Model Document: Grant Proposal

October 6, 2010

Ms. Joan Atwater
Executive Director
ABC Foundation
13 Hill Street
Boston, MA 02116

Subject: Read to Succeed! Project

Dear Ms. Atwater,

Orchard Middle School is pleased to present this proposal for your review. We look forward to partnering with you to provide a reading intervention program for our students with poor reading skills called Read to Succeed! Orchard Middle School has over 50 at-risk students with a reading performance of at least two years behind their current grade level. The objective of the Read to Succeed! program is to help all students with poor reading skills learn to read at grade level and increase their reading speed, comprehension, and reading attention span.

Last year, we ran a pilot Read to Succeed! program with a small group of students with poor reading skills and have seen dramatic improvements, with most of the students increasing their reading ability by one to two grade levels. The Read to Succeed! program provides students with access to assistive reading systems, along with training for classroom teachers and reading specialists.

We have seen measurable success, and we are now seeking to expand our Read to Succeed! program to address the needs of all at-risk students in the Orchard Middle School. Our proposal requests $16,504 in funding to obtain the software, hardware, and training necessary to equip the Orchard Middle School resource room with five assistive reading systems, each including a computer, a scanner, and assistive reading software.

We appreciate ABC Foundation taking an interest in helping our students develop their reading skills through our new reading program! Please give me a call at 888-555-1212, ext. 342, or e-mail me a jhazelton@oms.edu if you require any further information or have any questions concerning this proposal.

Thank you,

Jennifer Hazelton
Special Education Coordinator
Orchard Middle School
387 Pine Hill Road
Orchard, VT 02331

Read to Succeed! Improving Reading Performance
for At Risk Students

Submitted to: The ABC Foundation

Date: October 6, 2010

Jennifer Hazelton
Special Education Coordinator
Orchard Middle School
387 Pine Hill Road
Orchard, VT 02331

Read to Succeed! Improving Reading Performance for At Risk Students

Project Abstract

The Orchard Middle School, in Orchard, VT is seeking a grant to expand our Read to Succeed! program with the objective of helping all our at-risk students increase their reading skills and be able to read at grade level using the same classroom textbooks and materials as their peers. The objective is that by the end of the year the students will have at least doubled their reading speed and will have improved their reading skills by one to two grade levels. The Read to Succeed! program features computers equipped with assistive reading software and text scanners for reading instruction. Funding in the amount of $16,504 is requested for staff training and to purchase the required software and hardware for the school's resource room.

Kurzweil 3000 software, from Kurzweil Educational Systems, uses a multi-sensory approach to help students with learning and reading difficulties. The Kurzweil 3000 was developed for people with reading difficulties caused by learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorder (ADD), and other language-based difficulties. The Kurzweil 3000 is research-based assistive reading software developed with guidance from leading reading experts. It enables all children access to state and national curricula and conforms to today's research-focused funding requirements.

With the Kurzweil 3000, a student with reading difficulties has access to textbooks and classroom materials displayed as an exact image on the computer screen. The text is then read aloud using the highest quality, most human-sounding, synthetic speech while highlighting words and sentences visually on screen.

One of the benefits of using assistive reading technology, such as the Kurzweil 3000, is that students are able access classroom textbooks for increased access to general curriculum materials. This means they can use the same materials used in the classroom and can continue learning in the least restrictive environment. In addition to reading tools, Kurzweil 3000 includes audible tools to assist word decoding (syllabification and spelling), tools to assist with writing (spell-checking and word-prediction), and a tool that speaks and highlights pages from the Internet, opening up a whole world of knowledge. The Kurzweil 300 can also be used for classroom and standardized test-taking, offering more independence for both the student and teacher.

Assistive reading technology has been shown (e.g., Heckler, L., Burns, L., Katz, L., Elkind, J., & Elkind, K. 2002; Elkind 1998) to help poor readers increase reading speed, comprehension, and attention.

References

Elkind, J. (1998). *A study of the efficacy of the Kurzweil 3000 reading machine in enhancing poor reading performance*. Portola Valley, CA: Lexia Institute.

Elkind, J., Cohen K., & Murray, C. (1995). Using computer-based readers to improve reading comprehension of students with dyslexia. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 46, 159-186.

Heckler, L., Burns, L., Katz, L., Elkind, J., & Elkind, K. (2002). Benefits of assistive reading software for students with attention disorders. *Annals of Dyslexia*, *52*, 223-335.

