

Request for Proposal for Early Literacy Support

Proposal Deadline: Friday April 6, 2020

Proposal Contact: Emilie Raczek (eraczek@kipp.org)

Organizational Overview:

Great education transforms lives. KIPP, the Knowledge is Power Program, is a non-profit network of 242 college-preparatory, public charter schools educating nearly 100,000 early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school students. KIPP schools are tuition-free, public charter schools open to all students. KIPP schools, KIPP regions, and the KIPP Foundation – are united by a common mission, a commitment to excellence, and a belief that if we help children develop the academic and character strengths they need for college and choice filled lives, they will be able to build a better tomorrow for themselves, for their communities, for us all.

The non-profit KIPP Foundation trains and develops outstanding educators to lead KIPP schools, provides tools, resources, and training for excellent teaching and learning, promotes innovation, and facilitates the exchange of insights and ideas within the KIPP network and with partners including: other charters, districts, colleges and universities, and non-profit organizations across the country.

Strengthening Outcomes in Early Literacy:

Our Context

The KIPP network has recently adopted a new 2025 strategy. As part of that strategy, we are striving to make significant progress within our learning experience, alumni success, community engagement and advocacy and growth. We aim to deliver a consistently excellent learning experience for our students with college and career-ready academics in joyful schools that affirm student's identities. As part of this work, we've identified that we need to address a root cause of lagging early literacy outcomes in K-3, so that we can eventually see an increase in the percentage of 3rd graders on track to being college-ready in ELA.

As part of co-creating the 2025 plan with the network, we are embracing a new way of working. Each region that has identified early literacy as a core priority will set their own student achievement and growth goal. Some regions have set ambitious goals such as 100% of students reading on grade-level by third grade (KIPP NYC). While we have previously started with an initial goal of standardization aligned to best practices, our current goal is to be region-led to allow for potential variations in academic requirements by states and authorizers as well as past regional experience in foundational literacy instruction that may lead to them have a region-specific set of criteria in choosing curriculum and assessments. KIPP Foundation is supportive of that level of choice, presuming that those choices align to the cognitive science of how students learn to read.

We are looking to launch an early literacy learning collaborative that allows for some shared learning across the network, but prioritizes each region going on a tailored, research-based journey to strengthen their comprehensive early literacy system – including vision and goals, curriculum and instruction, assessment, professional learning, mindsets and culture, and time/schedule. We imagine in the first year 5-7 regions will go on this journey. Regions also have a resource in KIPP NYC, which has started

their early literacy work over the past year and will be one year ahead. We anticipate KIPP NYC could be an important change management and advisory hub for participating regions to see what a strong early literacy program looks like in action over the next year.

Regions participating in the early literacy collaborative will receive financial support to fuel work around the early literacy priority, become part of a learning and collaboration community of all regions working towards improving early literacy outcomes and will receive deep subject matter expert support.

Our Logic Model for Year 1

- In order for KIPP regions to increase the number of students reading at grade level by 3rd grade in alignment with our collective 2025 goal, early literacy instruction, curriculum and assessment must be aligned with the cognitive science of how students learn how to read.
- In order for early literacy instruction, curriculum, and assessment to be aligned with the cognitive science, teachers, coaches, and leaders must deeply understand the cognitive science and implications for foundational skills instruction.
- In order for teachers, coaches, and leaders to understand the cognitive science and implications for foundational skills instruction, they must be explicitly taught the science and instructional implications, they must observe and experience excellent, aligned instruction, and they must be observed and coached to excellence.
- In order for leaders to be observed and coached to excellence, they must align around what excellent coaching on early literacy instruction looks like and get feedback on their implementation of that approach.
- In order for the KIPP network to be able to optimally support each other in improving early literacy instruction, regions should align around a research-based vision for the literacy block, a vision for excellent foundational skills instruction, and a short list of curriculum and assessments that provide a common language for coaching, professional learning, and improvement. Regions should also adopt a continuous improvement process to set and monitor progress towards goals.

Key Questions to Revisit Through This Work (over multiple years)

- What does it take for a region to transform their early literacy program in alignment with the science of reading? What does this look like for regions of different sizes and contexts?
- What is the right pace of change balancing momentum and intentionality? What's the right sequencing of choices a region must make? How does this vary based on regional context?
- How should a region engage stakeholders in this process? How should regions engage parents given their critical role in helping their children build a love of reading?
- What curricular and assessment tools and practices are supported by cognitive science behind how students learn to read? What does the science imply for instructional approaches and time?
- How are regions implementing and operationalizing recommendations aligned to the science?
- What should classroom libraries look like?
- While strong tier one instruction is our objective, what does cognitive science suggest for how we should intervene with students who are not progressing in early literacy?
- What does a culturally responsive approach to early literacy entail?
- What does a coherent early literacy block look like? What guidance do we have for regions who are looking to revise their block?

