COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL REFORM PROGRAM

Grant Proposal

Excel Elementary School
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This RFP is an actual funded CSRP grant. Names and other pertinent information have been changed to protect the privacy of the school and individuals cited in the proposal.
Abstract

After examining the disaggregated data for Excel Elementary School and establishing our school-wide goals, the staff began searching for an intervention model that was specifically designed to accelerate below level readers in the intermediate grades. Our search criteria required that the program incorporate authentic literature, have small group application, and incorporate instructional strategies that had been proven effective for intermediate students. We also looked for an intervention that could be integrated in a balanced literacy program. The model we selected that most closely matched our criteria was the Project SUCCESS Intermediate Intervention Program.

Research conducted by J. David Cooper, nationally known for his efforts to promote literacy, indicated that this was a highly effective model based on strategies proven effective in early literacy programs and with struggling readers. The model has the potential for short-term growth, a critical component for a highly mobile population such as Excel Elementary. The Soar to Success program materials are built on the Project SUCCESS model. They include a highly structured lesson design utilizing reciprocal teaching and they incorporate strategies already familiar to many teachers at our school. Adoption of the new program will ensure consistent application of strategy instruction and enhance the achievement of all students. The assessment tools used to identify and transition students are already part of our assessment protocol, and additional assessments included with the program materials are easily learned and administered. These assessments will provide additional measures of our progress toward Comprehensive School Reform Program (CSRP) goals. A part-time site coordinator will assist with management of the assessment, and with parental and staff development components.

Our CSRP includes a staff development element that has often been fractured and unfocused. Recent initiatives have provided a common emphasis for primary reading instruction. Staff Training through Project SUCCESS will allow us to extend these efforts in a consistent manner through monthly staff meetings on related topics and in literacy study groups. Successful implementation of Project SUCCESS requires a model of ongoing coaching. The grant funding will allow us to provide substitutes so that intervention teachers have the opportunities to engage in coaching on a regularly scheduled basis.

Excel Elementary is fortunate to have funding resources for support personnel and program enhancement included in the CSRP. Parent and community programs involve many families in the early years but participation decreases in intermediate grades. Project SUCCESS will provide a new structure for inclusion and involvement of intermediate students’ parents through workshops and weekly parent/student activities.
Evidence of Effectiveness

J. David Cooper, Professor of Education at Ball State University, developed the Project SUCCESS model. The model is based upon an examination of existing research concerning characteristics of struggling readers and effective intervention strategies. Reciprocal Teaching, an interactive process designed to promote comprehension, was the one strategy he found that had solid research evidence that showed it could accelerate reading for students in a small amount of time. (Palincsar & Brown, 1986; Rosenshine & Meister, 1994).

Research from successful early intervention programs such as Reading Recovery, Early Intervention in Reading, and Right Start was also examined to identify successful program elements. The common practices found in these effective methodologies were that they were highly structured and fast paced and were offered in addition to a strong program of classroom instruction in reading. These key elements were included in the framework of the Project SUCCESS model.

With reciprocal teaching as the core component, instructors are trained to work with groups of five to seven students. During the forty-minute structured lesson, students work with a balance of narrative and expository text predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing. Instruction is scaffolded with heavy teacher modeling in the beginning, gradually leading to student independence. Graphic organizers are included to enable students to visually construct meaning. Oral reading checks and retelling assessments are used frequently to monitor individual progress.

During the 1995-96 school year, this model was field tested. After 90 days of instruction students gained an average of over 2-levels in reading. It was concluded that with this amount of growth, the model should be tested more carefully to see if similar gains would be obtained in a more controlled situation. The instructional plan and model for Project SUCCESS was presented at the International Reading Association (IRA) Conference in New Orleans in 1996. Participants were invited to submit proposals and thirteen research sites were identified. The 24 different schools in seven states ranged from major metropolitan areas to rural areas. Intensive two day training Institutes were held and the research sites began implementation. Pre- and posttesting was completed using the Qualitative Reading Inventory II and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests.

The final research report completed with the 1996-97 national research study results indicated significant gains for the twelve sites where the data was usable. The Project SUCCESS groups had from two to seven times as many students who were reading on level or higher at the conclusion of the treatment period. The project SUCCESS group significantly outperformed the control group in retelling, answering questions, oral reading, and comprehension after an average of 75.8 days of instruction. No overall statistically significant differences were obtained with a pullout or in-class location for the instruction. Since Project SUCCESS was presented at an IRA Symposium in Georgia in May 1997, over 1,500 people have been trained and the project has been successfully replicated in more than 500 sites.
Narrative

Introduction

Excel Elementary draws its population from single-family homes, town homes, two low-income housing projects, five mobile home parks, and military housing. Our parents are of a diverse socio-economic status. They are small business employers; community service providers; college professors; military professionals and contractors; skilled laborers; unskilled laborers; and welfare recipients. Forty percent of our population receives a free or reduced lunch.

Because of the population for each of the previous four years, Excel Elementary’s average mobility rate has been above forty percent. The student enrollment has fluctuated between 550 and 580 students. Nineteen percent receives some form of special education services. As of May 2000, the ethnic background of Excel Elementary is 3.3% Hispanic; 3.3% Asian; 31.8% African American; 59.4% White; 2.1% American Indian.

