

Grant Writing Toolkit

This document is to help schools create a proposal for funding for **Read to Them**'s family literacy programs. You will find tips to use before, during, and after writing and submitting your proposal, sample proposal language, supportive narrative, and third-party studies. Feel free to use and modify the narratives and third-party studies for your grant proposal(s).

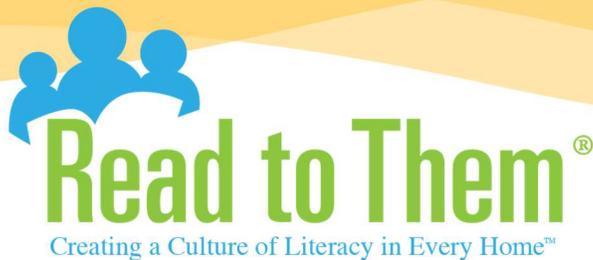
Before the application:

- Reach out to the funder prior to submitting a proposal to establish a relationship and determine whether the project is a potential fit with the funder's priorities.
- If funding range guidelines are not provided, you can determine an appropriate request amount by looking at the funder's giving history on their annual report or on their Form 990, available for free on www.guidestar.org
- Identify any board members of the funding organization that you know. It is frowned upon to contact board members while an application is under review, but it is permissible to contact them prior to submission.
- Identify project partners who are similarly committed to your work and be prepared to describe them. Collaborative partnerships could strengthen your case for support. Some examples include: local literacy focused nonprofits, public libraries, small businesses.

During the application:

- Follow all application directions! This may seem simple, but could be the difference between an award or decline.
- Do not procrastinate. Grant drafts should be prepared well ahead of the deadline to leave time to reach out to the funder in case of questions.
- If the funder has a particular geographic or programmatic focus, describe in detail the ways your program meets their priority areas and the impact on their targeted population.
- Make your evaluation plan clear, manageable, and realistic.
- Apply well ahead of the projected program start date to leave room for the funder's decision-making period. Some funders, for example, require 60+ days between the date of your application and your projected start date.

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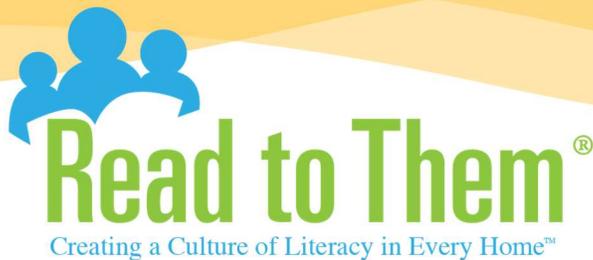


After the proposal is submitted:

- Follow up with the funder to let them know your proposal was submitted and to contact you with any questions.
- If the proposal is awarded, call to thank the funder and send a personal thank you letter from the school principal or lead administrator.
- Take the award as a chance to build a relationship with the organization/funder(s). Invite them to see the program in action: let them read to a classroom, have students make handmade thank you notes, etc. Creating a relationship with the funder can work in the school's benefits for future programs.
- If the proposal is rejected, follow up with the funder to identify ways to strengthen the proposal for the next applicable cycle.

Note: The following pages reference *One School, One Book* as the program described for which funding is sought. If you are seeking funding for an alternate **Read to Them** family literacy program, please substitute the appropriate program name in whatever content you choose to copy, borrow, or include.

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Sample Proposal Language

About the Organization and Mission

Founded in Richmond, Virginia in 2006, **Read to Them** partners with school districts in 2,500 distinct communities in all 50 states to promote family literacy. Their literacy programs engage with families, schools, and communities as partners in encouraging children to read and creating a culture of literacy in every home.

One School, One Book is a multi-week, school-wide reading event, where students and their families, faculty, and staff read the same book together. The school hosts a kick-off assembly to build excitement among students to participate. Each student, teacher, and staff member receives a copy of the title, chosen by the school. The principal invites parents to read the book aloud to their children for at least 15 minutes every night. Teachers integrate the content of the book into their lesson plans through skits, book-themed activities, and trivia questions created by **Read to Them**.

