

# Louisiana Believes

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## Real-time Early Access to Literacy

Education Stabilization Fund  
Rethink Education Models (ESF-REM) Grant

Overview for School Systems  
November 2020

# Agenda

- Current Landscape of Early Literacy
- REAL Program Overview
- Funding Model
- School System Role in Implementation
- Timeline



# Current Landscape of Early Literacy

Every day in Louisiana, educators are committed to making sure that all students and schools have the opportunity to grow and thrive.

By 2025, Louisiana's K-12 education system will...



ensure students are ready for the next level of study,



give all students access to the same opportunities as their peers across the country,



require comprehensive support for struggling schools and groups of students, and



provide families and communities with an accurate picture of school, center, and system performance and quality.

# Importance of Early Literacy

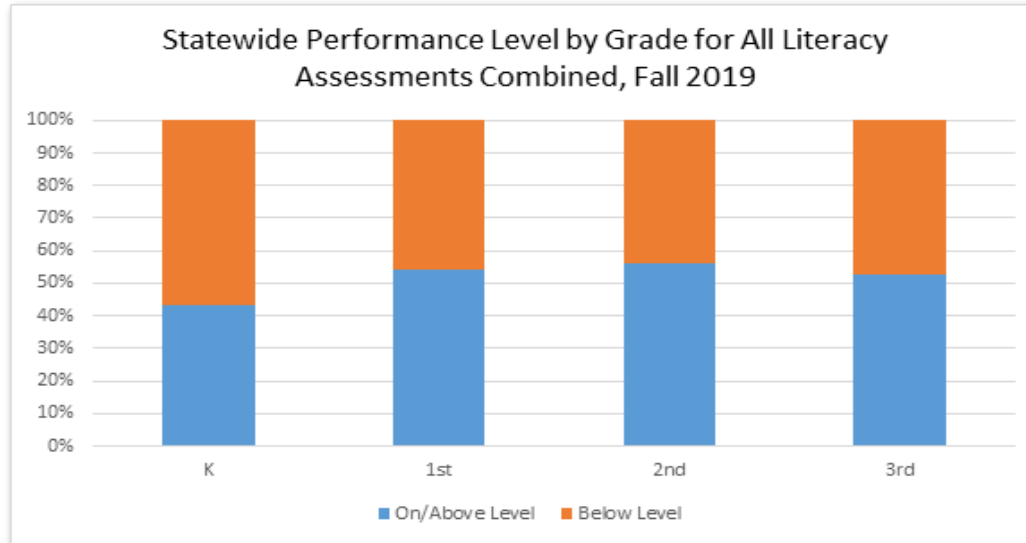
## **The need to prioritize early literacy is significant.**

- Early literacy is a critical predictor of educational and lifelong success.
- Struggling with early literacy puts students at a greater risk of future academic struggles including dropping out of school and incarceration.
- Research shows that only 1 in 10 students who are behind in reading at the end of first grade will catch up to their peers later on.

## **The Coronavirus pandemic has exacerbated existing gaps in early literacy.**

# Current Reading Data in Louisiana

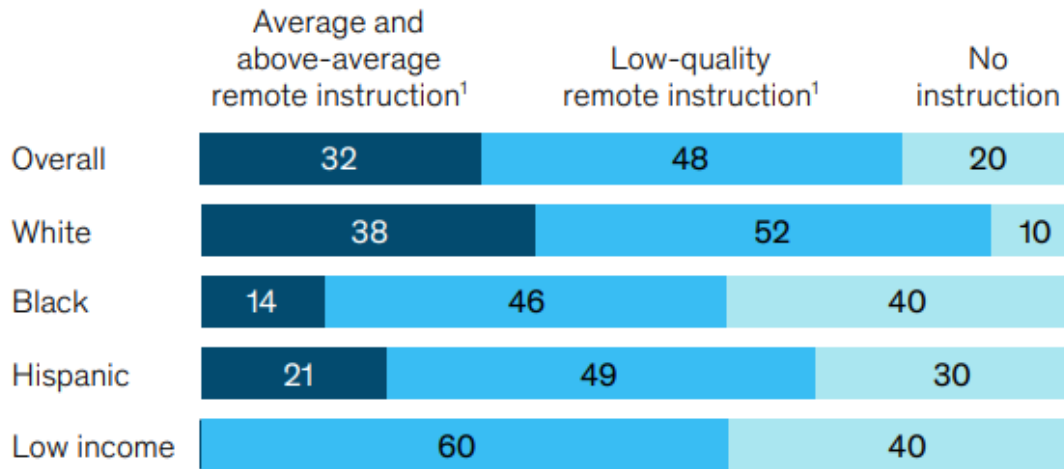
Data from the [Fall 2019 Reading Report](#) show that 43.2% of kindergarten students scored “On or Above Benchmark” on the literacy screener at the start of the year. Additionally, only 54.2% of first graders, 55.8% of second graders, and 52.8% of third graders scored at this same level.