Our faculty is comprised of teachers with a broad range of experience. Sixty-one percent of the staff has ten or more years of teaching experience and sixty-eight percent of the staff has advanced educational training beyond their Bachelor’s degree. Excel Elementary has the expertise to offer a variety of learning opportunities to meet the needs of our diverse student population, and staff committed to doing what is necessary to ensure all students achieve excellence.

(1) Need, Match, Effectiveness and Comprehensiveness of the CSR Program

Excellence and equity are two essential ingredients in an effective school’s mission. Excellence can be defined as generally high achievement in a school. Equity is the even distribution of that achievement among boys and girls, blacks and whites, low and middle/high socio-economic groups, and others in a school. Excellence cannot be built without equity as its foundation. Excel Elementary School Improvement Team gathered information concerning student’s achievement, teaching practices, instructional support services, the school’s operation, and opportunities to learn. After careful examination of the data, the team has identified areas of strength and weakness and established focused goals.

Student Achievement

Multiple assessment methods are used to evaluate student achievement at Excel. Our early childhood program uses age-appropriate developmental learning steps as an indication of progress. An examination of these steps indicated that although the majority of the students were making appropriate progress in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, approximately 30% of the students began to experience difficulties in acquiring the reading skills necessary for successful progress. Our primary teachers recognized this weakness and over 70% of the teachers took advantage of spring and summer coursework offered in promoting phonemic awareness and developing a balanced approach to literacy. Title I staff will support their efforts to incorporate these strategies in daily instruction. Project SUCCESS instruction will provide a continuation of these successful strategies in a new program model designed to accelerate learning in the intermediate grades.
Results of the mid-year and end-year assessments given in grades 1 through 5 to accompany the adopted core reading program indicate that a significant number of students at each grade level fail to meet grade-level expectations. Disaggregated data also indicated that the percent of African American males below level was greater than other groups at all grade levels. Writing skills are measured in fourth grade through a county writing test. A rubric score of 5.5 is our target goal. Although we have seen increased success each year, only 50% of fourth grade students achieved the target score this year, with females achieving a greater rate of success. Our CSRP indicates that resource teachers will continue to work to assist teachers with writing strategies.

Another measure of our student achievement is student success once they move to middle school. An examination of recent functional reading scores indicated that 27% of Excel’s graduates failed to pass this measure on their first attempt. Excel is a feeder school for Happy Middle School and Best High School, both schools with high levels of at-risk students. It is imperative that our departing students possess the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve success at the next levels. Project SUCCESS will allow us to provide a focused intervention for students preparing to make this transition.

An examination of the Anywhere School Performance Assessment Program (ASPAP) results for grades three and five over the three previous years indicates that many of the initiatives included in our CSRP have made an impact. The effective use of resource personnel in a school-wide emphasis on writing was reflected in student achievement across the curriculum. Teacher emphasis on stance questions and revisiting text has resulted in improved skills. The percentage of our students that did not achieve satisfactory scores is decreasing, but we still experience significant shortcomings in student achievement in all twelve of the assessed content areas. Reading scores in both the third and fifth grades are our weakest areas and this lack of success impacts all other assess areas. Our CSRP therefore targets intervention in reading for grades three, four, and five.


Disaggregated data indicates significant differences based on race. African American students, males in particular, perform significantly below the rest of the school population in reading. Grade 3 data indicates 57.1% of our African American males fail to achieve satisfactory levels and 90% of grade 5 African American males fail to reach satisfactory levels. CSRP will target this population for inclusion in our intervention program.

The California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) is given to students in grades two and four. Results show a significant number of students performing below grade level in the area of Reading, Language, and Math. The number of students below level actually increased in 1999 in all three areas. We anticipate that the school-wide adoption of a new math program focused on the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) goals will be reflected in an upward turn in math achievement during the 2001-02 school year. Disaggregated data again indicated a disproportionate number of African American students represented in the below-level groups.
We have made gains in our student achievement goals, but are in need of an effective research based intermediate intervention to bring about lasting improvement in the learning of our increasingly diverse student population.

Excel Elementary has incorporated various **instructional strategies, programs and resources** to respond to this need, though, implementation is inconsistent and varies within and across grade levels. Classroom practices and policies with a high influence on student learning focus on the teacher as the agent of action; a rich and cognitively challenging classroom environment; and teacher-student interactions concerning the learning tasks. Our CSRP addresses flexible instructional groups and the need to differentiate instruction. Project SUCCESS provides this framework within well-organized lessons that furnish frequent feedback for our struggling readers. With our high mobility rate we need a program that would produce accelerated gains in a minimal amount of time. The Project SUCCESS study group demonstrated significant gains in an average of 76 days of instruction. Impressive gains have since been replicated in extended day and extended year programs. It is essential for all teachers to implement the strategies that empower students to become responsible for their learning and achieve success. Excel has initiated many of the early literacy strategies proposed by J. David Cooper in his book, Literacy: Helping Children Construct Meaning. The establishment of this new program, Project SUCCESS and its product model, Soar to Success, will provide a common thread and enable all levels at Excel Elementary to address our common needs.