Program Description (Use the highlighted green text to personalize)

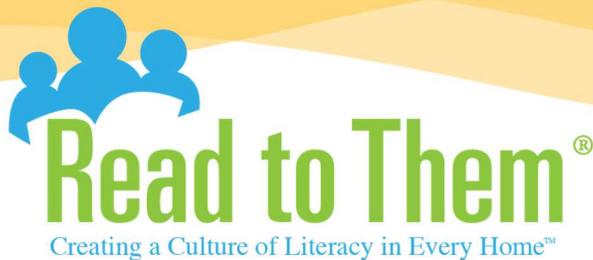
The **One School, One Book** program is packaged for easy implementation. Schools can select vetted titles, use tailored resource packets for parents and educators, and choose supplemental activities to reinforce the content of the book.

Our school will buy the **One School, One Book** program books and resources from **Read to Them**. When the books are received, **our school** will distribute a copy of the book to each child, as well as faculty, administration, and staff. **The principal** will invite parents to participate by reading the book aloud with their children for 15 minutes every night. Students will take home their copy of the book along with a reading schedule to follow along. All program participants – students, families, faculty, and staff – will read along at the same pace, with supplemental school and community activities reinforcing the content of the book.

Now is the time to give school-specific information describing:

- **Specific plans for implementing the program at your school (i.e., trivia boxes to collect student answers, daily classroom readings, video and/or audio of chapters, school-wide book-themed activities, etc.)**
- **Why this program is important for your school**
- **Any collaborations with businesses, nonprofits, or other schools in your community**
- **How you plan to keep the families and/or community involved**
- **Community leaders you plan to have support the program (i.e. City Mayor, City Council, Police Department, Fire Department, Community Influencers, etc.)**

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Supporting Narrative: Why *One School, One Book*?

The premise of the *One School, One Book* program is to get families involved with student reading. Programs that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home are linked to higher student achievement.¹ Benefits include higher grade point averages, improved attendance, and better social skills and adaptation to school. In short, children with strong family involvement stay in school longer, perform better, and enjoy it more.

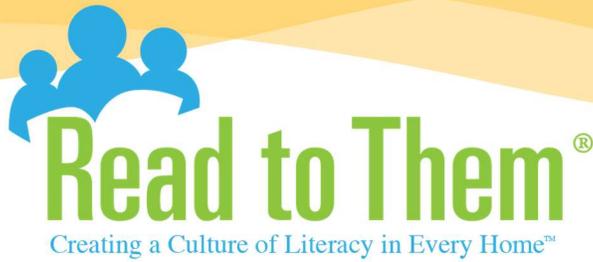
All students, from Kindergarten to 5th grade, will spend between two and four weeks reading the same title, on the provided schedule with their families. Families will be encouraged to read at least 15 minutes a night. From the 15 minutes of nightly reading, students are more likely to have:

- A positive attitude and desire to read
- An increased vocabulary (for speaking, reading, and writing)
- A reading role model

As students get older, reading aloud often stops in the home. However, there is value in reading aloud to all children from lower to intermediate grades. When younger students (in grades K-2) are read to, they are exposed to new and expansive stories, topics, vocabulary, and characters. When intermediate students (grades 3-5) are read to, they are exposed to the rules of grammar, structures of writing, and complex stories to improve reading. For all grades, students who are read aloud to are constantly improving their literacy skills.

One School, One Book will surround each student with a culture of literacy. By having families, teachers, and school faculty and administration participate in reading together, the importance of literacy is exhibited. Through reading together, students gain a positive influence of reading and books, making it more likely for students to continue their literacy journey and keep their skills proficient.

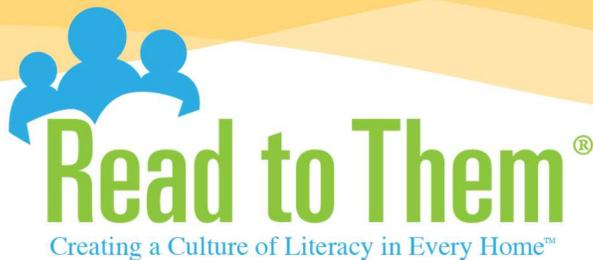
¹ The Annie E. Casey Foundation. "Early Warning Confirmed: A Research Update on Third-Grade Reading." Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013. Accessed Feb 5, 2018. <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-EarlyWarningConfirmed-2013.pdf>.



