# Early Literacy Success School District Grants FAQ:

## Jumpstart Biennium 23-25

This document provides answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) for Early Literacy Success School District Grants for the 23-25, or "Jumpstart", biennium.  Additional information, including definitions and helpful terms regarding funding, implementation and other elements of the grant program can be found in the more comprehensive grant application guidance.

**This document will continue to be updated as indicated with a version number and noted on the initiative website.**

For additional questions on these or other topics, please email k5.literacy@ode.oregon.gov.

# Structure of Document

This document organizes frequently asked questions by themes. The document is not meant to be read in a linear fashion; rather, it is intended for the reader to navigate to particular sections based on need using the links below.

Click on a category or question to link directly to the answer in the document below.

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# Allowable Uses

1.  **Applicants are already implementing some or all of these allowable uses (professional development and coaching, extended learning, high-dosage tutoring). Should these be included in plans and reporting?**

    Yes, applicants do not necessarily need to begin new activities in these allowable use categories to meet the requirements of the grant. Applicants should include current activities as part of their application and ensure that current activities align with the grant requirements specific to each allowable use (i.e., do current tutoring programs align with the definition of high-dosage tutoring in the guidance?).

2.  **For professional development and coaching, extended learning programs, and high-dosage tutoring, what is required in the application and annual reporting?**

    One of the grant application requirements is that applicants must submit a plan to provide and ultimately report on professional development and coaching, extended learning programs, and high-dosage tutoring. The information shared in planning and reporting is about an applicant's overall literacy implementation and is not narrowed just to this new fund source. Applicants may use other fund sources to operationalize these activities and will report on the status of implementation regardless of fund source.

    For the Jumpstart Biennium, applicants describe their plan to implement professional development and coaching, extended learning programs, and high-dosage tutoring. If applicants are not yet able to implement all three activities, applicants must submit a rationale and describe how they plan to do so in the future.

    The description of how each of these three allowable uses will be implemented (or the rationale for delay and plan to do so in the future) is completed in the Application Planning Template, questions 1 - 3, and is submitted as part of the Application.

3.  **Can an applicant spend all of their Early Literacy Success School District Grant funds on one allowable use?**

    Yes. The law does not establish any requirement for how funds are distributed across the allowable uses and there is not a minimum amount of funding required for any use. However, applicants must still meet the application and reporting requirements for all three of professional development and coaching, extended learning programs, and high-dosage tutoring. See Question #1 for more information.

    The allowable uses are:
    - professional development and coaching;

- extended learning;
- high-dosage tutoring;
- adoption and implementation of curriculum;
- employment of literacy specialists, coaches, or interventionists.

Note that the activities funded by the 25% match can be applied more broadly to PreK-5 literacy.

4. **How are the allowable uses of adoption of curriculum and hiring incorporated into the application and reporting?**

For the application, applicants need to submit an inventory of curriculum and other instructional materials. If the materials submitted in the application inventory are not research-aligned, a description of how the applicant will ensure the use of a research-aligned curriculum is required.

Through annual reporting, applicants will verify that the inventory submitted in the application process is up to date and provide any updates if needed. ODE will, as a principle, not ask for information already submitted.

Any hiring for these grant funds is submitted as part of the application in the Literacy Inventory and Budget spreadsheet and quarterly budget reports.

5. **If an applicant is not sure there will be enough funding to lift the activities described in the grant, what should they do?**

ODE recommends applicants look across all funding sources and existing activities to operationalize all three activities within the biennium, to the extent practical.

6. **Can an applicant spend Early Literacy Success funds across all three of the allowable uses for which a plan is required?**

Yes, Early Literacy Success funds can be used across all three of professional development and coaching, extended learning programs, and high-dosage tutoring, as well as the adoption and implementation of curriculum and hiring of literacy coaches, specialists, or interventionists.

7. **Are applicants required to implement both professional development AND coaching or are professional development and coaching separate reporting categories?**

When done well, professional development and coaching are implemented in an integrated and cohesive way as a coherent set of activities. These allowable uses have not been defined in rules so this could change in future bienniums. Practically, either professional development or coaching are acceptable in the Jumpstart Biennium.

Applicants describe in their plans how they will implement professional development and coaching and, if applicable, the rationale for the delay in either and plan for implementing both

in the future.

