Practice	1.75	2.42	3	3.5
	Resources and Materials	1.93	2.68	2	3.5
	Differentiated Instruction	1.75	NA	2.5	NA

Task 5	Classroom Set-up and Organization	3.12	2.95	3	4
	Classroom and Behavior Management	3	3.05	3	3.5
	Flexibility	2.87	2.89	3	4
	Questioning Strategies	2.68	2.84	2.5	3.25
	Student Engagement	2.81	2.89	3	3.25
	Academic Language	2.56	2.84	3	3.5
	Quality of the Evidence to Support Narrative and Reflection	2.31	2.89	3	3
Task 6	Clarity and Representation of Evidence	2.56	2.95	2	3.75
	Interpretation of Data	2.68	2.79	2.5	3
	Evidence of Impact	2.75	2.63	3	2.75
Task 7	Insights on Teaching and Learning	1.81	2.53	2.5	2.5
	Implications for Future Teaching	2.06	2.37	3	3
	Professional Growth	1.87	2.37	2.5	3
	Professional Collaborative Practice	2.75	2.79	3	3.25

Each element was scored on a 4 point rubric as follows:

- 1 = Unsatisfactory
- 2 = Emerging
- 3 = Accomplished
- 4 = Distinguished

As can be seen from these tables, all student teachers for the past three semesters attempting the Elementary Teaching Reading and Early Education Content tests met state standards on the first attempt. While 1 or 2 elementary candidates required a second attempt to pass the elementary English Language Arts Content Test, the mean score, which included scores of those who did not pass until a second attempt, is more than 12 points above the required passing score.

The WVTPA was developed by a consortium of WV universities to meet Policy 5100 requirements for a teacher performance assessment. It involves 7 linked tasks that rate ability to plan and implement instruction that takes into account both contextual factors and student needs to demonstrate improved learning outcomes of knowledge and skills represented by appropriate state standards. Improvements between the first and second administrations of this assessment reflect improvements in clarification of language in the rubrics as the instrument is still under development. As with the WV teacher evaluation, first year teachers are expected to score at least a 2, emerging, on this performance assessment. As can be seen from these scores, Shepherd Elementary Candidates exceed this expectation.

Shepherd is equally dedicated to providing professional development options for practicing teachers. Throughout the year, a variety of workshops with follow up application assignments are offered to teachers through our graduate school's continuing education program. For example, between 50-65 teachers on average who attend the annual Literacy Leaders Conference sign up for EDPD 699, Conference Applications to earn 3 graduate credits for recertification. The follow up assignments require teachers to apply conference learning to their role in the school for improved student learning. Excellence in the follow up application required in this class, often leads to direct invitations to submit a workshop proposal for the subsequent year's conference. Berkeley County teachers have been well-represented in these invitations with ten out of 27 workshops being presented by Berkeley County teachers alone in 2017.

The proposed Literacy Workshops in this grant will continue the dedication to professional development and application of knowledge gained to field placements in providing quality instruction for young learners.

Impact of Project on WV Leaders of Literacy Campaign for Grade Level Reading Component, High-Quality Instruction:

Currently, classrooms throughout Berkeley County Schools utilize the K-5 Elementary Literacy Model. This model is driven by Guided Reading Practices that focus on meeting students at their instructional level in small groups. The needs of students at or above grade level are easily met. However, the challenge for all classroom teachers are the students who are struggling below grade level. These students require intensive supplemental and personalized instruction to fill gaps in literacy development. For the Guided Reading Model to be an effective practice, educators must have a familiarity with strategies to address needs in phonemic awareness and phonics decoding, both covered through Garner's training.

An inability to decode has been identified as a major road block to student development as readers. Given that, it is important to note that children don't intrinsically develop decoding skills. They must be given the appropriate strategies to do so. According to McNamara (2009):

Regardless of the locus of the reading problems, teaching strategies is one of the most effective means of helping students to overcome them. Strategy instruction across a variety of domains builds on the notion that less skilled students should learn strategies that mimic those exhibited by skilled students or that compensate for processes exhibited by skilled students. The underlying assumption is that the processes or skills induced by the strategies become more automatic with practice. Strategies provide the means to tackle complex problems in more efficient ways and, with practice, the strategies lead to skills that become automatic and quick over time.

The training provided by Katie Garner would allow teachers to acquire a bank of proven strategies to use with struggling and developing readers. The impact of teaching these strategies, when carried out systematically and intentionally, can be immeasurable. By providing students with these strategies, teachers are filling in the gaps presented at the developing K-2 level in order to develop proficient readers by grade 3. Without filling in learning gaps in phonics and decoding, it is unlikely that a child will develop into a successful reader by third grade.

Intended Impact of the Proposed Project:

This proposal seeks to focus on 20 teacher/teacher candidate pairs during the 2017-2018 school year resulting in 40 individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to positively impact student learning.

