Applicants must respond to each question/item in each section of the application. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Technical support will be available Monday – Friday, from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

All information included in the application package must be accurate. All information that is submitted is subject to verification. All applications are subject to public inspection and/or photocopying.

**Contact Information**

All questions related to the preferred provider application process should be directed to:

Anne Hansen
Consultant
Office of Education Improvement & Innovation

OR

Tammy Hatfield
Consultant
Office of Education Improvement & Innovation

Telephone: (517) 373-8480 or (517) 335-4733
Email: hatfieldt@michigan.gov
Under the Final Requirements for School Improvements Grants, as defined under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, Title I, Part A. Section 1003(g) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as amended in January 2010, one of the criteria that the MDE (SEA) must consider when an LEA applies for a SIG grant is the extent to which the LEA has taken action to “recruit, screen, and select external providers...”. To assist LEA’s in this process, the MDE is requesting information/applications from entities wishing to be considered for placement on a preferred provider list that will be made available to LEA’s on the MDE website. If an LEA selects a provider that is not on the list, the provider will have to go through the application review process before engaging in the turnaround intervention at the LEA. Applications will be reviewed on their merits and not on a competitive basis. Please note that the application and accompanying attachments will be accessible online to LEA’s seeking to contract for educational services.

Preferred external providers will be required to participate in a state-run training program that specifies performance expectations and familiarizes providers with state legislation and regulations. External providers will be monitored and evaluated regularly and those who are not getting results will be removed from the preferred provider list.

All decisions made by the MDE are final. There is no appeal process.

Please note that being placed on the Preferred Provider List does not guarantee that a provider will be selected by an LEA to provide services.

Two or more qualified reviewers will rate the application using the scoring rubric developed by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE).

Applications will only be reviewed if:

1. All portions of the application are complete;
2. All application materials, including attachments, are submitted electronically prior to the due date;

Applications will only be approved if:

1. The above conditions are met for review;
2. The total application score meets a minimum of 70 points
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exemplar</th>
<th>Total Points Possible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Description of comprehensive improvement services</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use of scientific educational research</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Job embedded professional development</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>4. Experience with state and federal requirements</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>5. Sustainability Plan</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Staff Qualifications</td>
<td>15</td>
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**Total Points Possible**

| 100 |

**Minimum Points Required for Approval**

| 70 |

Note: Applicants may apply to become preferred providers in all or some of the program delivery areas listed in Section B. If applicant does not wish to become a provider in a program area, that should be noted on the application.

If an applicant is applying to be a preferred provider in less than the five areas listed, they must have a review score not less than the following in each area for which they apply:

- Section 1 15 points
- Section 2 10 points
- Section 3 10 points
- Section 4 10 points
- Section 5 10 points
- Section 6 10 points  Section 6 must be completed by all applicants.
The Application is divided into four sections.

Section A contains basic provider information.

Section B requests information related to six exemplars (program delivery information and staff qualifications). Responses in Section B must be in narrative form. You may include figures (e.g., tables, charts, graphs) to support your narrative, but such items will be counted toward applicable page/word limits.

Section C contains the Assurances. Please read each statement carefully. By submitting your application, you certify your agreement with all statements therein.

Section D Attachments
Please enter the requested information in the spaces provided. Be sure to read all notes, as they provide important information.

**Instructions:** Complete each section in full.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Federal EIN, Tax ID or Social Security Number</th>
<th>2. Legal Name of Entity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39-097-1239</td>
<td>School Specialty, Inc. d/b/a/ Educators Publishing Service/School Specialty Literacy and Intervention</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>3. Name of Entity as you would like it to appear on the Approved List</th>
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<th>4. Entity Type:</th>
<th>5. Check the category that best describes your entity:</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Non-profit</td>
<td>☐ Community-Based Organization</td>
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<td>☐ Educational Service Agency (e.g., RESA or ISD)</td>
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<td>☐ Institution of Higher Education</td>
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<td>☐ School District</td>
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<td>☐ Other (specify): ____</td>
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<th>6. Applicant Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Harvey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23541 Londonderry Drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>248-719-6705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
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<tr>
<td>419-520-4841</td>
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<tr>
<td>City</td>
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<tr>
<td>Novi</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Zip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MI 48375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Terry.Harvey@SchoolSpecialty.com">Terry.Harvey@SchoolSpecialty.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.schoolspecialty.com">www.schoolspecialty.com</a></td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>7. Local Contact Information (if different than information listed above)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Name of Contact</td>
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<td>Same as above</td>
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<th>8. Service Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List the intermediate school district and each individual district in which you agree to provide services. Enter “Statewide” ONLY if you agree to provide services to any district in the State of Michigan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☒ Statewide</td>
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<th>Name(s) of District(s):</th>
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9. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Are you or any member of your organization currently employed in any capacity by any public school district or public school academy (charter school) in Michigan, or do you serve in a decision making capacity for any public school district or public school academy in Michigan (i.e. school board member)?

☐ Yes       ☐ No

What school district are you employed by or serve: Ilene Robinson, a Sales Consultant for School Specialty, serves as a board member of Starr Commonwealth Academy, a charter school which is still in the development phase.