# Quality of Remote Instruction

*Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students are at a higher risk of not receiving remote instruction of average or above quality.*

**Quality level of remote instruction, % of K–12 students**



(Dorn, Hancock, Sarakatsannis, & Viruleg, 2020)

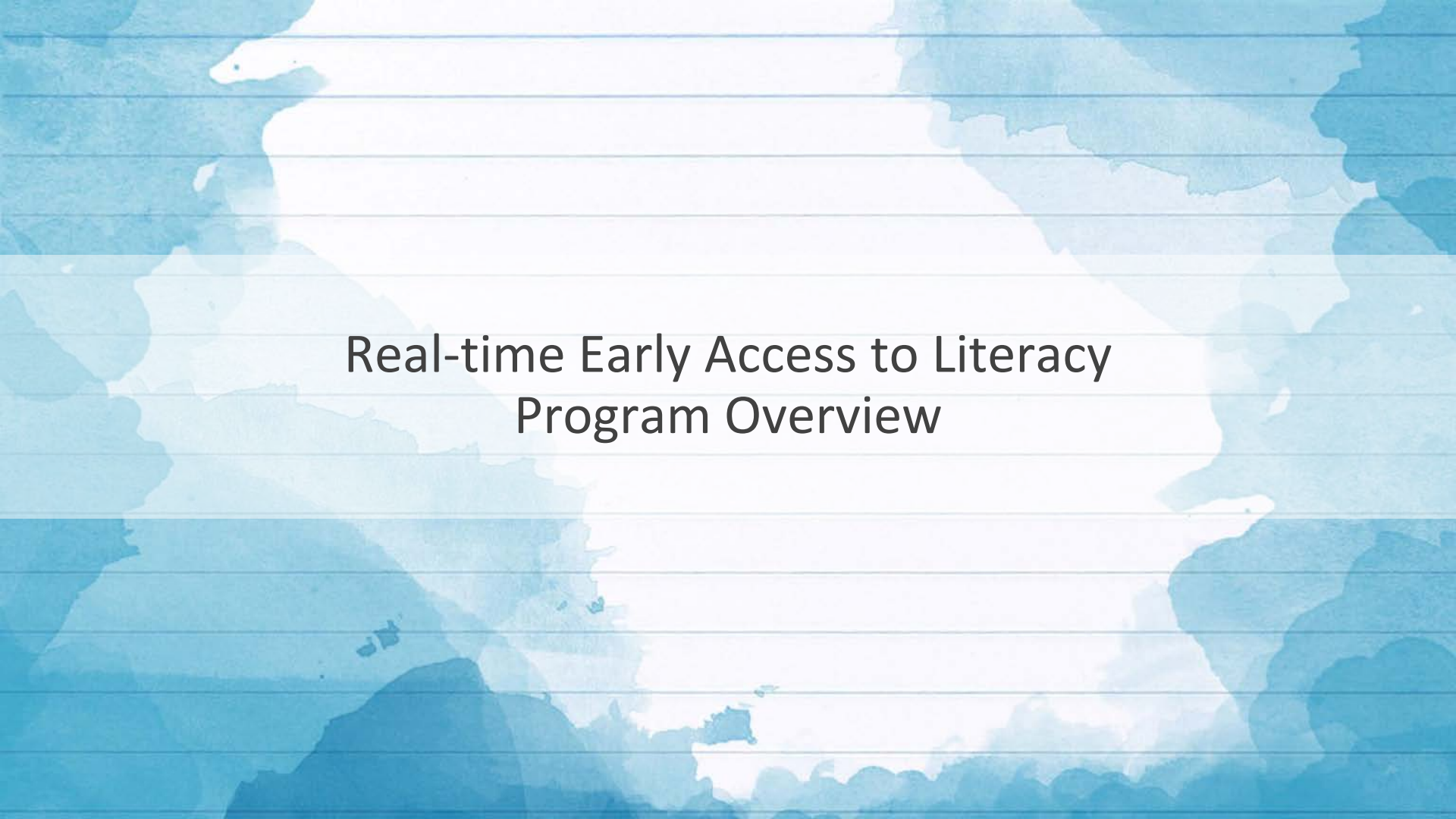
# Remote Learning: Need for Supports

All school systems have created plans for a virtual learning program in order to meet the needs of families who are not ready to send children back to a school building and also to prepare for any unexpected closures.

The Department has developed a [tool](#) for systems and schools to easily track student learning environments as well as device and connectivity data. This data will also help the Department and systems identify where additional student connectivity supports are needed.





The background of the slide is a watercolor-style illustration. It features soft, blended washes of light blue and white, creating a textured, ethereal effect. The colors are more saturated towards the edges and fade towards the center, where the text is located. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

# Real-time Early Access to Literacy Program Overview

# Real-time Early Access to Literacy: Overview

[Real-time Early Access to Literacy \(REAL\)](#) provides early literacy support for students in pre-K through grade 3. Through REAL, school systems are allocated funding to provide students in pre-K through grade 3 with technology and tutoring services.



# Key Grant Activities

Through Real-time Early Access to Literacy, Louisiana will:

- Create the REAL Family Portal where families can create a profile, apply for a microgrant, and enroll in live tutoring services for pre-K through grade 3 students.
- Approve Tutoring Service Providers who will partner with families and schools to provide tutoring aligned to high quality literacy curriculum.