A vital part of our **school operations** is the Pupil Services Team (PST). The PST provides evaluation of student progress and makes recommendations for adaptations to individual student educational programs. These programs might address behavior, academic performance, and emotional well being of the student. They are often an indication of a student’s failure to thrive in current programs. During the 1998-1999 school year, almost 20% of our population was referred to the PST. While it was determined that 47% of the referred students do not qualify for special education services, these students still need program alternatives. Scheduling provides our special education staff with opportunities to collaborate with classroom teachers through inclusion. Project SUCCESS will empower these teachers with a powerful tool for intervention.

Attendance is an important component of an effective school. We examined attendance records to determine the impact at Excel and discovered that we attained the excellence rating for 1998. Our students attend regularly so we must match programs to meet their needs. Our CSRP encourages teachers to collaborate to integrate classroom instruction and implement complex reform. Staff development opportunities provided through Project SUCCESS will provide access to new knowledge about effective practices and will enhance these efforts toward collaboration. The CSRP requires a disciplined environment conducive to learning. Data gathered from the Behavior Management Center reveals more than half the referrals were the result of physical contact, often an implication of high level of student frustration. Our guidance counselor will provide conflict resolution activities and facilitate a school-wide focus on positive values.

In recent years, students have been afforded **extended learning opportunities** through several programs and activities. Excel Elementary has a computer laboratory and science lab. Support staff facilitates the use of these resources. Other programs include Jump Start, Summer of Safety Arts and Reading Camp, and Summer Reading Academy. These
activities focus on continuing the education program through parental involvement and reinforcement of successful strategies utilized within the school program. Project SUCCESS trained staff will be readily available to participate in these programs and extend learning throughout the year.

While these CSRP initiatives have made some impact on student achievement, our concern still exists. A significant portion of our population continues to be unsuccessful in meeting established expectations. Our high mobility rate must be taken into consideration. Our goal is to establish an intervention program that ensures a consistent and sustained effect in a short amount of time. Project SUCCESS will enable Excel Elementary to implement a comprehensive school-wide approach to effective instructional strategies that enhance student achievement across the curriculum. Through assimilation of effective initiatives, students will attain success and become empowered to assume responsibility for their learning. By providing students with a consistent intensive, focused instructional program, they will accomplish outcomes designated in the Excel Elementary School Improvement Plan as well as the National Education Goals: Building a Nation of Learners.

The Project SUCCESS/Soar to Success model employs strategies and proven methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that are based on reliable research and effective practices. The project has been replicated in over 1000 sites across the country with diverse characteristics. Our team investigations indicated that the model meets the most rigorous standards of evidence of effectiveness.

The theoretical or research foundation of the program:

The goal of intervention instruction must be to accelerate reading as quickly as possible to get students reading successfully, on-level or higher (Allington & Walmsley, 1995). Project SUCCESS is designed to accelerate reading for intermediate grade-level students using authentic literature sequenced in complexity, reciprocal teaching, and graphic organizers. It requires 40-minutes daily lessons four or five times a week, delivered to small groups of 5 to 7 students in addition to quality classroom instruction.

Program researchers first examined the characteristics of struggling readers in grades three and above and noted that the gap between the least able and most able continues to widen over the years. These students have problems construction meaning and although they often know the isolated elements of decoding, they do not apply them. When literature on instruction for struggling readers was further examined, reciprocal teaching was the only strategy having solid research evidence that showed it could accelerate reading for students in a short amount of time.

The goal of reciprocal teaching is to involve students and teachers in a dialogue designed to promote comprehension of text material. Palinscar and Brown (1986) have found that the technique actively involves the students in the process of "meaning making" while developing conscious use of effective comprehension strategies. Reciprocal teaching has been successfully used with students of differing ability levels in primary grades through high school. In the Project SUCCESS program, teachers and students silently read a meaningful chunk of text and then take turns being teacher and modeling the four reciprocal teaching strategies: Clarify, Predict, Question, and Summarize. The Clarify strategy also provides a
place to teach students to apply decoding skills when encountering unknown words or confusing text.

The use of graphic organizers has been widely promoted as an effective means of helping students visually construct meaning and organize information. The explicit modeling and application of the graphic organizers in Project SUCCESS will provide the additional support our struggling readers need to successfully use these tools across content areas.

Intervention programs are specifically designed for students already having difficulty in reading. Research indicated that it was important to scaffold instruction with heavy teacher support initially, quickly moving students toward independence. This approach is imbedded in the structure of reciprocal teaching. Scaffolding is also used in the sequencing of books within and across the various levels of the Soar to Success instructional materials included in the program.

The final design component examined by researchers was the lessons learned for successful early intervention programs. The structure and pacing of these programs were found to be critical to their success. Project SUCCESS developers designed the 40-minute lesson in a highly scripted fashion to provide the support instructors need as they learn the five lesson components. The repetition and review keep students focused on the same four strategies, and the fast pace of the lesson provides the focus and motivation necessary to keep intermediate readers actively involved.