Also note that applicants do not necessarily need to begin new professional development and coaching activities to meet the requirements of the grant. Applicants should include current activities as part of their application and ensure that they align with the grant requirements specific to professional development and coaching.

**8. What are some examples of Extended Learning Programs that meet the criteria of the grant?**

The law describes "Extended Learning Programs" as programs that use research-aligned literacy strategies and that are made available to students in early elementary grades by licensed teachers or by qualified tutors. Extended learning programs may include, but are not limited to:

- Home-based summer reading activities for students who need additional support and enrichment; and
- An intensive summer school program for students who need the most additional support and who receive at least 60 hours of direct literacy instruction by an instructional assistant or a licensed teacher trained in research-aligned literacy strategies

Extended learning opportunities can be thought of as those which are in addition to or distinct from core instruction and high-dosage tutoring, as described in the Application Guidance, Appendix A.

For the Jumpstart Biennium, pending further permanent rule making, applicants have discretion over the time and other design choices for extended learning. Applicants should consider the evaluation criteria (in italics below) as what is required at a minimum for application approval.

*The description of how the applicant will provide extended learning programs that use research-aligned literacy strategies and that are made available by licensed teachers or by qualified tutors includes both:*

- *a description of how literacy is included as the focus of the program, and*
- *who will provide the extended learning and their qualifications.*

The scope and further clarifications of extended learning programs will be addressed through the permanent rulemaking process for future applications. For more information and guidance on summer learning programs, please see the ODE Summer Learning Best Practice Guide and Companion Toolkit.

**9. What are the definitions for "qualified tutor" and "high-dosage tutoring"?**

The legislation defines a "qualified tutor" as an individual who is trained to implement a program providing high-dosage tutoring. "High-dosage tutoring" means one-on-one tutoring or tutoring in small groups, as determined by rule of the State Board of Education, that:

- Is provided in addition to daily instruction;
- Is provided two or more times each week over at least a 10-week period; and
- Uses a research-aligned tutoring model that is administered in a culturally responsive

manner and that is combined with the training necessary for tutors to implement the model effectively.

Effective and impactful high-dosage tutoring programs:

- have tutors that are well-trained and supported, or are teachers, retired teachers, or teaching candidates;
- have tutors that have time for planning and collaboration with classroom teachers;
- tutors use high-quality instructional materials in high-frequency sessions (offer tutoring at least three times per week, for 30 minutes per session) with three or fewer students in each session;
- align with an evidence-based curriculum;
- occur at school during the school day whenever possible;
- include instruction that is supplemental and focused on acceleration, not remediation;
- are built into the school day and engages teachers and caregivers; and
- use data to inform and individualize instruction and continuously improve program design.

The scope and other details of these and other definitions will be further clarified through the permanent rulemaking process for future implementation.

10. **How do applicants determine if an ELA curriculum is "research-aligned"?**

For the purposes of the grant application, research-aligned curriculum is defined as
1) a curriculum from the State Board adopted list; or
2) a curriculum adopted independently using the state's guidelines for Independent Adoption of Instructional Materials, having used the SBE approved curriculum Adoption Criteria for ELA.

Curricula adopted using the most current criteria (adopted after February 2020) are considered research-aligned.

11. **How do applicants determine if other materials (i.e. supplemental, etc.), are research aligned? These typically do not go through an adoption process.**

The following recommendations support applicants in determining whether or not instructional materials meet the research-aligned standard:
- Oregon's State Board approved Adoption Criteria for ELA Instructional Materials. Additional resources on high-quality instructional materials can be found on Oregon Department of Education's High-Quality Instructional Materials webpage.
- Oregon's Early Literacy Framework includes additional information to inform evaluation and use of assessments, tools, and other instructional materials.

This determination will be further clarified through the permanent rulemaking process for future applications.

12. **Do applicants have to adopt a new ELA curriculum to meet the requirements of the grant?**

   If an applicant has adopted a research-aligned curriculum, no new adoption is necessary. If the applicant adopted materials after February 2020 using Oregon's State Board approved [Adoption Criteria for ELA Instructional Materials](#), the curriculum meets the requirement of research-aligned.