- Support economically disadvantaged families to access resources and services, and provide families with choices that meet their individual needs.

# Funding Summary

*Louisiana was awarded a total of \$17 million across three years, starting in August 2020.*

Category	Year 1 Allocations	Total Amount 3 Years
Technology - devices, internet	\$3.3M	\$5.6M
Tutoring - direct services	\$2.8M	\$8.5M
Contracts - family portal, capacity building	\$600K	\$1.8M
Grant Administration	\$350K	\$1.1M

## **In Year 1 the grant will provide:**

- Devices and internet to over 7,000 economically disadvantaged students in pre-K to grade 3.
- Tutoring services to over 5,000 students in UIR and CIR-A schools to support early literacy development.

# REAL Technology Overview

*School Systems who indicated a need received an initial allocation to provide devices and connectivity to pre-K through grade 3 students.*

Systems in priority need for devices for grades pre-K through 3 were identified through the Strong Start Implementation Survey.

Through the initial technology purchase, Louisiana achieved a 1:1 device ratio for pre-K through grade 3 in 90% of school systems across the state.

Systems may request additional funding for technology for the 2021-2022 school year through Super App.

# REAL Family Portal

Through the REAL Family Portal families will be able to:

- Establish a family profile;
- Apply for a microgrant account;
- Search and browse tutoring services;
- Match to Tutoring Service Providers; and
- Enroll in services.

*Louisiana modeled its grant approach and portal on a pre-existing program, Supplemental Course Academy (SCA).*



# Alignment to High Quality Curricula

*REAL services are a resource to support school systems' priorities and goals.*

- Tutoring services will support students to progress in their early literacy development.
- Tutors will receive training to align to high quality curricula used in students' schools.
- Tutoring Service Providers will ensure regular communication with teachers and families.