**Evaluation-based evidence of improvement in student achievement:**

There were 13 site locations identified for the initial 1996-97 study of the Project SUCCESS program. The population for the study was fourth-grade students identified through standardized tests as considerably below grade level in 24 different schools within the sites. The sites ranged from major metropolitan areas to rural areas. Students were randomly selected for research and control groups and the control groups were given instruction from their regular reading program. The two instruments selected for use in the study were the Qualitative Reading Inventory-II (QRI-II) and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests. These two instruments measured 5 different items – Silent Reading-Retelling, Silent Reading-Answering Questions, Oral Reading-Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. The average amount of instructional time was 75.8 days.

![Project SUCCESS 1996-1997 National Research Study](imageURL)

**Project SUCCESS 1996-1997 National Research Study**

Posttest Comparison After Average of 71 Days of Instruction

![Graph showing evaluation results](imageURL)

N = 185, 160

* Significant at .05 level
When the pretest and posttest means were compared, the percentage of students up to level in the Project SUCCESS group was consistently higher (refers to chart above). No overall statistical differences were obtained with a pullout or in-class location for instruction. Long-term achievement gains are part of an ongoing study. However, data covering the period from 1997-2000 is consistent with those gains achieved in the original study (see ongoing study data).

Evidence of effective implementation:

The Project SUCCESS model is fully implemented in the thirteen original sites and has been expanded within many of those districts to include additional schools as well as new sites across the United States. To date there are over 2,500 teachers trained through the Level I Intermediate Intervention Institutes, and the project is being replicated in over 1000 schools. Many of these schools are Title I sites and are similar in demographics to Excel Elementary. Our investigation team established networks at three of those sites:

(Choose sites from the Project Success/Soar to Success Tests Results 1997-2001 that are similar to applying school)

During the training institute, teachers are given a clear understanding of all of the model's implementation requirements, and those requirements are restated in the teacher’s manual provided with the Soar to Success materials. Methods are identified for selecting students, and assessment tools are included with the program. Scheduling options are presented and scripted lessons designed. Staff development is an important requirement for successful implementation, and guidelines for coaching and monthly meetings are clearly established, with a video to support these efforts provided with the program purchase. A site coordinator provides management, support, and staff development assistance to assure consistent implementation within the site.

Evidence of replicability:

To date there are more than 30 districts in their third or fourth year of implementing Project SUCCESS. These sites range from Springfield, Missouri to the inner city of Chicago. The model for delivery is not variable, however the location for delivery varies with pullout, in-class, extended day, and summer school being used alone or in various combinations. Once instructors are trained in the intervention components, the model is easily incorporated within existing programs in comprehensive reform efforts. The districts we conferred with emphasized the need for a strong program of staff development. Additional factors that affected successful implementation at these sites included scheduling, giving coaching and support, releasing and transitioning students, and staff mobility. Thorough ongoing implementation will be developed at this site. A network of support is already established and a site visit planned. Level II trainers will provide on-site training and support.

Excel Elementary has a long involvement in ongoing efforts at comprehensive school reform in an attempt to provide programs that will significantly improve the capacity of our students for healthy development and educational success. In identifying the need for Project SUCCESS, we continually examined our CSRP and the effective components in place. As a School-wide Title I site we have established resources that provide a great deal of parental and community involvement. In recent years at Excel, a pre-school story hour introduced
literature to families; a Buddy Program provided positive role models and instructional support; Library on Wheels brought books to the community; and an extensive volunteer and community partnership program reinforced classroom learning. These programs involved many of our families in school efforts but often did not include commitment from intermediate-level parents. Project SUCCESS provides a method for establishing positive communication and enabling greater partnership with these parents.

Numerous programs and approaches have been initiated to provide a variety of learning experiences. Paraprofessionals, Extended Day, Summer Reading Academy, and Summer of Safety, Art and Reading through Recreation and Parks have proved effective in meeting some of our needs; regardless of how worthwhile these efforts are, they are often fragmented and communicate varying expectations.

The comprehensive design of Project SUCCESS will allow us to align many different components of our CSRP. The strategies included in reciprocal teaching and identified graphic organizers will be incorporated into instruction at all grade levels. Professional development activities will provide focused goals and common vision. The site coordinator will assist with management and assessment as well as providing additional communication with parents. Supportive networks will be established through phone, fax and e-mail within the district and throughout the county. The external support and assistance provided by the consultants will ensure we maintain our commitment toward successful learning for all students.

The variety of intervention options, in-class, pullout, extended day, and extended year, provides flexibility in coordinating all available resources to effectively reach our CSRP milestones. The assessment components of Project SUCCESS will provide additional measures of student achievement and teacher growth.

The involvement of our staff and parent support groups in the choice and development of this model provides us with a firm foundation of support that will enable us to reach students of all abilities.

