




## ***Striving Readers and Step Up to Writing Alignment***

### ***Striving Readers Grant Overview:***

*Striving Readers* is a discretionary grant program designed to fund new reading initiatives, or the expansion of existing initiatives that will help our nation build a strong scientific research base identifying essential components of effective adolescent literacy models, and replicable school- and classroom-level strategies that raise the reading achievement of struggling middle and high school students. The *Striving Readers* grant is akin to *Early Reading First* for early childhood and *Reading First* for K-3 elementary students. Title I eligible schools, particularly those at risk of failing to meet AYP requirements under *NCLB*, are eligible to apply for the *Striving Readers* grant. The full grant application can be obtained at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/strivingreaders/applicant.html>.

It is expected that the desired outcomes of the *Striving Readers* grant will be achieved by addressing three overarching grant goals:

<b><i>Striving Readers Grant Desired Outcomes</i></b>		<b>Expected to Be Achieved Through</b>	
<b>Goal 1</b>	<b><i>Enhance the overall level of reading achievement</i></b> in middle and high schools through improvements to the quality of literacy instruction across the curriculum.		<b><i>School level strategies designed to increase reading achievement for students.</i></b> These strategies must include, at a minimum, needs assessment, professional development, and a process for monitoring student performance.
<b>Goal 2</b>	<b><i>Improve literacy skills</i></b> of struggling adolescent readers.		<b><i>Intensive, targeted intervention for struggling readers</i></b> (i.e., students who read at least two years below grade level, including limited English proficient students and students with disabilities).
<b>Goal 3</b>	Help <b><i>build a strong, scientific research base</i></b> around specific strategies that improve adolescent literacy skills.		A project evaluation that includes <b><i>a rigorous experimental research evaluation of the intensive, targeted intervention for struggling readers.</i></b> The evaluation of the intensive, targeted intervention must include a randomized control trial. There must also be <b><i>a rigorous evaluation of the school-level strategies designed to increase reading achievement for students</i></b> by integrating enhanced literacy instruction throughout the curriculum and the school. The evaluation of the school-level strategies may, but need not, include a randomized control trial.

### ***How Step Up to Writing Aligns With and Supports Striving Readers:***

The *Striving Readers* grant application includes nine key components (Page 2) that have been derived from recent publications by literacy experts and practitioners regarding recommended elements that should be included in efforts to help middle and high school students master reading skills and comprehension. The chart on the following pages outlines the manner in which *Step Up to Writing* addresses each of the nine bulleted elements.

**Brief Overview of Step Up to Writing**

*Step Up to Writing* is a set of research-based and validated strategies to help students develop writing, reading, and comprehension skills. More specifically, the programs’ strategies ensure that students are able to write both narrative and expository pieces, that they become actively engaged with reading materials, and that they become proficient with note-taking skills. Many teachers and administrators have identified the key strengths of *Step Up to Writing* as:

- providing a common language for teachers and grade K-12 students (strong vertical alignment component),
- providing strategies that can be generalized and applied across content areas and outside of school, and
- easy to integrate into any reading and language arts classroom, regardless of the curriculum or instructional system being used.

*Step Up to Writing* has been proven to be effective in moving struggling readers and writers from struggling, to striving, to thriving. It does this by combining clear, explicit instruction with kinesthetic, multisensory teaching strategies; thus, students learn the *Step Up to Writing* strategies while being motivated and experiencing success. *Step Up to Writing* has also been shown to significantly and positively affect the writing skills of English language learners – an outcome that can be attributed to the consistent strategies and multisensory approach. *Step Up to Writing* strongly supports the teaching and learning of two of the essential components of reading recommended by the National Reading Panel (NRP): vocabulary development and comprehension – both of which are foundational skills that struggling adolescents need to master to become proficient readers and writers.

The developers of *Step Up to Writing* recognized that many teachers did not learn to explicitly teach writing in teacher preparation courses; therefore, explicit and strong teacher support is provided in the materials so that teachers can clearly and effectively teach narrative and expository writing, reading comprehension strategies, and study skills. In addition to the teaching strategies embedded in the teacher materials, a two-day *Step Up to Writing* training with follow-up consultation is highly recommended to any school or district that implements the materials.