Olson R., Foltz G., & Wise, B. (1987). Reading instruction and remediation with the aid of computer speech. In D. Reinking (Ed.), *Computers and reading: Issues for theory and practice* (pp. 156-177). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Olson, R. & Wise, B. (1992). Reading on the computer with orthographic and speech feedback. *Reading and Writing,* 4, 107-144.

Wise, B. & Olson, R. (1995). Computer-based phonological awareness and reading instruction. *Annals of Dyslexia, 45*, 99-122.

Statement of Need

Orchard Middle School has 276 students, 59of which have been determined to be at risk in their reading performance for a variety of reasons, including learning disabilities, such as attention deficit disorder (ADD) and dyslexia, or other language difficulties based on economic status. Orchard Middle School is eligible for Title 1 funds, and if these students are not given an opportunity to improve their reading skills, they are, as studies show, more likely to be truant and drop out of school.

Program Description

The Orchard Read to Succeed! program will enable at-risk students to improve their reading skills through the use of five computers equipped with scanners and assistive reading software. Students using this innovative reading system will be able to use all their classroom materials, including textbooks, providing them access to the general curriculum. The students will increase their reading speed and comprehension, which will help them obtain classroom subject proficiency. Included in the Read to Succeed! program will be a day of training for the reading specialist and classroom teachers on the features and use of the Kurzweil 3000 software.

Standardized reading tests will be conducted at the start of the Read to Succeed! program and again at the end of the school year to determine increases in reading speed and comprehension. Additionally, those students with ADD will be tested to determine increased reading attention rates.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of the Read to Succeed! program is to enable at-risk students and students with learning and reading disabilities to improve their reading skills to the point where they can succeed in school and develop the reading skills that will prepare them for high school and postsecondary education. Studies have shown that poor readers, those reading at a grade level or more behind, are more likely to be disruptive in the classroom, truant from school, and at risk of dropping out of high school.

The main objectives of the Read to Succeed! program include the following:

1. Providing a measurable increase in reading speed, comprehension, and attention span. The objective is for the students to double their reading speed and increase their reading skills by one to two grade levels by the end of the school year.

2. Enabling poor readers to access the general curriculum through the use of assistive reading technology that will scan and read their textbooks and other classroom materials.

3. Providing learning-disabled students with a multisensory reading alternative that will help them increase their reading speed to the point where they can read on their own.

4. Helping learning- and reading-disabled students stay in their regular classroom with their peers so they can continue learning in a least-restrictive environment.

Budget

The budget includes funds for a Lab Pack containing five copies of Kurzweil Educational System's Scan/Read Color software, along with five computers and scanners. They will provide five independent assistive reading workstations. This combination will give students the greatest flexibility in using their textbooks and other classroom materials.

	Price	*Quantity*	*Total*
Kurzweil Scan/Read Lab Pack (Color) 5-Pack	$7,095	1 (5-pack)	$7,095
Software Maintenance Agreement (SMA)	$709	1 (5-pack)	$709
Epson 300 Scanner	$300	5	$1,500
Dell PC with Monitor	$1200	5	$6,000
Training	$1200	1 Day	$1,200
Total			**$16,504**

Schedule

Activity	Date
Submit grant proposal	October 2010
Expected grant notification	December 2010
Obtain hardware and software	January 2011
Set up Kurzweil 3000 program	January 2011
Training session for teachers	February 2011
Student introduction	February 2011
Test initial reading speed	February 2011
Begin first 12-week phase	March-May 2011
Test reading improvement	June 2011
Prepare project results report	July 2011

Staff and Organizational Information

Jennifer Hazelton, Special Education Coordinator, holds a Bachelor's degree in Special Education from Lesley College. Jennifer Hazelton has extensive experience working with students with severe reading difficulties and was responsible for implementing the successful pilot test program in 2001. She is proficient with learning technology, including computer hardware and software.

Sue Amberson, Speech and Language Pathologist, holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Vermont and a Master's degree from Boston University. Sue Amberson specializes in working with the students with severe learning disabilities and will be responsible for coordinating participation with classroom teachers.

Joan Freeman, Principal, holds a Master's degree in Education from Colby College. Joan Freeman is providing support for this program and has taken responsibility for parental and community involvement.