Teacher candidates will be enrolled in a literacy pedagogy course at Shepherd University in either the Elementary (k-5th grade certification) or Early (PreK-K certification) programs. These pedagogy courses require a minimum of 50 hours in a classroom for PreK to third grade students under the direction of an experienced classroom teacher and university supervisor.

If these classrooms average 18 students each, 360 young learners will be impacted by the high quality literacy instruction they will receive.

Assessment of Outcomes:

A variety of assessments will be used to gauge effectiveness of the workshops.

For teacher candidates:

- Lesson plans incorporating the trained methods will be assessed using rubrics developed by the course instructor to ensure the proper application of methods to integrated literacy lessons.
- Implementation of methods will be assessed by facilitating teachers and the university supervisor during formal observations using Shepherd's ST-11 teacher observation instrument.

For teachers:

- Teachers will be asked to complete a survey indicating the frequency that the workshop methods were incorporated into regular instruction and their perceptions as to its value for improving literacy skills for both reading and writing in young students.

For students:

- Candidate developed assessment built into each lesson will result in regular monitoring of student application of phonics principles to reading and/or writing to guide data-based instructional decision making.
- STAR testing already in place in first-third grade classrooms and administered periodically throughout the year will further document student growth in phonics and student growth in Lexile level and reading ability.
- Checklists aligned to the WV Early Learning Standards will be used to periodically document growth in emerging phonemic awareness and phonics skills for emergent readers.

Sustainability:

A great deal of research shows that individual workshops rarely result in substantial and continued changes in the way teachers teach. However, when systems are in place to immediately implement new strategies, provide on-going support, and have opportunities to problem-solve with others, teachers sustain changes in their practice significantly more (Lieberman, 1995). The same is true with the development of teacher candidates. Hence, Shepherd's conceptual framework of Teacher as Reflective problem Solver (Shepherd, 2017) which creates an action, interpretation, critical reflection cycle between campus courses and field placements where teacher candidates are supported in peer dyads, receive daily feedback from cooperating teachers, and are regularly observed and engaged in critical reflection by university supervisors as 'just learned' practices are implemented.

Consequently, while the actual proposed workshops are limited in scope, they are being embedded in a supportive framework that will maximize application and ensure the kind of deep understanding that leads to mastery and continued use of workshop content by both teacher candidates and teachers (Johnson, Mercado, & Spencer, in press).

With mastery and fluent application, these practices will then be sustained well beyond the immediate school year. Furthermore, because Berkeley County fully supports the strategies to be taught by Katie Garner, current teachers and newly graduated teachers who are hired by the county will have county-wide support beyond the geographical boundaries of the schools and teachers targeted for the training. In addition, because the methods of focus in the workshop are not curriculum specific, they can be incorporated into instruction even if specific curricular programs change over time.

Finally, a Secret Stories teacher kit will be purchased for each of the participating classrooms to augment those kits already being used in the county and three kits will be purchased for continued use in training future teacher candidates at Shepherd University. Classroom kits will become the property of Berkeley County schools for continued use in subsequent years. The university kits will become the property of the Shepherd University Department of Education. One each will be provided to the Elementary Specialization Coordinator and Early Education Specialization Coordinator for use in each respective program in subsequent years. The third copy will be directly available to teacher candidates through the department media lab.

Budget

Item and Description	In-Kind (Not required)	Amount
Workshop Cost \$1850 per workshop		3,700
Presenter Travel (Flight, Hotel, Rental Car, Food) \$895 per workshop		1,790
Secret Stories Teacher Kit 23 x \$95		2,185
Substitute Teachers 40 X 2 days = 80 Days at \$150 per day		12,000
Total Amount Requested		19,675

References

Blevins, Wiley W. (2016) *A Fresh Look at Phonics, Grades K-2: Common Causes of Failure and 7 Ingredients for Success*, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Hightower, A.M., Delgado, R.C., Lloyd, S.C., Wittenstein, R., Sellers, K. and Swanson, C.B. (2011). *Improving Student Learning by Supporting Quality Teaching: Key Issues, Effective Strategies*. Education Week, Editorial Projects in Education, Bethesda, MD. Retrieved from www.edweek.org July 5, 2017.

Johnson, L.A., Mercado, R., & Spencer, K. (in press). Dig Deep Professional Development from Project-Based Exploration and Classroom Application of Reading Strategies for Teacher Candidates. *The Reading Professor Journal*, International Literacy Association

Lieberman, A. 1995. "Practices that Support Teacher Development." *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 76(8) 591-596.

McNamara, D. (2009, Spring). The Importance of Teaching Reading Strategies. Perspectives on Language and Literacy. *The International Dyslexia Association Publication*.

Rice, J.K. (2003) *Teacher Quality: Understanding the Effectiveness of Teacher Attributes*. Economic Policy Institute, Washington, DC.

Shepherd University (1987). *Teacher as Reflective Problem Solver*, Retrieved July 9, 2017 from <http://www.shepherd.edu/education/about-the-teacher-education-program>