In what capacity are you employed or do you serve (position title): Board member of Starr Commonwealth Academy, a charter school which is still in the development phase.

Schools or school districts are encouraged to apply to become preferred providers. However, the school or school district may not become a preferred provider in its own district. This restriction does not apply to Intermediate School Districts or Regional Educational Service Authorities.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Once approved, providers must operate within the information identified in this application.**

Changes in application information may be requested in writing to MDE. The request must include the rationale for the changes. All changes must receive written approval from MDE prior to implementation and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. This includes, but is not limited to, information changes in the following categories:

- Change in service area
- Change in services to be offered
- Change in method of offering services
Instructions: Section B responses must be in narrative form. Provide data/documentation of previous achievements where applicable. All responses must comply with stated page limits. Figures such as tables, charts and graphs can be included in the narrative, but such information will be counted toward page limits. Text and figures beyond the stated page limit will not be considered and should not be submitted with the application. All references must be cited.

Exemplar 1: Description of Comprehensive Improvement Services (25 points possible)

Describe how comprehensive improvement services that result in dramatic, documented and sustainable improvement in underperforming urban secondary schools will be delivered to LEA’s that contract for your services. Comprehensive services include, but are not limited to the following:

- Support systems to ensure student and teacher success and sustain improvement
- Content and delivery systems and mechanisms proven to result in dramatic and sustained improvement linked to student achievement
- Job embedded professional development at leadership, teacher and support levels to increase internal capacity for improvement and sustainability linked to student achievement
- Comprehensive short cycle and summative assessment systems to measure performance and goal attainment linked to the building school improvement plan.
Accelerated Learning Model: School Specialty Literacy and Intervention will partner with Michigan LEAs to implement our proven Accelerated Learning Model to improve teaching and learning in the state’s underperforming schools. The model incorporates three pillars for success and sustainability: high-quality professional development and ongoing support to increase teacher effectiveness; online content delivery and management system that provides 24/7 access and real-time progress data; and evidence-based reading and mathematics intervention programs to help students achieve rapid, sustainable gains in alignment with Michigan, NCTM, and Common Core State Standards (documentation in Appendices 1 & 2). School Specialty has successfully implemented the Accelerated Learning Model in small to large-size urban schools – from Grand Ledge School District, MI, with almost 5,000 students to Hillsborough County Public Schools, FL, with a population of 193,076 diverse students. Our implementation team has more than 15 years of direct teaching experience and a strong track record of success working with educators to close the achievement gap in Tier II, Tier III and special education, including English Language Learners, Title I and IDEA-eligible students.

As part of our three-year sustainability plan, we will work closely with Michigan LEAs to establish goals and fidelity requirements that support each school’s student improvement objectives and create a collaborative, positive environment for administrators and teachers. Our implementation experts become part of the local team to provide ongoing professional development for staff, and establish local support systems to increase teacher success and sustain student growth over time. 

Job-embedded PD: Based on research best practices and validated in thousands of implementations, our job-embedded Professional Development (PD) fosters a cooperative, continuous learning environment for educators and students. The PD plan is designed to build internal capacity over three years. (See Appendix 7 for a sample PD plan.) Components include:

- Success plan – collaborate with the leadership team to create a written plan, including growth metrics, student scheduling and teacher training
- Annual leadership summit – communicate the goals and fidelity measures for the implementation at the start of each year to gain buy-in with school staff
- Onsite administrator training – teach staff to use the online system to monitor progress, track metrics, and address fidelity issues as they arise
- Onsite teacher training – prepare teachers with a solid foundation in our online management system and research-based intervention programs
- Ongoing workshops – onsite and virtual sessions for teachers on key topics to support skill development in screening, progress monitoring, and using student data to differentiate instruction
- In-class modeling and coaching – classroom best practices for intervention strategies and differentiating instruction to accelerate learning
- Virtual coaching – webinar sessions to review student data and discuss instructional strategies for continuous improvement
- Ongoing support – telephone and email access to our expert team
Monthly and Year-End Reviews: Progress reviews with administrators and teachers – including fidelity reports, analysis of student growth data and classroom observations of teacher effectiveness, with recommendations.

**Support for Sustainability:** To ensure sustainable improvement in teacher effectiveness and student growth, we provide each school with an experienced Intervention Manager for ongoing coaching, data analysis, intervention strategies and troubleshooting. In addition to a series of school visits, the manager will provide dedicated support by telephone, email and webinar conference.

We will work with the LEA to build a team of experts at the school sites to ensure year-to-year continuity and sustainability. Our Train-the-Trainer philosophy and job-embedded PD enable schools and districts to build a local, self-sufficient achievement program. Key individuals in the Train-the-Trainer program will receive master-level training, mentoring, and coaching from our experienced PD team over a three-year period. Upon completion, LEA or district staff will be able to take the lead in supporting schools within their areas/districts.