Specified Topics to Expand on if it Applies to Your School:

- If you have a high student poverty rate (you can discuss correlation of literacy, poverty, and high school graduation rates)
- If a majority of your student qualify for free or reduced lunch (you can discuss correlation of literacy, poverty, and high school graduation rates)
- If there is any community involvement (collaborative efforts and community involvement are favored by funders)
- If there is a low proficiency rate in literacy for your school or district (reading together with families and aloud improves literacy skills)
- If family involvement is low (the premise of *One School, One Book* is to get families involved)

A few third-party studies are available for research use on page 9.



Evaluation

Read to Them currently does not offer a parent/family survey for the *One School, One Book* program. However, if you receive funding for your proposal, funders may have a requirement to show the effects of the program. The best way to measure this is to send home a survey with your students for parents to fill out, or create an online survey through free platforms (such as Google Forms). You can find sample parent survey questions below. Make sure when you make your family survey, it is personalized to your school.

Additionally, please feel free to share any data you find for your school with **Read to Them**.

Sample Family Survey Questions:

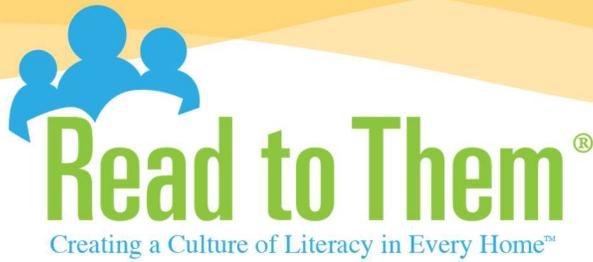
Child(ren)'s Grade(s):

Classroom(s):

1. What was the frequency of your participation in *One School, One Book*?
 - a. Daily
 - b. Every other day
 - c. At least once a week
 - d. We could not participate at this time

2. Did you read with your child(ren) for 15 minutes per night?
 - a. We read for more than 15 minutes per night.
 - b. We read for about 15 minutes per night.
 - c. We read, but for less than 15 minutes per night.
 - d. We started the book, but we did not finish it.
 - e. We did not read at all.

3. What impact did *One School, One Book* have on your child's attitude towards reading?
 - a. Great impact – I saw a big change.
 - b. Good impact – I saw an improvement.
 - c. Some impact – I saw a slight improvement.
 - d. No impact – My child's attitude did not change.



4. How would you rate the resources for the ***One School, One Book*** program?

1	2	3	4
Needs Improvement	Fair	Good	Excellent

5. Will you read more books at home with your child(ren) after participating in the ***One School, One Book*** program?

Yes	Maybe	No	I don't know
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6. My child was exposed to a new topic or author during ***One School, One Book***.

Yes	No
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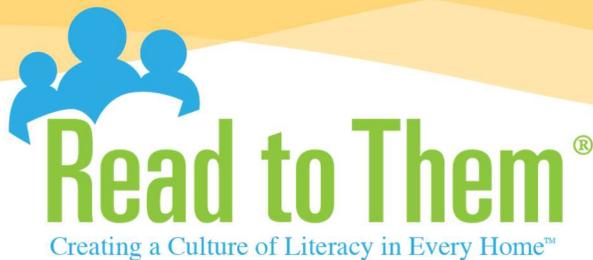
If yes, please share what that topic was:

7. Would you take part in another program like ***One School, One Book***?

Yes	No
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8. Would you like to share anything about your experience with ***One School, One Book***?

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Third Party Studies of Reading Aloud, Achievement Gaps, and Literacy

Early Warning Confirmed: A Research Update on Third Grade Reading (2013)

- Importance of reading proficiency by third grade; Study by The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-EarlyWarningConfirmed-2013.pdf>

Double Jeopardy, How Third Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation

- The link between third grade reading proficiency, poverty, and high school graduation; Study by The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2012)
- <http://gradelevelreading.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Double-Jeopardy-Report-030812-for-web1.pdf>

The Read-Aloud Handbook by Jim Trelease (2019)

- Book that goes in depth about the importance of reading aloud to children of various ages, backed by research.
- Purchase [here](#); Available in paperback and eTextbook.