(2) Quality of Measurable Goals and Milestones

The CSRP includes achievement goals for each of the content areas: Science, Social Studies, Mathematics, Reading, Writing and Language Usage. In revealing her twelve-step plan for increasing the reading skills of Best County public schools, Dr. Lotta Smart, chair of the Anywhere State Department of Education’s Task Force on Reading, stressed reading as the key to success in all subject areas. Excel's continued focus on reading achievement and the addition of a new program, Project SUCCESS, will assist us in providing the differentiated instruction necessary for all our students, including special education students and students who transfer to our school, to meet our stated goals:

The achievement goals for Reading and Writing state that by the year 2002:

- 75% of students will demonstrate appropriate grade-level outcomes and indicators in reading and writing.
- 70% of students in grades 3 and 5 will receive a score of satisfactory on the ASPAP.
- 75% of fourth-grade students will score 5.5 or higher on the Best County Writing Assessment.
100% of Special Education students will master their IEP goals/objectives for reading and written language.

These goals are based on Anywhere State Department of Education Goals and Best County School District’s Goals that promote high expectations for learning and include goals in Achievement, Partnership, and Safe and Orderly Environment. State and local goals in turn reflect the eight National Education Goals that provide a framework for educational reform and promote systemic changes needed to ensure equitable educational achievement for all students.

Our goals are woven throughout the CSRP. Excel’s early childhood programs provide **readiness for learning**. Positive role models reinforce the importance of **completing an education**. New **math and science** programs help our students make real world connections and promote excellence. We maintain a **safe and orderly learning environment** through a school-wide discipline plan and a focus on values. We strive to achieve balanced membership in SIT (school improvement team) and to gain a greater degree of **parental participation** in all programs. We communicate literacy goals and the value of lifelong learning. The two goals that require our most extensive efforts are **student achievement and citizenship** and **teacher education and professional development**.

To achieve our reading and writing goals and objectives, our CSRP includes modeling and teaching strategic reading behaviors, improving student comprehension by using a variety of text, differentiating instruction to meet student needs, integrating reading/writing across the curriculum, and celebrating student’s writing.

The school will utilize all available resources and personnel provided through the Best County School District and Federal, State and private grants to increase literacy. Classroom teachers will assess, monitor, plan, and implement balanced reading programs. Resource and Title I Personnel will collaborate with classroom teachers, modeling effective instructional techniques and facilitating the writing process with groups of students. Tutors and volunteers will work with direction from classroom teachers to provide small-group reinforcement of skills and strategies. Parents shall ensure that homework is completed, provide a time for reading each day, monitor their child/children’s progress, and communicate with the teacher. Additional programs include: extended day – tutoring, extended year, and partnership for volunteers. As a Title I school, Excel is able to provide pre-school reading hour and home learning packets. Project SUCCESS would be an integral part of our quilt of literacy.

Project SUCCESS is a highly effective program that will be used as a means of providing differentiated instruction to meet the needs of identified students in the intermediate grades. Our goal is to ensure equity and provide the means for these students to leave Excel with a firm foundation for lifelong learning. With our highly mobile rate, Excel frequently has students who arrive in the intermediate classes without having the benefit of early literacy intervention, and who lack the skills necessary for success.

Continuing to allow students to depart from elementary school below grade level will only cause the gap to continue to widen between our least and most able students, black and white students and our economically diverse population. Project SUCCESS is a small-group intervention of short duration (16 weeks). This intervention will have a direct impact on all achievement goals. Students will be provided with the knowledge and skill needed to
achieve mastery of appropriate grade-level outcomes, indicators and benchmark expectations.

**MILESTONES**

- By the end of January, 2000, participating teachers will be identified and trained.
- By mid-February, 2000, students will be assessed and identified for participation.
- By the end of February, 2000, students will begin receiving instruction.
- By the end of March, 2000, and every four weeks after, data will be collected and students’ progress will be evaluated using oral reading checks and the retelling protocol.
- Documentation will verify that 80% of participating students will have achieved a minimum growth of three months for each month of participation.
- In June 2000, final data will be collected and evaluated. Results will be disaggregated to determine effectiveness and program adjustments made.
- Documentation will verify that 75% of the students receiving intervention will demonstrate appropriate grade level outcomes and indicators in reading.

**This cycle will continue each year of the grant**

**Table 1**

(3) Quality of Professional Development

Michael Fullans stated, “The purpose of staff development is not just to implement isolated instructional innovations; its central purpose is to build strong collaborative work cultures that will develop the long-term capacity for change.” Staff Development at Excel will be used to promote common professional growth, increase the number of Excel fifth-graders leaving our school on or above grade level, and to facilitate the implementation and integration of Project SUCCESS. The staff will be involved in a variety of experiences.

In January 2000 staff members will be trained at the Level I Intermediate Intervention institute located in Pennsylvania. Participants will include: two teachers from each of the intermediate grades, two Special Education teachers, and one resource teacher. This 15-hour training examines all program components: the research base, selecting and releasing students, the instructional plan, reciprocal teaching, supporting teachers throughout the year, and organization and management. After completion of the two-day training, the staff members will be able to implement the intervention model with students, coach other teachers, assess and evaluate progress and coordinate activities within Excel Elementary.