**Ongoing Instructional and Technical Support:** We offer a wide range of installation, technical, and pedagogical support for School Specialty programs from our Customer Support helpdesk, which can be reached by phone or email Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 6 PM ET. Our support program includes:

- unlimited telephone and email access to instructional and technical support that works in tandem with the Intervention Manager assigned to each school
- product updates and service packs for the most up to date content
- 24/7 access to an online customer portal with a searchable knowledge base of instructional scenarios and frequently asked questions

**Content and Delivery System**

At the core of our Accelerated Learning Model is our online delivery and management system that offers Michigan schools a single platform for assessment, instruction and reporting. Features such as single sign-on, graphical reporting screens, and availability at any time, from anywhere on the school network create a productive instructional environment for teachers and students. Unlimited licenses enable schools to offer flexible instructional time during the school day, after school, at home, intercession, or for community-based programs.

**Universal Screening:** Many districts have adopted the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework to improve instruction and accelerate growth for struggling students. Our online system offers research-based universal screening tests for reading and mathematics that can be used for all students to set local benchmarks in fall, winter, and spring. Results are displayed in easy to read graphical reports with automated tools to help school leadership identify students at risk, determine capacity for progress monitoring, and assign low-performing students to our intervention programs available on the online platform, described below.

**Intervention Programs – Academy of READING** is an adaptive, comprehensive intervention program used by more than 3,000 schools for instruction, progress monitoring and summative assessment. Academy of READING provides systematic instruction and practice in the five essential components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.

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2010-11 Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grants
Preferred External Educational Services Provider Application
Studies that meet the What Works Clearinghouse “gold standard” research design show that below-proficient students using Academy of READING can achieve rapid, permanent gains in less than 12 weeks by following a protocol of 30 minutes per day, 3-5 days per week. Based on original neuroscience research and reading studies that identify how the brain functions while reading, the program incorporates automaticity, mastery learning, and behavioral motivation into its instructional design.

Foundation reading skills are broken down into small, manageable chunks and trained to automaticity. Developed from a decade of clinical research by Dr. Trites and Dr. Fiedorowicz, the program’s automaticity algorithm records both accuracy and consistency of speed, measured in milliseconds. By mastering the hierarchy of skills to a level of automaticity, students achieve decoding accuracy and fluency.

Students continue to develop confidence as they learn foundation skills by extended practice with oral reading comprehension strategies, vocabulary, and reading fluency. All student work is collected and organized in a personalized portfolio that can be accessed by teachers and students and shared with parents.

Academy of READING has been endorsed by the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE), reviewed by the Florida Center for Reading Research, and is listed as a recognized instructional intervention program by the National Center on Response to Intervention.

**Intervention Programs – Making Connections Intervention (MCI)** provides targeted literacy intervention for struggling readers in secondary school. Based on published reading research, MCI can be used for students who need targeted instruction in comprehension skills. Through carefully scaffolded lessons and differentiated learning paths, students learn to apply strategies to help them master comprehension skills across subject areas, including science and social studies. The program offers high interest content with low Lexile readability levels, and features an extensive library of graphic novels and high-interest readers.

**Intervention Programs – Academy of MATH** is an adaptive, comprehensive intervention program used by more than 3,000 schools for instruction, progress monitoring and summative assessment. Studies that meet the What Works Clearinghouse “gold standard” research design show that students develop computational fluency and achieve significant gains in math proficiency in less than 12 weeks using a protocol of 30 minutes per day, 3-5 days per week. The program uses a systematic, scaffolded approach to mathematics to build fluency in foundation math skills. For each skill area and level, students master conceptual knowledge (terms), computational fluency (operations), and strategic competence (word problems). Individualized instruction lets students systematically target areas of weakness, while teachers can facilitate learning where they are needed the most. Academy of MATH covers the content strands of Number, Operations, Algebra, Measurement, Geometry, and Data Analysis & Probability.

Academy of MATH was recently endorsed by CASE and listed as a recognized program by the National Center on Response to Intervention.

**Additional student supports** for rapid skill development include an optional read-aloud assistant for struggling readers and SpanishTutor, which can be enabled on a per-student basis at any time to provide tutorials, assistance, and motivational elements in Spanish. SpanishTutor assists Spanish-speaking students with neutral
enunciation and generic accents, offers positive feedback/support in Spanish, and accelerates gains by removing the language barrier for ELL students.

**Individualized Placement and Comprehensive Short Cycle:** Once students are assigned to an intervention, they begin their personalized learning by completing the adaptive Placement Test to determine their skill gaps and learning path. Data generated from the Placement Test is used to create an Individual Training Program (ITP), which places the student into the instructional stream at the appropriate level. As students work through the programs, the system adjusts the learning path, accelerating where possible and remediating when necessary. Students get positive and immediate feedback and can track their own progress.

**Progress Monitoring and Summative Assessments:** Progress monitoring can be assigned for individual and groups of students at any time. The management system provides teachers with realtime access to class and student data for:

- progress against weekly goals
- time spent in the instructional programs
- skills mastered
- speed of trial completion
- percentage of items correct
- number of attempts before mastery
- levels gained
- detailed error analysis
- suggestions for differentiating instruction

Using the data from the management system, teachers can create watchlists, identify the strengths and weaknesses of each student, and get daily information on progress metrics. By capturing each key stroke, the management system automatically records students’ progress in real time. Teachers can review errors and use intervention strategies learned through our job-embedded PD program to differentiate instruction based on actual learning data – providing opportunities to engage with students and further accelerate their progress.

