

Invitation to Participate™

Invested from the Start

Grades K-5 Reading and Math at Grade Level Committee

Date of release: June 14, 2011

Responses must be submitted by: July 8, 2011

Project overview

In order to strengthen the foundational skills (reading and math) and habits (attendance, homework completion, etc.) for life-long learning, community organizations are invited to create programs to connect the parents of kindergarteners to each other, and to provide resources so they become increasingly invested and involved in their children's learning. Taking advantage of the switch to zoned elementary attendance, parents will form communities with each other in their neighborhoods so they might provide mutual support to each other. Community organizations will address the obstacles to full participation, including discomfort with educational institutions and the needs for childcare, food and transportation at events. Through these programs, parents will know and trust each other, and will attend school events. As a consequence kindergarten children will make greater progress toward meeting grade-level expectations in reading and math and will attend school more frequently.

Services requested

The committee has identified the need for programs and activities which connect parents to one another at a deep level, where they can share their struggles, strategies and resources with each other. To strengthen these parent connections and to take advantage of growing networks of friendship, additional programs that bring families together, increase parental attendance and participation, and provide information and resources to parents are needed.

Goal

To create community support to ensure students in Grades K-5 meet grade level expectations for reading and math.

RPS Visualize 2015 strategy selected

5.2.1 Promote and create opportunities to help parents in the education of their children.

Tactic designed by committee

In targeted schools, community partners create programs which connect parents to each other and strengthen the investment parents make in their child's learning.

General project description

Reading and math are foundational skills for life-long learning, but too many children are behind grade-level expectations in their early elementary years. Often, they never catch up. If more students could complete their kindergarten year at grade level, with the content and social skills needed for success, and if those students could continue their progress through their early years, it would improve their outcomes, their lives, and our community. Success in these very early years depends greatly on the involvement and investment of parents. Parents play the critical role – in attendance, in health and behavior, in learning habits, and for cementing the foundational skills that children learn in the

classroom. Yet many parents are disconnected from their children's learning community and from other parents with whom they might share resources, knowledge and inspiration.

This project seeks to build an engaged and active parent community. As parents connect with each other, they will become more invested and involved in their child's learning. Parents will gain skills, knowledge, comfort, and a support system to boost attendance, participation, and grade-level performance.

Taking advantage of the switch to a geographically-based attendance zone, this project will begin with kindergarten parents who will all live in proximity to each other and their child's school. Community partners are asked to develop and implement programs and activities which build relationships between parents so that they might lean on each other for wisdom and resources as well as programs which provide resource and empower parents to be effective participants in their child's education.

Participating organizations will need to attend, in particular, to the obstacles that parents must overcome to participate. These obstacles include material concerns such as transportation, food, and childcare, as well as more intangible barriers such as previous negative experiences with educational institutions.

Specifically:

1. We seek an organization to provide an intentional, regular gathering of the parents and guardians of kindergarten children. These "parent circles" will meet at least monthly with the leadership of a facilitator from/provided by the community organization. The design and size of the circles will be determined by the community organization; generally speaking, the groups should be large enough to support quality interaction and small enough to make deep connections. These circles will be a place for parents to share knowledge with each other, ask questions, make connections, and develop long-term community.

2. In addition to these circles, a host of other services and resources will be helpful to the school and these parents. Community organizations may be able to sponsor a particular item, provide a particular resource or plan a particular event. The organization taking responsibility for (1) above may wish to also provide some of these additional services, though they need not do so. Examples of additional services include:

- providing transportation to school events for parents and families
- providing food for parent events
- providing childcare for parent events
- sponsoring and supporting Parent Teacher Organizations
- neighborhood events that connect parents with their communities (these events may draw in non-parents to certain activities)
- parent workshops on topics such as promoting attendance, reading together as a family, math in everyday situations, and socialization skills (character, teamwork, responsibility, etc.)
- fun, arts, and creative events for whole families

These are only examples. We hope and expect that community partners will have additional creative ideas for programs that can connect parents and encourage their involvement in their child's learning.

Community organizations will find it optimal to collaborate. While one organization (a faith community, for example) might provide facilitators for the “parent circles” and plan neighborhood events, another organization (a restaurant, for example) might provide food for events, and a third organization (an arts organization, for example) might provide content for family events. Working collaboratively, organizations will be more effective in fulfilling the goals of the program, and will strengthen the neighborhood at the same time.

We anticipate that the community organizations providing services to a particular school will work together and with the school’s principal to plan a calendar of events and activities.

Participating community organizations should plan to attend an introductory meeting on July 26, 2011.

Target population

During school year 2011-12 this will begin with parents of kindergarteners. Our chosen pilot school is King.

Continuity and scaling up and out

If successful, this program will scale both up and out.

Scaling up: As one group of kindergarten parents enters first grade, the community organization in (1) above will identify and train parents/guardians to assume facilitation responsibility. Some organizations will wish to “move up” with their class of parents and children, while others will wish to stay at the kindergarten level. Other organizations will already be providing resources for the whole school, will start doing so, or will add one grade each year until the whole school is covered.

Scaling out: We will identify additional schools and their kindergarten classes in future years.

Needed information from community service providers

- Are there existing programs in the pilot school which could be aligned to these goals?
- Are there other services that community organizations provide that meet these goals in other schools that could be used and aligned in our target schools?

Expected dates of implementation

School year 2011-12. The organization providing parent circles will be ready to sign parents up at registration in mid-August and start the meetings shortly thereafter.