A meeting will be scheduled for a minimum of an hour each month before or after school for staff to share intervention strategies and evaluate progress. Topics might include: taking oral reading checks and running records, observation of strategic reading behaviors, retelling checks, development of record-keeping forms and follow-up training in coaching/observation models. As teachers become more skilled with intervention strategies and Soar to Success materials, there will be more time at each meeting for consultation between classroom teachers and intervention providers, and for teachers to discuss questions, concerns, and issues dealing with our CSRP.

Coaching in teaching is the process of helping a teacher internalize a set of instructional strategies through observation and feedback. Research by Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers (1981) shows this to be a powerful tool. Substitutes will be provided bi-monthly to
allow teachers to serve as peer coaches to enhance the implementation of Project SUCCESS intervention.

Over the next three years, program consultants will be involved in ongoing training at our site. These consultants will spend a day at Excel in spring, 2000, fall, 2000, spring 2001, and spring 2002 to provide the instruction and assistance necessary for accelerating student learning. A research consultant will also be available to provide guidance with effective evaluation measures.

At the end of our first year of implementation, two staff members who have worked successfully with intervention models will be sent for Level II training. Upon completion of this three-day Institute, they will be qualified to train interested teachers within our district in the use of the Project SUCCESS. A local Institute at the beginning of the 2001 school year will qualify additional staff members as instructors and enhance efforts to imbed these strategies into our CSRP.

Lucy Calkins stated “One way to become more powerful teachers of reading is by forming study groups with fellow teachers.” Surveys indicated that the staff at this site strongly supports the formation of a monthly literacy group. This activity will empower them to become strong instructors of reading and develop common understandings, expectations and goals. Led by knowledgeable facilitators, they plan to examine professional literature and discuss effective practices that impact the daily learning of all students.

Support systems throughout the area have joined our initiative. Best College provides assistance for many of our CSRP initiatives. Student teachers placed at Excel will be included in our staff development and the college has sent one of their instructors to Level I training to gain a better understanding of this program. Best County School District, having also recognized the value of this program, provided the resources for the Supervisor of Language Arts to receive training. Her knowledge will enhance our efforts and facilitate communication with other sites throughout the country.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type of Inservice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January, 2000</td>
<td>Ø Staff members sent to Level I training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monthly 2000-2002</td>
<td>Ø Staff Development Meeting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ø Literacy Group Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ø Coaching (alternating teachers)</td>
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<td>Spring ’00, Fall ’00, Spring ’01, Fall ’01</td>
<td>Ø Training led by program consultants</td>
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<tr>
<td>June, 2000</td>
<td>Ø Staff members sent to Level II training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer, 2000/Fall 2000</td>
<td>Ø Level I training at Excel</td>
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Table 2

The school improvement team at Excel and the district support staff communicate an outstanding commitment to professional development. Funding through our school-wide Title I program support both the positions of facilitator and teacher/tutor. These individuals model effective teaching strategies and provide staff-development activities that enhance our CSRP program. The additional training received through Project SUCCESS will enhance their effectiveness in the intermediate grades. Best County also funds the position of instructional resource teacher and this individual provides expertise and support for CSRP initiatives, and
will be part of the team that received initial training. District level support personnel provide expertise in reciprocal teaching and assessment strategies and will be involved in our monthly staff-development activities. The Higher Education Center has many courses available to teachers that enable us to differentiate instruction to meet a variety of needs. Our CSRP goal is to provide common staff development experiences to enable our staff to provide focused and consistent instruction for all students.

(4) Quality of support within the School & Parent/Community Involvement

During the summer, SIT members met to examine CSRP and discuss the opportunity to develop an additional component that might target any weaknesses in student achievement. We began by assembling and disaggregating the data to determine the needs of Excel. There were several meetings with stakeholders from all grade levels and the school community during which we examined our findings and established priorities. The next step was to evaluate the available models that were identified as promoting successful school reform. A match to Excel and its identified needs was not found among those programs. Further investigation revealed an independent model that effectively matched our staff and intervention needs. A representative sample of staff members met to further research and evaluate the model. Their positive findings were highly supportive of Project SUCCESS and the entire staff was presented with the model and professional development requirements. At that meeting, over 95% of the staff agreed to support and actively participate in the program model. The parents and staff members of the SIT team were then brought back on board to assist in the drafting of the grant proposal. Each staff member was then given a copy of this proposal along with clarification of individual commitment. A final meeting was held to address questions and concerns and then the staff voted by secret ballot on the adoption of the model. A ballot count indicated that over 80% of the staff affirmed their commitment to initiate Project SUCCESS as a component of CSRP.

In the CSRP, the involvement of parents and community is clearly defined and they are considered a valuable resource in the school. Parents and community members are encouraged to become active in the SIT and PTA meetings, where school improvement activities are discussed and parents and community members join in the dialogue. All stakeholders were invited to the initial planning meeting and parents were involved in all phases of the research and writing of the proposal. The draft proposal was presented at the September PTA meeting and questions were addressed. Once the program is adopted, all parents will be kept informed of milestones at future PTA and SIT meetings. Parents of participating students will be invited to informational meetings throughout the program and will be involved in their children's weekly instruction. Parents and community members support the CSRP through volunteering, monitoring homework, and ensuring daily attendance. The PTA and SIT have favorably received Project SUCCESS and the addition of this model to the CSRP will reinforce and increase current involvement.