Student training results can be viewed or printed at any time, allowing teachers to demonstrate progress to various stakeholders, including parents and administrators. Students can also be supplied with concrete evidence of their own progress. The placement test can be delivered at intervals as a summative assessment. The results of these assessments can, in turn, be used for the comprehensive tracking and reporting of student data, as required by the School Improvement Plan.

**School Improvement Plans:** Our Accelerated Learning Model produces positive outcomes for students and teachers that can be clearly linked to School Improvement Plans. Through our job-embedded professional development for teachers, data-driven management system and proven intervention programs, underperforming schools can meet their Plan objectives of successfully educating at-risk students, improving teacher effectiveness and achieving AYP targets. Our experienced intervention team works in partnership with each school to implement
a local model, continuously measure progress and make adjustments where needed to ensure sustainable results.
**Exemplar 2: Use of Scientific Educational Research**  
*(15 points possible)*

Describe how scientific educational research and evidence based practices will be used as the basis for all content and delivery systems and services provided to the LEA.

- The applicant should provide detailed data that supports successful performance in utilizing research and evidence-based practices in the delivery of systems and services, especially as applied to secondary school settings.
- Cite and reference available research studies (as appropriate) and provide data that indicate the practices used have a positive impact on the academic achievement of students in the subjects and grade levels in which you intend to provide services.
Research- and Evidence-Based Approach to Services: Academy of READING and Academy of MATH were first developed in 1990 by neuro-psychologists Dr. Ronald Trites and Dr. Christina Fiedorowicz, based on the results of a decade of original laboratory research into the causes and treatment of learning disabilities from reading dysfunction. This original research and subsequent studies on computer-based methodologies for mastery-based learning resulted in the development of powerful intervention solutions initially branded as AutoSkill – now called Academy of READING and Academy of MATH – which build fluency in the foundation skills of reading and math.

Automaticity: a Critical Component of Reading Fluency: A key feature of Academy programs is the incorporation of a “practice-makes-proficient” philosophy. This approach is consistent with one of Trites and Fiederowicz’s major findings: that fluent readers need to master the component sub skills of reading to the level of automaticity.

In a 1986 research study, Fiedorowicz examined 15 reading disabled children who had failed to acquire normal reading proficiency despite average intelligence, socio-cultural opportunity, conventional instruction, and freedom from gross sensory, emotional, or neurological handicap. The average age was 11.0 years (range of 8.1 to 13.8 years) and the average projected reading grade delay was 2.3 grades (range of 1.5 to 4.3 grades).

The results of participants who trained on the AutoSkill Reading Program were compared with the results of those who did not receive the AutoSkill training. Those who received the training improved more than the untrained participants in phonetic knowledge of words and reading word recognition (1.1 grade level gain versus a 0.1 grade level gain for the control group). In addition, the trained participants improved more than the untrained participants in oral reading accuracy, oral reading speed, auditory-visual matching accuracy, and visual matching speed.

Making Skills Manageable: the Key to Math Improvement: For students, overcoming the significant challenge of learning a new skill requires the coordination of a variety of cognitive abilities; it is essential that the skill is broken down into its component parts, with each part representing a manageable chunk to be learned – successfully (Vail, 1987¹, 1994²). School Specialty has long recognized the immense value of using this approach to teach complex skills. Since learning math is hierarchical in nature (new skills are built on learned skills), students who are moved through a curriculum without understanding foundation skills will continue to experience failure (Miller & Mercer, 1997³).

In the Academy of MATH, component skills of mathematics have been broken down and individually addressed, with students trained along a skill development sequence. This bottom-up approach gives students an opportunity to develop basic mathematical skills and knowledge before they move on to more complex or abstract mathematical concepts.

Educational research on math continually indicates that structured practice leads to development of accurate and fluent skills (Chall, 1983; Garnett, 1992; Kulak, 1993; Samuels, 1979). Indeed, instructional programs that do not provide sufficient opportunities for students to practice skills are unlikely to produce desired results (Wilson & Sindelar, 1991). The Academy of MATH incorporates this “practice-makes-proficient” philosophy, ensuring that students receive plenty of opportunities to practice new skills.

**Efficacy Studies:** From the original research by Trites and Fiedorowicz, the Academy programs have continued to evolve into the current version available on the online delivery system that is the central platform for School Specialty’s Accelerated Learning Model. As each new version is released, with updated assessments, content, graphics, responsive feedback and reporting features, the programs continue to be evaluated in ongoing studies with a wide range of student populations. Academy of READING and Academy of MATH studies have passed the rigorous research standards of the National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI). Recent efficacy studies that meet the NCRTI and What Works Clearinghouse “gold standard” requirements are described below.

**, OH (2011):** In Whitehall, Ohio, Whitehall-Yearling High School students were trained in the Academy of READING program from January to April 2011. Eighty-one Tier II and Tier III students in grades 9-12 were selected to participate in the study, based on their performance on the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. The students spent on average 25.6 hours in the Academy of READING program and 14.9 hours on focused training over a four-month period. On average, the students spent 129.7 minutes per week using the program. The Whitehall-Yearling students completed an average of 68.73% of the program and mastered approximately 35 skills.

