

Frequently Asked Questions: Section 35a(4) Grant



Section 35a(4) of the FY 25 State School Aid Act provides \$42,000,000 for early literacy coaches at Intermediate School Districts (ISD) to assist teachers in developing and implementing instructional strategies for pupils in grades pre-K to 5 so that pupils are reading at grade level by the end of grade 3. Each ISD is eligible to receive \$125,000 per coach from the MDE and must have a minimum of 2 early literacy coaches.

1. Who are the grant funds intended for?

Intermediate School Districts (ISD) and Regional Educational Services Agencies (RESA).

2. How can the grant funds be used?

Grant funds can be used to hire Early Literacy Coaches at the ISD or RESA. This can include salary, benefits, and materials utilized by the coach.

3. Will the ISD allocations remain the same for 2024-25?

Each ISD is eligible to receive \$125,000 per coach and must have a minimum of 2 early literacy coaches. Each ISD is eligible to maintain their current funding beyond the 2-coach minimum. All additional coaching allocations will be distributed to ISDs based on the percentage of total statewide number of pupils in grades K to 3 who meet the income eligibility standards for the federal free and reduced-price lunch programs who are enrolled in districts within the ISD. ISDs eligible for additional funding will be contacted by MDE after the application closes.

4. What is the expenditure period for this grant?

The grant expenditure period is October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025.

5. When will the ISD receive grant funds?

Grant funds must be disbursed by the December State Aid payment.

6. Does this grant allow for carryover?

Yes, the grant allows for one year of carryover. Intent to carry over unused funds must be emailed to MDE-EarlyLiteracy@michigan.gov by October 31, 2025. Once the carryover request is approved, the ISD/RESA will have until September 30, 2026 to expend or return all unused carryover funds.

7. Can the ISD/RESA directly hire a coach?

Yes, the ISD/RESA can directly hire an early literacy coach. The early literacy coach would be an employee of the ISD/RESA.

8. What if we have a district who would like to use the funds to support a coach that they have hired?

The funds are intended for ISDs/RESAs. ISDs/RESAs may accept early literacy coaching funds and work with a local district to establish an educator on loan process for the purpose of identifying early literacy coaches. The educator on loan coach would be engaged in the work outlined in the Grant Assurances through the ISDs/RESAs, but will remain an employee of their district. These funds cannot be distributed directly from MDE to a local district for this purpose.

9. Can Section 35a(4) funds be used to fund existing early literacy coaches?

35a(4) funds are intended to increase coaching capacity in Michigan and will ideally be used to fund a full FTE Early Literacy Coaching position whose activities will be: directed by the ISD, participating in all ELTF Early Literacy Coaching Network activities, supporting increased early literacy knowledge, providing consistent messaging and professional learning for Michigan K-3 teachers. This may include hiring of new early literacy coaches or redefining current early literacy coaching positions.

- 10. Can the \$125,000 coaching allocation be used to hire multiple part time coaches?**
Yes, the ISD/RESA can use the allocation(s) to hire multiple part time coaches if needed. Please keep in mind that part time early literacy coaches will still need to abide by all the grant assurances and attend/participate in the required training and networking.
- 11. Can a district contribute supplemental funds to offset an educator on loan literacy coach above the \$125,000 provided by the ISD?**
Yes, the district can contribute supplemental funds above the \$125,000 allocation for the educator on loan literacy coach if needed.
- 12. Who is responsible for ensuring the ISD coach adheres to the Grant Assurances?**
The ISD/RESA is responsible for ensuring the Early Literacy Coach adheres to the grant assurances in the grant application. Grant assurances can be found on the [MDE Literacy website](#).
- 13. Are coaches required to take LETRS?**
Yes, any early literacy coach partially or fully funded using 35a(4) grant funds must have already received or be making progress toward receiving LETRS training. For more information, please visit the [LETRS website](#).
- 14. How do we report who we have hired as an ISD Coach and what their role and responsibility is?**
The ISD must provide the department with a list by September 1 of the immediately preceding fiscal year containing contact information for all literacy coaches funded under this subsection, in a form and manner determined by the department. An ISD shall communicate any personnel changes and changes to contact information for literacy coaches funded under this subsection to the department within 30 days of the personnel change or change in contact information.
- 15. Do the ISD Early Literacy Coaches have to service charters/public school academies?**
Yes, the ISD Early Literacy Coach(es) have to service the charters/public school academies within their ISD.
- 16. Is each coach required to be assigned to a particular district?**
The ISD has autonomy to determine how coaches will work with schools. The grant requires that all schools have access to the literacy coach.
- 17. Can ISDs assign coaches all or a portion of their FTE within the PreK setting in order to support pupils reading at grade level by the end of grade 3?**
Yes, in the 2024-2025 legislation, pre-K is included.