- How does a region monitor progress? What data practices should regions be adopting to drive continued growth?
- What instructional, curricular, and assessment practices must we stop doing?
- What supports must regions provide teachers, coaches, and leaders on an ongoing basis? How does this support vary across different regional contexts (including very different per-pupil funding levels)?
- How do we continue to build joy in reading alongside an explicit focus on foundational skills?

Vendor requirements overview

KIPP Foundation is looking for a vendor to support regions in bringing their early literacy programs into alignment with the science of reading. The vendor must be able to work across multiple contexts given KIPP regions vary in size (number of schools), regional team expertise, per pupil funding and multiple other factors. In addition, the vendor will need to provide guidance to regions regardless of the region's specific curriculum and assessment choices. Vendors will, however, engage with and influence regions when curriculum and assessment do not align with the cognitive science. We are looking for a vendor to support building deep understanding in the science of reading in 2020-2021, while partnering with regions to lay out a multi-year plan for addressing all parts of their early literacy system over the following 2-3 years. In addition to supporting individual regions deeply, the vendor should identify meaningful opportunities for cross-region collaboration and learning. Lastly, the vendor should be able to track and monitor progress within and across regions to support KIPP Foundation's effort to track progress towards our ultimate 2025 goal. (Note that regions will be revising their 2025 3rd grade ELA goals in the fall. As a result, those goals will not be immediately available in all regions.)

Vendor requirements

1. Dedicated point of contact to work closely with KIPP Foundation's project manager
2. Desire for close partnership with and feedback from KIPP Foundation project team
3. Capacity to manage partnerships with multiple regions of differing contexts
4. Flexibility and responsiveness
5. A diverse and experienced team that respects and considers KIPP's mission and has prior experience in working with comparable organizations
6. A clear foundation in the science of reading

Vendor deliverables

1. An audit of regional early literacy practices to gain deep context of the current state of foundational skills programming in each region
2. Professional development for leaders (broadly defined to include regional leaders, school leaders, deans/APs, and teacher leaders) based in the cognitive science of how students learn to read
3. A plan to coach and develop leaders in implementing curricular, instructional, and assessment changes within their schools

4. A multi-year strategic plan co-created with each region to address the region's needs in building a coherent early literacy system, aligned to the audit; this plan should also include the change management approach relevant to each region
5. A plan to bring regions together at key points in their learning journey
6. A plan for robust program evaluation and impact measurement

Relevant dates and RFP Deadline:

1. RFP Release – March 20th
2. RFP Submissions – April 6th
3. Initial Foundation Review – April 6th – 10th
4. Follow Up Interviews with Relevant Vendors – April 6th – 17th
5. Selection of vendor – April 19th
6. Approval by KIPP Foundation Board – May 3rd
7. Launch with participating regions – summer

Proposal Elements: Vendors are not required to submit for all components. Please submit for areas of the project that you are best able to support. We will not eliminate vendors who only propose partnership for a subsection of the project.

1. Cover Page to include:
 - a. Name of Vendor
 - b. Contact information for the proposed project lead
2. Vendor capacity: Please describe the following briefly (no more than a sentence is needed for each bullet).
 - a. Describe capacity to provide dedicated staff to this project to support 6-7 regions
 - b. Describe capacity to operate on timeline described above
3. Approach
 - a. Approach, including key milestones
 - b. Multi-year vision
 - c. How would you measure impact and progress of regions?
 - d. How would you measure impact of programming?
 - e. How would you support regions in driving change?
 - f. How would you incorporate KIPP NYC in your work?
4. Research Base informing your approach
 - a. What is the research base that informs your approach? How has that research informed your approach?
5. Impact Data
 - a. What impact data do you have to support your programming?
6. Assumptions
 - a. The set of assumptions the vendor is operating under in order to drive successful implementation and completion of the project
7. Pricing: Please provide per-school and aggregate costs for supporting regions. If there are other costs that would be associated with this project that are not explicitly listed here, please specify them as well. Please also provide an overview of any economies of scale that we might achieve

in project pricing by working across multiple regions. In addition, if you have suggested a multi-year approach, please outline high level costs for future years in alignment with the set of activities.

8. References: Provide references, with contact names and telephone numbers, from two organizations with which the applicant has worked recently on a similar/relevant project

RFP Submission: Please electronically submit proposals to Emilie Raczek (eraczek@kipp.org) and cc procurement@kipp.org by 5 pm EST on Monday, April 6th.