Overall, students who were trained on Academy of READING made significant improvements on all of the assessments used in the study, which include:

- Academy of READING Placement Test
- Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test
- Ohio Graduating Test

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Ohio Test of English Language Acquisition
System to Enhance Educational Performance (iSTEEP)
Academy of READNG® Oral Reading Fluency Benchmark Assessment

In addition, scores on the Academy of READING Placement Test were significantly correlated with scores on each of these assessments, which provides support for use of the Academy of READING Placement Test as a reliable assessment to determine the individualized learning path for each student. (See Appendix 3 for the full report.)

**Spring Independent School District, TX (2009):** In Spring ISD, TX, 2,176 students from 26 schools used the Academy of READING during the school year and another 194 students used it during summer school. After an average of only 13.8 hours using the program, students had TAKS gains that were 104 scale points higher than non-users. After using the Academy of READING, the number of students meeting the TAKS reading standard increased by sixteen percent (16%). Title I, at-risk, economically disadvantaged, and students of all ethnicities had significantly higher TAKS reading gains than non-users. (See Appendix 4 for the full report.)

In a similar study from Spring ISD, TX, 2,176 students from 26 schools used the Academy of MATH during the school year, and another 194 students used it during summer school. The goal of this project was to evaluate the efficacy of the Academy of MATH with struggling elementary, middle, and high school students. After an average of 14 hours of training on the Academy of MATH, the number of students meeting proficiency on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills increased by 17%. (See Appendix 5 for the full report.)

**Great Falls Public Schools, MT (2007):** The Academy of MATH intervention program was sed at 16 schools in the Great Falls Public Schools District, MT. The program was targeted mainly towards students who were having difficulty with their math skills. Nine hundred and twenty-four students, grades 1-12, achieved an average gain of 3.5 levels on the Criterion Reference Test after using Academy of MATH for an average of 28.5 hours. (See Appendix 6 for the full report.)

Finally, for a more complete discussion of the research basis for the Academy programs, please see *Focus on Research: the Academy of READING* and *Focus on Research: Building Mathematical Proficiency with Academy of MATH.*
Exemplar 3: Job Embedded Professional Development
(15 points possible)

Describe how a job-embedded professional development plan will be put in place to support principals, school leadership teams, teachers, and support staff.

- The applicant should provide detailed data that supports successful performance in developing job-embedded professional development plans for:
  - principals
  - school leadership teams
  - teachers
  - support staff
An Effective, Customized Professional Development Program: As a key pillar of our Accelerated Learning Model, School Specialty has created an embedded Professional Development (PD) program that provides LEA, district, and school administrators, teachers, and support staff with a solid understanding of our intervention solutions, as well as comprehensive monitoring and reporting tools to ensure fidelity and measure progress towards student improvement objectives. Based on thousands of successful implementations, our PD program integrates job-embedded, onsite teacher training with proven instructional strategies, classroom coaching, and ongoing support to meet the needs of diverse populations and close the achievement gap for Tier II, Tier III, Title I, and ELL students.

Our experienced PD team has conducted effective teacher training services in a wide range of school districts, both large and small, across the U.S.—from Chinle USD, AZ, with a student population of 3,700, to Fort Bend ISD, TX, with a population of 69,423. In Fort Bend, for example, we’ve trained 160 educators in 60 sessions, with 6-8 site visits at each of 43 sites during the past two years. This extensive training regimen has led to program success and a high level of fidelity, resulting in positive student outcomes in both reading and math (Appendices 3-6).

Training Teachers - the Key to Program Success and Sustainability: At School Specialty, our forte is teaching students basic reading and math skills. Our programs complement schools’ existing reading and math curricula and address skill development and learner motivation. Teacher training is imperative, as our programs have a specialized focus and require fidelity to documented protocols in order to achieve the best outcomes for students. A complete understanding of our programs, the scientific research behind them, and how our programs retrain the brain is needed. Through a series of onsite training sessions and ongoing support, our PD team will work in close partnership with staff, including LEA administrators, principals, teachers and aides, to ensure that our programs are properly implemented. Due to our effective training process, teachers and students using our programs will be able to sustain positive results well into the future.

Our PD team partners with school administrators, IT professionals, and teachers to deliver comprehensive services that will optimize student achievement. All members of the PD team are knowledgeable in the program’s theory and pedagogy, and are experienced at providing trainings/implementations (Appendix 9).

Before beginning the implementation process, we will work closely with the LEA, as well as district and school leadership, to define student growth goals, address local issues, and optimize integration with current PD strategies. This approach comprises a customized, multi-year PD Plan designed to build internal capacity and sustain program success. A sample PD Plan is provided in Appendix 7.

School Specialty knows that ongoing, consistent PD and support services lead to measurable, positive results. Therefore, we will provide customer support to all Academy users, as well as an Intervention Manager, who will be available to provide coaching/assistance and answer any questions that might arise. As part of our three-year PD Plan, we will address the need to build a team of experts for continued best practices and professional development to ensure year-to-year continuity and sustainability. We offer a Train-the-Trainer program to assist schools...
and districts in building a local, self-sufficient management program, which provides a sustainable economic model for district-wide implementation. Key individuals will receive master-level training, mentoring, and coaching from our experienced PD team over a three-year period. Upon completion, LEA or district staff will be able to take the lead in supporting schools within their areas/districts.