(5) Quality of Ongoing Support and Technical Assistance

Support will be provided through a three-year commitment with developers and researchers of Project SUCCESS and Soar to Success. This commitment will include:
Ongoing consultation, training, and assistance – available by phone, e-mail, fax or in person for refinement and implementation monitoring

Establishment of a three-to-five year research project using Project SUCCESS model/Soar to Success materials – provide support for measurement of long-term growth of participating students

Collaboration with a research consultant and provision of assessment materials

Opportunity to network with other Project SUCCESS schools – directory provided to all participants of Intermediate Intervention Institutes

Level II training at the Intervention Institute will result in select teachers becoming coaches in order to build training capacity within our staff and thus successfully support monthly ongoing training meetings

Services of the developers and researchers on the Project SUCCESS team:
  - J. David Cooper, Irene Boschken, Janet McWilliams, Lynne Pistochni
  - Teacher-users/trainers
  - Soar to Success Program consultants

Developers/researchers will provide three scheduled site visits to present identified program components

(6) Quality of Project Evaluation

Too often schools institute reform efforts without adequate means of evaluating their impact on student achievement. One of the compelling reasons Excel selected Project SUCCESS was due to the embedded evaluative measures the program incorporated. Instructors continually observe and evaluate individual progress. (Table I) If the grant is awarded, Excel has been approached to serve as a long-term research site. If we choose to participate, the progress of identified students would be monitored carefully to verify the continued success of program participants over the course of several years. This would also allow us to be in continuous contact with a research consultant who would assist in ongoing student and project evaluation. The Region III Comprehensive Center for Equity and Excellence in Education is available to provide assistance with implementation and evaluation.

Pre- and posttesting for student participation will utilize the Johns Basic Reading Inventory, an instrument that is already a part of our assessment protocol. The progress of students will be carefully monitored through the Oral Reading Checks and the Retelling Protocol instruments included with the Soar to Success materials. Successful progress will be established by a score of 90% or higher for oral reading fluency and a score of 75% or higher on retelling. An individual record of progress will be kept for each student and collected monthly to evaluate progress and make program adjustments. Students dismissed from the program will be transitioned into full classroom instruction and provisions made to monitor their continued success. Mid-Year and End-Year school-wide assessments and statewide testing will be examined to document progress in attaining CSRP goals.

Staff development goals will also be carefully examined. Teacher training in alternative assessments will allow us to further document the progress of all of our students. Staff input will be continually gathered for planning monthly meetings and consultant visits. Participation in professional study groups will also allow us to measure our growth toward a shared vision for student learning and achievement.
Project SUCCESS will allow us to measure and analyze:

- The number of students attaining grade-appropriate mastery of outcomes, indicators, and benchmarks
- Students’ oral ready fluency
- Student use of strategic reading behaviors
- Student achievement on ASPAP and CTBS

(7) Coordination of Resources and Sustainability

Our CSRP represents an integration of a variety of federal, state, and local resources that support and sustain efforts for school reform. Best College and community partnerships provide innumerable volunteer hours for program support. (See budget attachment for summary of funding resources). The coordination of federal and state funds make possible the following positions and programs: Title I funds are allocated to provide staffing for a Title I Facilitator, a paraprofessional, and two hourly workers. Title I funds are also designated for staff development, materials of instruction and parent workshops. This includes paying for presenters, materials, and provision of supervised activities for children of parents attending the workshops. One teacher and one paraprofessional are funded by the EEEP for pre-kindergarten program. A Behavior Management Monitor position is funded through the use of Targeted Poverty II Grant funds and a Resource Teacher/Tutor is funded through Targeted Improvement funds. These existing positions will be utilized in the implementation of our new program.

Project SUCCESS will enable us to sustain comprehensive school reform over an extended period of time. Materials purchased during the initial implementation will be available for use in future years. Training will be conducted for intermediate teachers, as well as others who are interested. The site is planning to provide Level II training for one to two key people to enable new staff members to receive instruction for continued support of the program. A site coordinator will be put in place to oversee the project for one and one-half years to ensure the establishment of a solid foundation. Once training is provided for the staff in the implementation of program strategies, instruction in all content areas will be impacted. The collaboration and utilization of all resources will allow co-workers to support each other on a daily basis.

In addition to site support, there also exist initiatives that will enable county and nationwide support. Three additional schools in our district have participated in the training and plan to implement an intermediate intervention model. This will allow for communication and support among schools within our district. As part of the program, we have the opportunity of participating in a research project for three to five years. An Internet Web site is being created which will allow us to make connections with schools who are participants in the program to discuss successes, problems, and solutions. Institutes are scheduled which will allow us to establish a relationship with our associates who are utilizing the same intervention program.