<b>Striving Readers Element</b>	<b>Step Up to Writing Alignment</b>
Extended learning time for literacy	<i>Step Up to Writing</i> infuses existing programs/curricula with strategies that encourage teachers to spend additional time explicitly teaching reading and writing.
Direct, explicit instruction in comprehension	<i>Step Up to Writing</i> teaches much more than the writing process. It also provides clear and explicit strategies for students to actively engage with and comprehend reading materials. The materials provide several different strategies to increase comprehension and content retention (e.g., two-column note taking, highlighting, making connections, free response, index card responses, response starters, one-word responses, agree/disagree, “ <i>What were you thinking?</i> ”, creating questions, reading notations, quotation and response, quick sketch, drawing, guided response, framed paragraphs, and bookmarks).

<b>Striving Readers Element</b>	<b>Step Up to Writing Alignment</b>
Modeling of reading and thinking strategies for comprehension	Modeling of reading and thinking strategies are highly emphasized in <i>Step Up to Writing</i> . The program provides teachers with effective methods of modeling reading and thinking strategies, such as demonstrating the strategy and then guiding students as they try it. As an example, a teacher might take notes, highlight an article, or create questions/connections based on a reading in front of the class and then have the class practice the strategy independently or in groups.
Cooperative learning and discussion of texts among students	Inherent throughout <i>Step Up to Writing</i> strategies are opportunities for students to work together. For example, students are often encouraged to work in pairs or groups to create group paragraphs, stories, and essays.
Self-selected reading at students' ability levels to build motivation	A major strength of <i>Step Up to Writing</i> is its foundation in the read-write connection. When students read text at any readability level, they are encouraged to write a response. Then, they are generally encouraged to work in pairs or groups to process their writing. This provides a non-intimidating environment in which students are not only encouraged to interact with the text, but also with each other.
On-going progress monitoring	<i>Step Up to Writing</i> helps teachers communicate and measure clear writing expectations with students. Not only does it take teachers and students through the entire writing process (i.e., planning, developing, editing/revising, and presenting), but it also provides easy-to-understand rubrics that identify students' strengths and areas in which they need additional instruction/practice.
Intensive writing	The tools presented in <i>Step Up to Writing</i> have become the writing backbone in many districts across the United States. The program is all about using writing to think, comprehend, and communicate. In many cases, core general curricula do not offer a strong writing strand – <i>Step Up to Writing</i> serves as the intensive writing element that can be applied across grade levels and curricula.
Age appropriate and diverse reading materials	<i>Step Up to Writing</i> provides critical thinking and writing suggestions for diverse and engaging nonfiction, authentic, and fiction materials external to the program that can be effectively used with the program.
Interdisciplinary, classroom-based efforts to focus on literacy	The <i>Step Up to Writing</i> reading comprehension and writing strategies apply across content areas; since these strategies are curriculum independent, they can be generalized and applied across content areas and outside of school. For example, <i>Step Up to Writing</i> strategies can be used to comprehend a science text and to respond to science writing prompts.

### What's Next?

For more information on this product, including the research basis of the product and evidence of program effectiveness, or about our ability to partner with your district for a successful *Striving Readers* grant application, please contact your Regional Sopris West Sales Director:



A Cambium Learning™ Company

<p><b>Central:</b> IL, MI, OH, AR, TX, IA, KS, MO, LA, OK, SD, ND, WI, MN, NE, IN</p>	<p>Clossie Ray, Central Region Sales Director (817) 426-0780</p> <p>Monique Austin, Sales Support Specialist <a href="mailto:moniquea@sopriswest.com">moniquea@sopriswest.com</a> (817) 426-0780</p>
<p><b>West:</b> MT, UT, WY, WA, OR, ID, CA, AZ, CO, NV, HI, Guam, American Samoa</p>	<p>Suellen Atkinson, West Region Sales Director (303) 651-2829, ext 104</p> <p>Kim Holland, Sales Support Specialist <a href="mailto:kimholland@sopriswest.com">kimholland@sopriswest.com</a> (303) 651-2829, ext 104</p>
<p><b>East:</b> AL, MS, NY, KY, TN, CT, MA, RI, GA, FL, PA, NJ, DC, MD, VA, NC, SC</p>	<p>Christina Williams, East Region Sales Director (303) 651-2829, ext 269</p> <p>Courtney Cox, East Sales Support Specialist <a href="mailto:courtneyc@sopriswest.com">courtneyc@sopriswest.com</a> (303) 651-2829, ext 269</p>

To learn more about our company and products, you may also visit the Sopris West Educational Services website: [www.sopriswest.com](http://www.sopriswest.com).