**Levels and Phases of PD Training:** The level and intensity of PD services we provide is differentiated, depending on the needs/desires of those being trained. For example, more intensive and frequent PD services (i.e., onsite training sessions conducted by experienced instructors) will be provided to those teachers and support staff who will be implementing our programs, while LEA administrators, school leaderships teams, and principals will receive an overview of our programs with a focus on their progress monitoring/data reporting features. Our PD training sessions follow four phases, geared towards various LEA/school staff:

**Phase 1 – Planning (LEA/School Administrators):** We will meet with LEA/school leaders to determine the capacity for program fidelity and establish implementation goals. At the end of this onsite session, participants will:

- Complete the *Implementation Planning Guide*
- Establish implementation goals
- Determine capacity for program fidelity

**Phase 2 – Deployment (Teachers/Aides):** Our Professional Development specialists will equip teachers/aides with product knowledge and tools to implement the interventions effectively. Students will receive hands-on guidance, and teachers/aides will learn to monitor/manage student training. At the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand the theory and benefits of our programs
- Assess students’ reading/math proficiency
- Monitor and manage student learning effectively

**Phase 3 - Onsite Coaching and Classroom Support (Teachers/Aides):** We will provide ongoing, in-class coaching, virtual PD sessions, and implementation support to help teachers/aides analyze data and apply appropriate intervention strategies for each student. Teachers and aides will be coached on:

- Monitoring student progress
- Analyzing and assessing data
- Intervention strategies

*Mid-Year Review:* In order to ensure ongoing program fidelity, we will conduct a mid-year review of interim report cards with teachers and aides.

**Phase 4 – Evaluation/Comprehensive Year-end Report (LEA/School Administrators):** We will meet with LEA/school administrators to review year-end results and plan for the next school year. Participants will receive:

- Recommendations for Year 2 implementation
- A Year 2 *Planning Guide*
- A Comprehensive Year-end, District-level Report

This four-phase process ensures that all district/school administrators, teachers, and support staff understand how to effectively use the Academy programs and their accompanying tools, as well as how the programs work to provide direct
intervention (via math and reading skills remediation) to struggling students.

**Exemplar 4: Experience with State and Federal Requirements**
*(15 points possible)*

Describe your experience with State and Federal Requirements, especially as it relates to the following:

- Aligning model(s) to be implemented with the School Improvement Framework
- The Michigan Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- Individual School/District Improvement Plans, North Central Association (NCA)
  - Response demonstrates alignment of the above mentioned elements, AKA “One Common Voice - One Plan.”
- Understanding of Title 1 (differences between Targeted Assistance and School-wide)
- State assessments — Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and the Michigan Merit Exam (MME)
- Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs)
- Michigan High School Content Expectations (HSCEs)
- Michigan Merit Curriculum
- Michigan Curriculum Framework
- Section 504 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
As literacy and intervention specialists for more than 50 years, School Specialty has first-hand experience in adhering to federal and state requirements while providing effective instructional programs to a variety of student populations across the country. Our Accelerated Learning Model provides schools with job-embedded professional development to improve teacher effectiveness, an online delivery and management system to provide instruction, track progress and make data-based decisions, and evidence-based intervention programs that are documented to close the achievement gap for struggling learners in Tier II, Tier III, special education and ELL programs. (Research and Efficacy studies are provided in appendices 3-6.)

Experience with Title I: Many of the more than 3,000 schools we work with use Title I funding to purchase our programs, for both targeted assistance and school-wide initiatives. With limited capacity (access to computers, for example), and specific school improvement goals, some schools we serve opt for a more targeted approach to their implementation. Our flexible implementation and licensing model enables schools to use targeted or school-wide interventions and offer students access anywhere on the school network or from home. For example:

- In Wake County, North Carolina, 55 secondary schools use Academy of READING three days/week during intensive intervention periods and for supplemental, extended-day learning with 3,640 students in Tier II and Tier III. In 2010, students using Academy of READING reaching or exceeding their growth target [EOG] increased from 37.5% to 60.1% after service.

- In Hillsborough Public Schools in Tampa, the third largest school district in Florida, 32 secondary schools are using the Academy of READING and MCI for targeted intervention during five 90-minute intervention periods with FCAT I students in the 1-19th percentile, including Title I and special education. Year over year data shows positive growth on FCAT scores.

Experience in Michigan: We have worked closely with administrators and teachers in the Grand Ledge Public School District to implement our intervention solutions with students in grades 2-12. With our PD team providing ongoing teacher training and support, this district of nearly 5,000 students is currently using Academy of READING and Academy of MATH with Tier II and Tier III students. Dr. Norma Schutzki, Executive Director of Special Services in Grand Ledge, reports positive results since implementing the programs: "Already we have seen growth in reading and math scores on the MEAP for students in the first two years.”

We’ve also partnered with Ace Academy in Highland Park to implement a successful intervention program for the school’s behaviorally challenged students. This strict discipline academy, which provides small-group instruction to adjudicated males ages 12-20, is using the Academy of READING to improve students’ literacy skills.