   If a district or charter school has not yet adopted a curriculum using research-aligned quality standards, they are still eligible for the Jumpstart Biennium grant funding. The ODE is required to collect the ELA curriculum currently being used by each applicant and is interested in understanding applicant's plans to adopt a new curriculum that meets research-aligned quality standards, if applicable. The Jumpstart Biennium is a baseline year for applicants to name areas of improvement and for ODE to support applicants in the process of improving Early Literacy programs.

   As part of the application process, applicants will submit their current ELA curriculum in the [Literacy Inventory & Budget spreadsheet](#), including any planned changes to the curriculum. If an applicant plans to purchase a new curriculum, it should also be reflected in the Budget tab in the Literacy Inventory & Budget.


# Funding/Matching Funds

13. **Can applicants use Title, SIA, or other state/federal dollars for the 25% match?**

   Yes. Matching funds can come from any funding source. Applicants are not limited to spending matching funds on the allowable uses of the grant, though are highly encouraged to do so. Matching funds for the Jumpstart Biennium, pending permanent rule making, can be used broadly to support literacy across pre-kindergarten through 5th grade. See page 13 of the [Application Guidance](#) for additional information.


14. **If applicants don't use all the funds allocated for the 2023-2024 school year, do they roll over?**

   Funds can carry over each year, *within the biennium,* from year one to year two. However, any allotted funds not used at the end of biennium will be returned to the Statewide Education Initiatives Account (SEIA). All applications for the 23-25 biennium must be submitted by January 8, 2024. If an applicant does not apply in year one, they are ineligible for funds in year two.


15. **Can applicants take indirect cost on the Early Literacy Grant?**

   A grant recipient may use funds for administrative costs, including indirect costs, directly related to allowed expenditures as provided in the grant agreement. Administrative costs are limited to 5 percent of the applicant's total allocations. Allowable administrative costs include costs

associated with applying for the grant.

16. **What is the backdate for early literacy fund grant expenditures and the 25% matching funds?**

    ● For the Jumpstart Biennium, grantees are allowed to backdate *early literacy grant fund expenditures* to October 1, 2023, ahead of grant agreements being fully executed.
    ● The backdate for the *25% matching* funds is July 1st, 2023.  For example, if a district spent other funds to purchase an early literacy curriculum prior to Oct 1, but after July 1st, 2023, that can count towards their 25% match.

17. **Are all applicants required to have the 25% matching funds?**

    No.  For districts and charter schools with an ADMw <50, the 25% match and any additional matches for 4th/5th grade expenditures will be waived.

18. **Can applicants apply in consortia?**

    Any district or charter school that applied as an Aligned Program Consortium[1] must apply in that same consortium for the Early Literacy Success School District Grants. A charter that is sponsored by a district is not considered an Aligned Program Consortium and will need to apply on their own. Aligned Program Consortium members will:
    ● submit one application
    ● provide an amended Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to include Early Literacy Success School District Grants,
    ● receive one grant agreement, and
    ● report on the Early Literacy Success School Grant program implementation as one grantee.

    An amended Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to include the Early Literacy Success School District Grants must be revised and signed by all eligible members[2] of the consortium to:
    ● define consortium operations as it relates to Early Literacy, and
    ● articulate the reporting structure as it relates to Early Literacy. This amended MOU will be uploaded as an additional attachment required as part of the submission for the Early Literacy Success School District Grant application. Please keep in mind that:
    ● A single joint application from an Aligned Program Consortium for the Early Literacy Success School District Grants must be approved by each partnering school district's or applicant's governing board and meet all other application requirements.

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[1] As defined under Oregon Department of Education's Aligning for Student Success: Integrated Guidance for Six ODE Initiatives.
[2] If a member of the Aligned Program Consortium is not eligible to receive Early Literacy Success School District Grant funds, they will be excluded from plans and expenditures.

It is important to understand the differences between participating in an Aligned Program Consortium and collaborating. Those in an Aligned Program Consortium formally combine their allocations under one grant agreement with one lead organization ultimately responsible for all deliverables and expenditures under the grant. However, if the applicants are not a part of an Aligned Program Consortium this biennium, the Oregon Department of Education encourages applicants to collaborate with other applicants in their regions and/or their ESD partners. Through collaborative efforts, grantees can pool resources together through contracts, agreements, or other means, while each grantee remains independently responsible for submitting an application and receives their own grant agreement and is independently responsible for all grant deliverables and expenditures.

