



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION**

**RECIPIENTS OF THE SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM
SPECIAL COMPETITION: ENHANCED READING OPPORTUNITIES
NUMBER OF AWARDS FUNDED: 10**

The purpose of the Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) program is to promote academic achievement through the implementation or expansion of small, safe, and successful learning environments in large high schools to help ensure that all students graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to make successful transitions to college and careers. This special competition Enhanced Reading Opportunities (ERO), funded under the SLC program, is a national research evaluation of two promising supplemental reading programs.

Under the SLC-ERO Program, local education agencies (LEAs) applied for grants on behalf of two or four large comprehensive public high schools. The SLC-ERO grants provide funding for schools to participate in a national evaluation of two supplemental reading programs for striving ninth-grade readers that will be implemented within freshman academies, as well as funding to create or expand a broader SLC project at each school site. The two supplemental reading programs are: 1.) Strategic Instruction Model, from the University of Kansas's Center for Research on Learning, and 2.) Reading Apprenticeship Academic Literacy from the Strategic Literacy Initiative, from WestEd. These programs, selected by a panel of literacy experts, provide instruction in advanced decoding skills, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and metacognition and are able to be implemented to meet the needs of ninth-grade students who are reading two to four years below grade level.

LEAs were eligible to receive up to \$1,250,000 per school or a total of \$5,000,000 for four-school applicants. The ERO awards are 60-month grants, which include a portion of funds designated to support implementation of the assigned supplemental reading program, intensive professional development for the assigned program teacher, technical assistance from the program vendor and the cost of participating in the evaluation.

Profiles of Grant Recipients:

Atlanta Public Schools, Georgia.	Award Amount: \$4,980,000
Total Number of Schools: 4	
<i>Project Abstract:</i> Four of Atlanta's large comprehensive high schools are willing and qualified to participate in ERO. Each of these schools, Benjamin Mays High School, South Atlanta High School, Southside High School and Booker T. Washington High School, has developed a plan to add career pathways to their existing academic/career academies, all of which will complement their participation in the ERO project. Benjamin Mays High School will restructure its existing Science and Mathematics Academy to create a new Health Care Sciences and Technology Academy. South Atlanta High School proposes to enhance its existing SLC program in Finance and Business as well as create two new academies in the areas of Information Technology and Health Services. Southside High School will refine their current SLC activities provided under	

the Finance and Business Academy and will create a new Information Technology Academy with a focus on multimedia. Booker T. Washington High School will expand programs under their existing Finance and Business, Health Care Sciences, and Technology Academies. Each SLC plan includes intensive professional development activities focused on team building, classroom organization models, instructional “best practices,” interdisciplinary planning, thematic unit development as well as the use of technology to support instruction. Within each school, core area teachers will serve in an advisory capacity to provide both academic and non-academic support to students. In addition, each of the four schools will restructure their Ninth Grade Academies to create teams of 100 students with all students participating in AVID. The evaluation for the broader SLC project is to be undertaken by a team from Wellsys Corporation.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Maryland. Award Amount: \$4,962,833
Total Number of Schools: 4

Project Abstract: Four of Anne Arundel’s large comprehensive high schools are willing and qualified to participate in ERO. Arundel High School, Glen Burnie High School, Meade High School, and Old Mill High School are large schools, each with an enrollment near or above 2,000 students. The broader SLC project proposed for each site builds on extensive SLC activities already underway. In addition to strengthening existing career academies, developing shared planning time for teachers, and improving communication with parents and community members, the proposal seeks to begin implementation of looping for the 9th and 10th grades, plan the implementation of alternative education programs within the high schools via the SLCs, and offer dual credit courses in conjunction with a local community college. The evaluation for the broader SLC project is to be undertaken by RMC Corporation.

Omaha Public Schools, Nebraska. Award Amount: \$1,927,351
Total Number of Schools: 2

Project Abstract: Two of Omaha’s large comprehensive high schools are willing and qualified to participate in ERO. Omaha South High School and Benson High School have developed a joint plan to expand SLC activities currently underway. In an effort to improve the academic performance of all students, Omaha South and Benson propose to implement structural and operational changes, such instituting common planning time, restructuring course schedules, focusing curriculum to meet individual student needs and coordinating activities and services across grade levels. Each school also plans to build upon their existing SLC structures by supporting intensive professional development in specific content areas, instructional techniques and mentoring strategies. Dr. Peter Dewitz, a developer of district-wide assessment systems, will conduct an evaluation of the broader Omaha SLC project.

Greece Central/ Rochester City School Districts, New York. Award Amount: \$4,998,033
Total Number of Schools: 4

Project Abstract: This is a consortium application on behalf of three eligible high schools in Greece Central School District, Arcadia High School, Athena High School, and Olympia High School, and East High School in Rochester City School District. All four schools have more than 165 striving ninth grade readers, and all have committed to fully implementing a supplemental reading program at the conclusion of their participation in the research study. In the Greece Central schools, SLC activities will focus on expanding the existing Ninth Grade Academies, developing a Freshman Mentor Program, and providing professional development on project-based learning strategies. At East High School in Rochester, activities will focus on

expanding the Freshman Foundation Academy, creating a new career pathway for grades 10-12, and providing professional development emphasizing vertical teaming for revising curricula.

Syracuse City School District, New York.