Support for One Common Voice-One Plan: We work closely with district and school leaders to create a sustainable action plan that reflects the local environment, capacity and student achievement goals. Our PD services, ongoing supports, and instructional programs provide research-based practices for rapid improvement. Our centralized management system enables district leaders to compare school and grade-level data, and develop a common reporting framework.
Alignment with the School Improvement Framework: Our intervention solutions are proven to assist Transformational schools meet the following:

(1) Teacher Effectiveness: Our Professional Development services facilitate effective teaching through best practices for intervention, classroom modeling and coaching. Our online management system provides real-time data for progress monitoring, diagnostics and formative instruction.

(2) Reform Strategies: Our online solutions can be integrated into a school- or district-designed instructional program and used with multiple student populations, including emergent, remedial, special education, and ELL.

(3) Community: Our age-neutral program teaches basic reading and math skills and can be incorporated into community outreach programs to serve ELL students and parents or early learners. Reports can be printed or emailed to parents or guardians and used to foster at-home support and ongoing success.

(4) Operational flexibility & Sustained Support: Since our solution requires just 1.5 hours/week per student, it can be combined with other solutions used by the school or district, and offered for use at home, after school or intercession.

Alignment with State Standards: Academy of READING and Academy of MATH are aligned with Michigan, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and Common Core State Standards; the MEAP, the MME, and the Michigan GLSCEs and HSCEs (Appendices 1 & 2). Our programs are correlated with the Michigan Merit Curriculum and the three tiers of the Michigan Curriculum Framework.

Alignment with Federal Legislation: We are committed to providing solutions that align to federal legislation, including the Response to Intervention (RTI) initiative. The RTI model establishes that early intervention, a problem-solving approach based on data and a multi-tiered delivery model are critical to the prevention of reading and math failure. Our experienced PD team has provided guidance and instructional solutions to educators across the county to implement this data-driven process, which is also part of many School Improvement Plans.

Section 504 of IDEA: Many of the schools we serve buy our programs using IDEA funds. Our documented research basis with special education students and endorsement by the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) demonstrates the fit for our programs with special education students. Such as:

- In Fort Bend ISD, Texas, Special Education students with low performing scores in Math have shown “strong growth since we began implementing Academy of MATH during the 2011-2012 school year,” says Renee Gore, SERS Instructional Liaison. “The overall increase was 3% from the previous year. When analyzing the data for the [proficient] students not using the programs, the gains were from 1% to 3%. “

- Albuquerque Public Schools, NM, began implementing MCI for special education students in secondary schools in 2009. Says Claudia Gutierrez, Instructional Manager, “In the 2010-11 school year, we met our federal indicator for the district’s population of special education students achieving proficiency in reading on the NMSBA. Our special education students are now moving ahead of the ELL students on meeting proficiency in reading.”
Exemplar 5: Sustainability Plan
(15 points possible)

Describe how a sustainability plan will be put in place for the building to become self-sufficient at the end of the 3-year grant period.

- The applicant should demonstrate significant knowledge and experience in developing sustainability plans.
Sustainability of Program Success: The extensive professional development process outlined in our PD Plan puts schools and districts on the path to achieving maximum positive results, in terms of measurable student gains in both reading and math. Our customized PD Plan is built upon the knowledge that continued success must address the diverse experience levels and varying improvement and/or turnaround goals of each school or district. Our consultative, team-based approach to PD is designed to transfer knowledge and a firm understanding of our programs and solutions to all of our stakeholders, while also building internal capacity for ongoing program management. Advanced strategies and future planning are also included as part of our three-year PD Plan.

As described in Exemplar 3, our PD program has been developed and refined over the years. The training results of our extensive professional development process – coupled with ongoing support, which is provided to schools/districts on an as-needed basis – has shown that schools using the Academy programs become self-sufficient.

Successful Implementations Lead to Sustained Success: School Specialty has successfully implemented its Academy programs in more than 3,000 schools and districts across the United States. A wide range of schools and districts – both large and small, urban and rural – have been able to effectively use the Academy of READING and Academy of MATH programs, without being dependent on our PD team, after three years, due to our intensive PD training. Because of the measurable student gains achieved through the use of our proven solutions, administrators, principals, and teachers become highly motivated to continue using our products and learn more about them. They also use and integrate our programs’ data-driven outcomes into their curriculum, classrooms, and schools. Our effective PD program, along with committed staff and teachers who are willing to implement the programs with fidelity, helps perpetuate program sustainability.

Three-Year Plan Furthers Self-Sufficiency: As part of our three-year PD Plan, we address the need to build a team of experts for continued best practices and professional development to ensure year-to-year continuity. To ensure continuity and sustainability, we offer a Train-the-Trainer program to assist schools and districts in building a local, self-sufficient management program. This training program provides a sustainable economic model for district-wide implementation. Key individuals in the Train-the-Trainer program receive master-level training, mentoring, and coaching from our experienced PD team over a three-year period. Upon completion, district staff is able to take the lead in supporting schools within their districts.

Please see Appendix 8 for a detailed description of our Train-the-Trainer program, which is an integral part of our Professional Development/Sustainability Plan.
Exemplar 6: Staff Qualifications
(15 points possible)

Provide names and a brief summary of qualifications for the primary staff who will be involved in providing services to LEA’s. Provide criteria for selection of additional staff that are projected to be working with LEA’s. Include vitae of primary staff.