Expected outcomes

- Our primary outcome is that parents will be invested and involved in children’s learning so that more students will meet grade level expectations in reading and math.
- Secondly, parents will have informal personal relationships with other parents.

Assessment strategies

- A parent survey will be given to kindergarten parents at the pilot school as well as at one other similar school at the beginning, middle, and end of the year which will measure how well they know other parents and can rely on them for advice, assistance, and support.
- We will measure parent attendance at school events.

- We will compare the percentage increase from baseline to summative assessments for targeted schools versus another similar school. Did the pilot school have a larger percentage increase than the other school in reading and/or math?
- We will measure kindergarten attendance, with the goal that kindergarten attendance at the pilot school will be at or above 94%.

Submission directions

Organizations that submit a proposal in response to this ITP™ agree to the following statements of intent and conditions:

- This will be a collaborative effort. To achieve the goals of Alignment Rockford, organizations will need to work together to provide services.
- Your organization may need to redirect resources, personnel and otherwise, or make modest changes to programs to participate in this project.
- Alignment Rockford has a small staff and is also supported by leadership from Rockford Public Schools. These resources will be used where feasible to support your efforts.
- When delivering services in the schools, your organization must comply with RPS policies.
- Your organization agrees to report resources contributed to committee work quarterly, using AR forms and processes.
- Your organization will be asked to provide process and output information (i.e., services actually provided, number of students served, student demographics, sites, etc.) on an annual basis.

If you agree to the above statements of intent and conditions, we invite you to complete the attached Response Form before July 8, 2011 and fax it to 815-637-7629 or email it to dianepeters@alignmentrockford.com.

If you have questions regarding the Invitation to Participate™ or the ITP™ process, please contact Glenda Turner at gturner@girlscoutsni.org.

Alignment Rockford Grades K-5 Reading and Math Committee members

Chair:	Tracy Stevenson-Olson	RPS 205
Vice Chair:	Glenda Turner	Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois
	Lori Berkes-Nelson	Golden Apple Foundation of Rockford
	David Byrnes	Midway Village Museum
	Lori Fanello	Regional Office of Education
	Meagen Flood	RPS 205
	Bridget French	William Charles Real Estate
	Chris Greenwood	City of Rockford
	Steve Guedet	Winnebago County Health Department
	Matthew Johnson-Doyle	Unitarian Universalist Church
	Jennifer Jump	RPS 205
	Eileen Liezert	Children’s Home and Aid
	Lois Lutz	YMCA of Rock River Valley
	Kiki Marske	Hope Reigns Ranch
	Carol McNeal	Mildred Berry Center
	Sharon Nesbit-Davis	Rockford Area Arts Council
	Mike Rathbun	Discovery Center Museum
	Cheryl Rinker	Rock Valley College

Delia Rodriguez
Marsha Sisney
Chris Weber
Binah Wing

RPS 205
RPS 205
Morgan Stanley Smith Barney
Temple Beth-El

Overview of Alignment Rockford

The mission of Alignment Rockford is to align community resources in support of public school strategies to raise student achievement, improve the health and happiness of our children, and advance the economic and social well-being of our community. Our goal is to improve the achievement of all school children through a citywide partnership initiative that will provide important and needed services to the schools. Your expertise and programs are critical to the success of Alignment Rockford. We hope you will join us in this effort.

Invitation to Participate™ process

The Grades K-5 Reading and Math at Grade Level Committee has developed a pilot project to align the resources of community organizations – non-profits, government agencies, colleges and universities, businesses, faith-based organizations, and others – in support of a common goal. The Invitation to Participate™ (ITP™) process provides these community organizations with an opportunity to propose ways that they can align their existing resources for increased impact on student outcomes. The committee will review proposals based on organizational capacity and expertise, willingness to collaborate, and likelihood of success.

Benefits to participating organizations

Participation in this pilot provides your organization with the following benefits:

- Improvements in outcomes for all Rockford children, particularly those who need additional support to realize their potential.
- Opportunities to contribute in areas in which you have specific skills and capacities.
- Opportunities for collaboration and for building individual agency capacity.
- Data and measurable results to support outcome reporting to funding agencies.
- The opportunity to partner with a community-wide initiative to redesign, elevate, and increase the effectiveness of the delivery of services to Rockford's school children.
- The ability to work directly with Rockford schools, and to establish a strong relationship with key administrators and teachers.

This page intentionally left blank

Invested from the Start ITP™ Response Form

ITP™ Release Date: June 14, 2011
 Responses Due: July 8, 2011

Contact Information

Organization	
Street Address	
City State ZIP	
Phone	
Contact Name	
Email Address	

Parent Circles

If your organization is interested in providing the facilitation for parent circles, please check here [].
 Describe any experience or expertise your organization has with small group facilitation.

Additional Services

Please check any additional services you can provide, and describe.

<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare <input type="checkbox"/> Food <input type="checkbox"/> Workshops for parents	<input type="checkbox"/> PTO sponsorship / support <input type="checkbox"/> Community-wide events <input type="checkbox"/> Fun, arts, and creative events for families <input type="checkbox"/> Other!
--	---

Describe in more detail what your organization can provide:

Delivery of Services

Will the proposed services be delivered on a one-time or ongoing basis?

One-time

Ongoing

Cost

Is there a cost for the services? Please provide details.

--

Submitted by

Name (printed)	
Date	

Submit

Please submit this completed form before July 8, 2011 by faxing to 815-637-7629 or emailing to dianepeters@alignmentrockford.com. Thank you.