(8) Management Systems

A critical component of the CSRP is the method through which the program is integrated, implemented, monitored, and evaluated. A collaborative decision was made by the school improvement team and school staff to utilize the Project SUCCESS program to achieve success with all students. To begin implementation, key people will receive training and will
begin intervention with identified students. Once the grant is awarded, a designated team will participate in a site visit to examine a school-wide program where Project SUCCCESS has made a positive impact in order to identify successful implementation strategies. Participating teachers will be identified and trained at the next locally scheduled Intervention Institute in January of 2000, at King of Prussia, PA. Identification of students will be finalized and intervention instruction scheduled to begin in February. Four weeks after instruction begins, and every four weeks thereafter, student progress data will be collected and evaluated to determine growth. Classroom teachers and instructors will consult on a regular basis to evaluate student carryover and readiness for transition and dismissal. Substitute teachers will be provided to facilitate staff development and coaching activities. The literacy study group will meet monthly with a facilitator who will record topics and activities. In June of 2000, final data for the year will be collected and results disaggregated to evaluate program effectiveness. The process will start again in September of 2000 and continue until the end of the grant period.

Several components will be utilized in order to effectively monitor the program. As a research site, a consultant will monitor the program to ensure ongoing implementation and participate in the evaluation of student data. Teams of teachers have devised forms for collecting achievement data and all teachers will utilize this framework. Within the Soar to Success materials there are recording devices that will be used by teachers. Other instruments already in place for all students such as running records, portfolios, and additional data recording sheets, will also be included during the evaluation process. When data collection is completed, the site coordinator will compile the information for examination by all stakeholders.

Periodic updates concerning the implementation of the program will occur on a regular basis. Once a month, at the regularly scheduled SIT meetings, the site coordinator will give a report. The report will include data identifying the number of students serviced, number of students attaining grade-level expectations, number of staff members receiving training, documentation of parent involvement, and other components of the program. This report will then be shared with the PTA.

Throughout the program, it is imperative that milestones are reviewed and necessary adaptations instituted. Beginning in March and every four weeks after, the progress of participating intermediate grade students will be monitored and evaluated and an ongoing summary of progress provided to teachers and parents. During regularly scheduled SIT meetings disaggregated data will be examined and a consensus reached concerning improvements and necessary adjustments. Decisions will then be reported to the entire staff.

**9 Coordination of Resources/Budget**

The CSR funds alone are not intended to support the full implementation of a comprehensive school reform program on an ongoing basis, including possible curriculum changes, sustained professional development, enhanced parental involvement, and the like. Therefore, CSR resources must be coordinated with other federal funds, including Title I, Goals 2000, School to Work, Reading Excellence, Title II, and Title VI – as well as state, local and private resources to leverage school improvement. The CSR funds must supplement,
not supplant federal, state and local funds that the local school system and school would therefore receive.

The chart below demonstrates the coordination of funds that will be utilized in support of our CSRP at Excel Elementary School.

(Chart that demonstrates coordination of services and monies between the variety of program funds and the CSR)

# Proposed Budget Summary

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Half-Time Site Coordinator</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>32,000</td>
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<td><strong>Level I Training:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nine staff members will attend the Intermediate Intervention Institute sponsored by Houghton Mifflin to receive training in intermediate intervention strategies and enable them to successfully implement the Project SUCCESS model. Includes travel.</td>
<td>$11,500</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Level II Training:</strong></td>
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<td>Two staff members will attend a three-day training session to qualify as trainers/coaches. They will provide Level I training for Excel Elementary school staff and other Best County staff who may be interested in implementing the model. Includes travel.</td>
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<td>$5,000</td>
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<td><strong>Consultant:</strong></td>
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<td>Consultants from Project SUCCESS/Soar to Success Developers/Researchers will provide additional training and monitor the implementation of the program and will provide assistance in the development of assessments and evaluation data.</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>$7,800</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
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<td><strong>Site Visit:</strong></td>
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<td>A representative team from the SIT will visit a comparable site where the Project SUCCESS model has made a positive impact in order to identify successful implementation strategies.</td>
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<td>$325</td>
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<td><strong>Staff Development:</strong></td>
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<td>Additional staff training will take place during the summer of 2001. The goal is for all classroom teachers to be eventually trained so that there will be consistency in the implementation of the intervention program.</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
<td>$2,450</td>
<td>$2,450</td>
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<td><strong>Coaching:</strong></td>
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<td>Through coaching, staff will be able to develop their skills in implementing the project and will become more effective instructionally</td>
<td>$750</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>$750</td>
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<td><strong>Materials of Instruction:</strong></td>
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<td>The initial cost of materials is the greatest in the first year, decreasing each year with the ability of the program to continue after the three-year grant period. Program materials include the Soar to Success materials, additional books for classroom/home practice, and other record-keeping tools.</td>
<td>$8,275</td>
<td>$2,115</td>
<td>$1,525</td>
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<td><strong>Parent Workshops:</strong></td>
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<td>Regularly scheduled workshops will be held to introduce the program to each group of parents. Additional workshops will be</td>
<td>$475</td>
<td>$525</td>
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held to provide parents with strategies for helping their children maintain the progress they make through intervention. Includes materials such as the Whole Village Home Involvement package.

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<th>Dialogue Groups:</th>
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<td></td>
<td>$5,225</td>
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<th>Totals</th>
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