19. **Do expenses for grades 4 and 5 count towards the 25% match in the first biennium?**

The overall 25% match on the total allocation is inclusive of the 4th and/or 5th grade match requirement. For example, if an applicant uses the full 20% limitation supporting 4th and/or 5th grades in the first year and provides the 25% match for the total allocation as required, the 20% match for 4th/5th grade is fulfilled; there is no additional matching requirement.

## Application Process

20. **What if an applicant cannot complete the application by the January 8th, 2024 deadline?**

Applications that are partially complete by January 8th will still be accepted, though will not begin to be reviewed. Applicants who intend to apply for these grant dollars but have not yet completed their application are encouraged to still submit an incomplete application by January 8th, 2023.  This will allow ODE to track incomplete applications, reach out, and support applicants with completion.

Applications must be presented to and approved by the school district board or the governing body of the public charter school at an open meeting with opportunity for public comment. As evidence of this requirement, applicants must submit a copy of the board minutes when this presentation and approval occurred. For the Jumpstart Biennium, applicants will have through February 28th, 2024 to submit these board minutes; however, the review of applications will not be complete until the board minutes are received.

21. **How can applicants most efficiently complete the application?**

Please review the Early Literacy Success School District Grant Application Steps document for the 11 necessary steps to complete the application.

## Pre-K

**22. What qualifies as a preschool as part of the Early Literacy Success School District Grants?**

In the law, preschool and prekindergarten are defined as follows:
"Pre-kindergarten" means a preschool or pre-kindergarten program that is:
- Provided by a school district or public charter school; or
- Delivered in partnership between a school district and another organization.

"Preschool" means a high-quality program that serves children at least three years of age but not older than five years of age.

**23. Can Early Literacy Success School District Grant funds be spent on preschool staff or an Early Learning TOSA/coach?**

Early literacy funds can be spent on preschool staff or an Early Learning TOSA/coach as long as the position(s) meets the requirement of being a literacy coach, specialist, or interventionist. Applicants would have to show that the position being funded with the early literacy dollars meets that requirement for hiring.

Note that the percentage of a teacher's salary proportional to their time supporting literacy, generally for PreK-5, can be considered as part of an applicant's 25% match.

## Student Growth Assessment

**24. What is required for the student growth assessment?**

For the Jumpstart Biennium, applicants may identify which student growth assessment is most appropriate to assess student growth in literacy. Many schools and districts use early/foundational reading universal screening tools with aligned progress monitoring measures to assess students' performance and growth with those critical foundational skills in the K-3 (and often K-5) space as their dyslexia screener. A system of assessment and evidence of student growth is a strong practice, and applicants are encouraged to provide multiple measures of student growth if that is currently their practice for early literacy.

Applicants are required to name the student growth assessment for literacy in the Literacy Inventory & Budget spreadsheet, and may use their current literacy assessment. If an applicant does not have a current student growth assessment that allows for data to be disaggregated by student groups who have historically experienced academic disparities, describe how one will be provided in the application.

Note: The "disaggregation of data" requirement for this application requirement is evaluated through an assurance.

# Communication Plan

25. **What will need to be asked of the community/families for the communication plan?**

> Applicants need to provide at least one communication strategy for each community group:
> ● School districts;
> ● Elementary schools of the school district;
> ● Families of the school district; and
> ● Members of the school district community

Applicants need only select the communication strategies they plan to use as they communicate and execute the early literacy plan. The communication efforts themselves need not be completed before the application is submitted.

Note: Every family deserves to know their district's approach and early literacy strategy. The communication plan described above is a minimum requirement for this application related to, but distinct from, deep community engagement. As applicants engage communities for Integrated Guidance, they should include the development and continuous improvement of their early literacy approach and strategy into those efforts throughout the Jumpstart Biennium.

# Charter Schools

26. **Do district sponsored charter schools submit applications separate from their district?**

A charter that is sponsored by a district will need to apply on their own, separate from their sponsoring district.

27. **Are virtual public charter schools eligible for the grant funding?**

No. As named in the law, virtual public charter schools are not eligible for Early Literacy Success School District Grants.

28. **Do district sponsored charter schools receive their own allocation?**

Yes. District sponsored public charter schools may view their allocations in 2023-2025 Preliminary Allocations. A charter school that is sponsored by a district and not considered as part of an Aligned Program Consortium will need to apply on their own.