*Tutoring Service Providers (TSPs) undergo a rigorous vetting process by the Louisiana Department of Education, similar to the PD vendor guide review process. Approved TSPs are required to provide background checks for all individuals providing virtual tutoring services.*

# Funding Model



# Funding Model Year 1

- The Department will allocate a total of \$2.8 million to school systems in Year 1 of the grant.
- The ESF-REM grant will provide funding to each school system based on the number of children in Pre-K to grade 3 enrolled in CIR and UIR-A schools. Allocations for each school system are provided at a rate of \$16 per student enrolled in Pre-K to grade 3 in CIR and UIR-A schools and then rounded up (in \$500 increments).
- Remaining Year 1 funds will be allocated to school systems in March BESE based on updated enrollment numbers in addition to regional demand indicators (i.e., how much funding has been spent up to that point). March allocations will be available for use between April 1, 2021 - June 30, 2021.

# Family Microgrants

- After December BESE allocations are approved, school systems will create a budget in eGMS and submit reimbursements for allowable expenses.
- Using the REAL Family Portal on Louisiana Believes, families will apply for micro grants and school systems will approve their application based on eligibility, with priority going to students in CIR/UIR-A schools who are economically disadvantaged (ED).
- Eligible families will receive an initial microgrant of \$500 in order to use towards approved services in the REAL family portal.
- The Department will provide directions to school systems for how to support families to access, enroll, and utilize the portal.
- School systems will be required to support individual families with their account management. All approved services are designed to support students to be successful with the high quality reading curriculum that is implemented by their school.

# Funding Model Years 2-3



Year 2-3 funds will be allocated via Super App, through Core Academics question 6.1.

Early Literacy Support	
Indicator	Application Question
<b>CA6</b> Students in grades pre-K to 3 are provided with high-quality instruction and targeted support in order to ensure that all students are reading on level by the end of grade 3.	<b>6.1</b> Identify the number of pre-K to 3rd grade students at CIR/UIR-Academics schools who are in need of targeted early literacy support, including support required to effectively engage in remote learning.

# School System Role in Implementation

# School System Engagement

**School Systems will be able to utilize REAL to support their early literacy strategy in the following ways:**

- Approval of families' microgrant accounts
- Strengthening family partnerships
- Communication with Tutoring Service Providers

# Microgrant Approval Process

**The REAL Family Portal is currently in development. Once completed:**

- Families will create a family profile and apply for a microgrant account;
- An identified school system employee will authorize the account, in alignment with grant assurances; and
- Families will be able to select and enroll in services once approved.

# Family Partnerships

**The school system will be able to strengthen family partnerships through:**

- Promoting services aligned to family needs;
- Receiving survey feedback from LDOE from participating families; and
- Providing families with the resources required to effectively engage in remote learning.

# Communication with Tutoring Service Providers

*Tutoring Service Providers will support students in pre-K through grade 3 to make progress in the high quality curriculum implemented in each student's school.*

## **Tutoring Service Providers will:**

- Provide access to curriculum-aligned training
- Ensure regular communication with families and schools



# Next Steps for School Systems

**To maximize the benefits of REAL, school systems will need to:**

- Identify a system-level point person for REAL
- Define how REAL can best support system-level strategy and priorities for early literacy
- Determine who can support the approval process for family microgrants
- Recommend Tutoring Service Providers who currently work with your system and/or consider completing the RFA to become an approved Tutoring Service Provider

For any questions please contact [EarlyLiteracy@la.gov](mailto:EarlyLiteracy@la.gov).



# Timeline

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Next Steps	Description	Timeframe
Purchase Devices and Internet Connectivity	School systems coordinate with LDOE technology partners to receive delivery of hot spots and devices.	Fall 2020
Release RFA	LDOE releases RFA seeking applications from Tutoring Service Providers.	October 2020
Approve School System Allocations	LDOE brings allocations for approval to December BESE meeting.	December 2020
Vet and Approve Providers	LDOE releases “vendor guide” of approved Tutoring Providers.	Winter 2020
Engage Families	Families can create an account in the REAL portal and apply for services.	Winter 2020
Begin Tutoring Services	Tutoring Providers begin services.	Spring 2021



Questions?

Email [leslie.doyle@la.gov](mailto:leslie.doyle@la.gov)