Award Amount: \$5,000,000

Total Number of Schools: 4

Project Abstract: Four of Syracuse City School District’s (SCSD) large comprehensive high schools are willing and qualified to participate in ERO. Each of these schools, Corcoran High School, Fowler High School, Henninger High School, and Nottingham High School, has developed a unique plan to implement their own broader SLC initiatives to complement ERO participation. Corcoran will expand its offerings to include career academies for Visual and Performing Arts, for Environmental Studies, and for Health and Human Performance. Fowler will offer two new career academies, in Education and Business. Henninger will create a Math and Science academy. Nottingham will implement two new career academies, in Creative Arts and in Business and Health. Each SLC plan includes intensive professional development, and extended learning opportunities for students through after-school programs. In addition, the schools will together implement a project called the “SLC Student Support Network” in cooperation with local postsecondary institutions to provide school counseling interns to help guidance counselors at each site. An evaluation of the broader SLC project will be undertaken by a team from State University of New York at Oswego.

Richland County School District, South Carolina.

Amount Funded: \$2,500,000

Total Number of Schools: 2

Project Abstract: Two of Richland County’s large comprehensive high schools are willing and qualified to participate in ERO. Dreher High School and Lower Richland High School will build on the extensive SLC activities currently underway, which include freshman academies, upper academies, parent and community outreach and professional development. Dreher High School proposes to enhance the opportunities available within their existing Fine Arts, Health and Medicine, Finance and Business, Classical Studies and Engineering academies. Lower Richmond High School will expand their SLC activities across four career areas: Arts and Humanities; Health and Human Services; Engineering and Technology; and Business and Marketing. Each school will integrate vertical teaming and mentoring activities within their freshman and upper academies. In addition to expanding existing career academies, the district intends to strengthen professional development opportunities to include various cooperative and service learning models. Examples of proposed professional development topics include: identification of student learning styles, authentic assessment, integrated thematic instruction, project-based learning, best practices in core curriculum, portfolio development and assessment, cooperative discipline and team building. An independent evaluation team, specializing in program development and assessment, will be selected to conduct an evaluation of the broader SLC project.

Houston Independent School District, Texas.

Amount Funded: \$4,976,992

Total Number of Schools: 4

Project Abstract: Four of Houston’s large comprehensive high schools are willing and qualified to participate in ERO. The application includes a comprehensive plan for broader SLC activities at the four schools – Chavez High School, Furr High School, Sharpstown High School, and Westbury High School. Among the activities proposed in the grant application are “Keystone/Capstone” courses to help student transition into and out of high school, expansion of

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program strategies, the creation of monthly Professional Learning Community meetings, and the establishment of advisory councils for the SLCs comprised of parents and community members. In addition, the proposal includes professional development in math and literacy, with an emphasis on certifying teachers to become Advanced Placement (AP) instructors. The evaluation of the broader SLC project will be overseen by a team from the University of St. Thomas in Houston.

San Antonio Independent School District, Texas. **Amount Funded: \$4,842,752**
Total Number of Schools: 4

Project Abstract: Four of San Antonio Independent School District’s (SAISD) large comprehensive high schools are willing and qualified to participate in ERO. Brackenridge High School, Edison High School, Fox Tech High School, and Highlands High School are each currently implementing “school-within-a-school” SLCs that include special teacher teaming strategies at the ninth-grade level. The broader SLC project focuses on providing professional development to teachers and counselors involved in implementing the SLCs with an emphasis on creating professional learning communities, but will also expand the AVID program, improve information technology systems supporting the SLCs, and provide college planning and test-taking workshops. The evaluation of the broader SLC project will be undertaken by Intercultural Development Research Association.

Ogden City School District, Utah. **Amount Funded: \$2,497,188**
Total Number of Schools: 2

Project Abstract: Two of Ogden City’s large comprehensive high schools are willing and qualified to participate in ERO. Ben Lomond High School and Ogden High School will build on the extensive SLC activities currently underway. Both schools will expand the teacher-led mentoring programs to include a focus on easing transitions between the 8th and 9th grade. The schools will also form academic teams to facilitate the development and alignment of curricula, inform instruction and further the development of professional learning communities. The district maintains that these teams will be instrumental in supporting the administration of NAEP-linked testing and the use of its data to inform instruction within the SLC programs. The proposal also details the district’s recent partnership with the Southern Regional Education Board’s (SREB) High Schools that Work (HSTW) Network and Stanford University’s “School Redesign Network (SRN)” and these organizations will be enlisted to strengthen professional development opportunities. The evaluation for the broader SLC project is to be undertaken by Spectrum Consulting.

Norfolk Public Schools, Virginia **Amount Funded: \$4,903,455**
Total Number of Schools: 4

Project Abstract: Four of Norfolk’s large comprehensive high schools are willing and qualified to participate in ERO. The application includes a comprehensive plan to expand the broader SLC activities at the four schools– Booker T. Washington High School, Granby High School, Maury High School, and Norview High School. Supported by Norfolk Public Schools’ Comprehensive High School Improvement (CHSI) initiative, the four high schools have developed three “power goals” to guide development of Sophomore and Junior/Senior Career Academies at each of the four schools and to enhance current SLC activities. The CHSI “power goals” reinforce on time graduation as well as preparation for post-secondary education and employment for all Norfolk Public School graduates. In an effort to increase the number of

students prepared to graduate within four years, the district will implement a “high school readiness program” for middle school students, develop a “Preparing for High School” course for all 9th grade students, and form “vertical dialogue teams” among middle and high school teachers to ensure that all students are prepared with the academic skills required for success in high school. The four schools will strengthen professional development opportunities through the development of a joint “Teacher Demonstration Center,” where teachers will learn new approaches to curriculum development, instruction and assessment. The district will also begin an incentive program to encourage teachers to pursue advanced training in specific content areas. Lastly, in an effort to prepare students’ with marketable skills, the four high schools will expand SLC activities to include the development of individualized “academic and career” plans, structured internships, job shadowing activities and career discussion forums with local business leaders. An evaluation of the broader SLC project will be undertaken by Dr. David Blackburn, the Director of the Program for Research and Evaluation in Public Schools (PREPS) at Old Dominion University.