- Staff qualifications and vitae should match with areas that the applicant wishes to serve. Staff should have extensive experience in implementation of all applicable areas.
School Specialty has an established, highly qualified Professional Development team of experienced trainers, all of whom are available to conduct extensive onsite training and ongoing support to administrators, teachers, and others who will be implementing the Academy and MCI programs in Michigan’s schools. All members of our PD team have a thorough knowledge of the Academy and MCI products, the research and pedagogy behind them, and the best practices approach to utilizing our products to improve students’ math and reading skills.

Our criteria for selection of additional staff include: a four-year degree; knowledge of classroom management strategies; tact and diplomacy, with the ability to handle confidential information; excellent communication skills; and a strong commitment to providing superior PD services. Ideally, new hires will have a teaching degree (with either a reading or math specialization); classroom teaching experience; and experience with implementing School Specialty intervention programs.

The Project Lead, **Peter Cleary**, is our Director of Professional Services. He holds a Master’s degree in Education from Queen’s University in Canada. During his 14 years with the company, Mr. Cleary has served in a variety of capacities related to program design and implementation. His experience is invaluable in helping districts evaluate their needs and create success plans.

The Reading Lead is **Mildred Papi**, our National Training Manager and Literacy Intervention Specialist. Mrs. Papi is a certificated reading teacher with a Master’s of Science in Teaching Reading from Queens College, NY. Mrs. Papi has taught at every level, from elementary school through junior college. She has provided program and implementation training for Academy of READING for the past 10 years. Mrs. Papi has a wealth of experience in working with educators in schools of every size and has spearheaded numerous successful implementations.

**Valerie Russell**, the Math Lead for School Specialty, holds a Master's in Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Oklahoma University and Math Teaching Certificates for both Oklahoma and Texas. She has been working with us since 2007 and specializes in Academy of MATH, with an additional focus on Response to Intervention (RTI) programs. Ms. Russell has taught at elementary, middle, and high school levels, and understands the challenges of teaching at-risk students.

We are excited to have **Dr. John E. McCook** as our RTI Lead. Dr. McCook serves as a consultant for school systems across the nation on special education, Section 504, legal issues in school administration, and implementing the Response to Intervention process. Serving as president of the Tennessee Association of Administrators in Special Education, Dr. McCook received the Richard Yoakley Award for the Outstanding Special Education Director in 1999. In 2006 he was awarded the UCEA Excellence in Educational Leadership Award by the graduate faculty at the University of Tennessee.

We will also use the following experienced, subject-specific trainers as a part of the Professional Development services delivery team: **Lynne Cooke, Kathleen Ausen, Emily Duplantis, and Rebecca Cantrell**. Please see Appendix 9 for CVs of each member of our dedicated PD team.
The applicant entity:

1. will follow all applicable legislation and guidance governing the Section 1003(g) school improvement grants.

2. will follow all applicable Federal, state, and local health, safety, employment, and civil rights laws at all times.

3. will comply with the MDE Standards for Monitoring Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grants Preferred External Education Services Providers.

4. agrees to make all documents available to the MDE or LEA for inspection/monitoring purposes, and participate in site visits at the request of the MDE, the district, or facilitators/monitors for the SIG grant.

5. agrees to notify MDE and applicable district(s), in writing, of any change in the contact information provided in this application within ten business days.

6. ensures that it will provide written notification to MDE, when external preferred provider services will no longer be provided, thirty days prior to termination of services.

7. assures that they have accurately and completely described services they will provide to the LEA.

8. assures they will comply with SEA and LEA requirements and procedures.
Assurances:

By submitting this application, School Specialty Literacy and Intervention:

- will follow all applicable legislation and guidance governing the Section 1003(g) school improvement grants.
- will follow all applicable Federal, state, and local health, safety, employment, and civil rights laws at all times.
- will comply with the MDE Standards for Monitoring Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grants Preferred External Education Services Providers.
- agrees to make all documents available to the MDE or LEA for inspection/monitoring purposes, and participate in site visits at the request of the MDE, the district, or facilitators/monitors for the SIG grant.
- agrees to notify MDE and applicable district(s), in writing, of any change in the contact information provided in this application within ten business days.
- ensures that we will provide written notification to MDE, when external preferred provider services will no longer be provided, thirty days prior to termination of services.
- assures that we have accurately and completely described services we will provide to the LEA; and
- assures that we will comply with SEA and LEA requirements and procedures.

Sincerely,

David Ciommo

David Ciommo
VP, Finance
School Specialty Literacy and Intervention
**SECTION D: ATTACHMENTS**

- **Licensure:** Applicants must attach a copy of their business license or formal documentation of legal status with respect to conducting business in Michigan (e.g., certificate of incorporation, proof of 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status). Schools, school districts, and ISDs/RESAs may substitute documents that include address/contact information and the appropriate building or district code as found in the Educational Entity Master (EEM).

  Please see **Attachment A** for a copy of our business license.

- **Insurance:** Applicants must provide a proof of their liability insurance or a quote from an insurance agency that reflects the intent to obtain general and/or professional liability insurance coverage.

  Please see **Attachment B** for proof of our liability insurance.