The Rise of Read-Aloud, from Scholastic's The Kids and Family Reading Report (2019)

- Study of reading aloud in families, how it affects children, and how to make it a priority
- <https://www.scholastic.com/readingreport/rise-of-read-aloud.html>

Reading Aloud: Children's Attitudes toward being Read to at Home and at School (2018)

- Study of students' attitudes toward being read aloud to
- <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3781&context=ajte>

Read Alouds and Their Impact on Students' Literacy Development (2016)

- A read aloud study done on fourth grade classrooms
- https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1673&context=ehd_theses

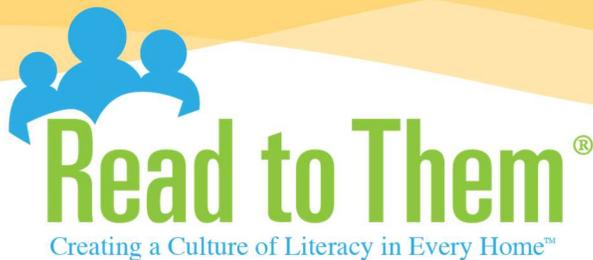
Access to Print, Low-Income vs. Middle Income Communities: An Ecological Study of Four Neighborhoods (2001)

- Study by Susan B. Neuman about accessibility to age-appropriate books based on income
- <https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/88026/RRQ.36.1.1.pdf?sequence=1>

The Widening Academic Achievement Gap Between the Rich and the Poor (2012)

- Achievement gap in students based on family income
- https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/CI_Summer2012_Reardon.pdf

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Grant Databases

Below are a number of suggested resources to aid your search for funding:

GrantStation

- Provides two free newsletters, one of which lists US-based grant opportunities weekly
- Offers courses and webinars on grant writing, acquiring funding, branding, etc.
- Has a subscription service

Foundation Center

- Has a large database of funders, providing access to foundation without websites and easy contact
- Has different forms of paid subscriptions
- 400 public locations via libraries across the US, free of use

Foundation Directory Online

- Is the same as Foundation Center, but it requires a paid subscription between \$49.99 - \$199.99 per month
- Has access to over 200k grant opportunities and 224k US foundations

FundsForNGOs

- Provides funding for different nonprofits, from agriculture to education
- Provides a free email newsletter
- Has a Premium Membership costing \$49.99 annually

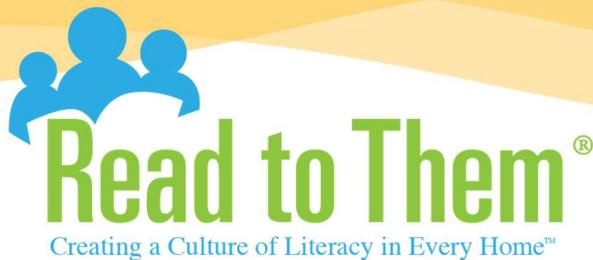
Grant Gopher

- Offers US-based organizations free basic searches/access to details of first 5 search results
- With free registration, you are given access to a free newsletter with open grant opportunities
- Specifically for nonprofits, schools, etc.
- Annual subscription is \$99 a year

Philanthropy News Digest

- A service of the [Foundation Center](#)
- Includes philanthropy news and job postings
- All materials, newsletters, and RFP announcements are accessible for free

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Open Philanthropy

- Dedicated to sharing key information and eliminating barriers between philanthropists and the communities they are aiding
- Free access to grant information, current research and an in-depth look at a number of focus areas that Open Philanthropy is working with

Funding Opportunities

- International grant database with postings for calls for proposals, awards, and grant opportunities
- Free of use

Us Government (USG) Grants

- Best place to find USG grant opportunities
- Free service
- Opportunities posted by 26 federal agencies and 12 independent federal agencies

Regional Associations of Grantmakers

- Offers access to organizations that are based in grantmaking
- Has free links to United Philanthropy forums/contacts for almost every state
- Membership offers discounts, technical assistance, networking, and more
- Pay based on your operating budget: dues found here

GrantScope

- Offers access to grant opportunities including over 9,000 active grants and over \$46 billion total funding available
- Individual grant seekers cost \$29 month/Team cost is \$179 month/subscription info here

GrantAdvisor

- Offers access to reviews of individual funders and foundations
- Database is free

GuideStar

- Offers free information including a database of form 990s
- Free for registration and basic access, with possibility for paid upgrade

Foundation Search

- Offers resources for grants, fundraising education, and grant development services
- Subscribe and contact Foundation Search for a quote (it requires a service fee for use)

Donors Choose

- Platform for teacher fundraising, free to use
- Provides access to other fundraisers with search tool that enables user to fine tune their searches and/or their posting

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