



“Civic engagement in public education.”

Read to Succeed SIC Goals and Project Ideas for Elementary Schools

Goal I: Increase Student Access to a Wide Variety of Books and other Texts

Access to a variety of engaging reading materials, both in the classroom and at home, is associated with improved student reading and writing levels. This is particularly true for students from lower-income families, who often do not have easy access to books and other texts.

Projects ideas for this goal:

1. Create libraries in each classroom that have a wide variety of engaging books for different reading levels.

The International Reading Association recommends that every pre-kindergarten classroom contain a minimum of 5-6 books per student, 50% of which should be non-fiction. It recommends that each elementary classroom have its own library with up to at least 200 books in its collection. The goal is to include many different types of books at different reading levels in each classroom addressing a wide variety of interests, including poetry, historical fiction, biography, autobiography, nonfiction, graphic novels, multicultural resources, magazines and comics.

2. Organize a free book program that allows children to periodically choose books to take home and keep.

This type of project can be especially impactful for low income students. It has been estimated that, in low income neighborhoods, there is one book for every 300 children, while in middle-income neighborhoods, there are an average of 13 books for every one child.

3. Bring books to where families are, using donated books to create small informal libraries throughout the community.

Be creative in thinking about how your SIC can help meet the needs of busy families who may not be able to visit the library regularly. Communities have used donated books to establish small libraries in locations such as the town laundromat, where parents can pick up a book and read to their child while waiting for clothes to dry. You can read about one such project at <http://kalw.org/post/richmond-mom-brings-literacy-laundromats#stream/>. Another creative approach is to establish "Little Free Libraries," mailbox-sized library boxes, in locations that are convenient for kids and families. For more information about this movement and to find existing locations in South Carolina, visit <http://littlefreelibrary.org>.

4. Work with public libraries to identify and address barriers that families may face in regularly visiting and borrowing books.

Transportation is a common barrier, particularly in rural areas. Explore working with a local library and other community groups to create a library bus that takes books to where families are or that provides regular weekly trips to the library. Some communities and school districts are experimenting with transforming school buses into Wi-Fi hot spots so that students with long commutes can access digital books and other online resources while they ride. Local businesses may be willing to cover the cost of outfitting individual buses with internet access. You can read about one school district in Arizona that has adopted this approach at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/04/13/wi-fi-hubs-on-buses-connect-students-in.html>.

Goal II: Increase Parent Knowledge, Skills, and Confidence in How to Help Their Children become Proficient Readers and Writers

Increased parent engagement in children's reading and writing development is associated with improved student achievement in these areas. Many parents need help, however, in building the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to support their children's literacy development.

Project ideas for this goal:

1. Organize parent workshops or distribute parent-friendly brochures or flyers addressing one or more of the following suggested topics (feel free to brainstorm additional ideas):

- How children learn to read and write
- Literacy strategies that parents can use with their children at home
- Where to find lists of books that are right for your child's reading level
- What to do when your child is a reluctant reader
- What Read to Succeed means for parents and students
- What children need to know and do in order to read and write at grade-level
- What school assessment data tells you about your child's literacy development
- How parents and teachers can partner together to support literacy development

2. Organize or provide support for school family literacy nights or similar family events at the school or in the community.

There are many ways that SICs can contribute, such as providing volunteers, finding community resources, helping with publicity, and making phone calls and personal invitations to individual parents to ensure a good turnout. Literacy nights are usually held at the school, but don't limit yourself to the school if there are other locations in the community that may enable you to reach more parents.

3. Create a lending library at the school for parents (or a virtual equivalent on the school's website) containing books, videos, audiotapes, and other materials that explain how parents can support their children's literacy development.

Goal III: Decrease Summer Reading Loss, Especially for Struggling and Low Income Readers

Students who do not read at all over the summer months will likely experience summer reading loss. This achievement loss can have an especially significant impact on struggling readers as summer reading loss can be cumulative from year to year. Low income students are especially at risk of experiencing summer reading loss because it is more difficult for them to access books and reading activities during the summer months.

Project ideas for this goal:

1. Organize or provide support for a school-wide book fair right before summer break.

Try to collect enough books so that every Pre-K through 5th grader can take home 8-12 books of their choice for summer reading, free of charge.

2. Provide support for your school district's summer reading camp.

The Read to Succeed law requires school districts, either on their own or in collaboration with others, to provide access to summer reading camp for 3rd grade students who are at risk of retention because they have not demonstrated grade level proficiency. SICs can work individually or form district-wide partnerships with other SICs to provide needed supports for these camps and recruit local businesses and community organizations to help.

3. Organize or provide support for a summer book club or tutoring program at the school or as part of an existing day camp that many children attend.

Check to see if there are local organizations in your community that already deliver reading enrichment activities to kids and ask if they are willing to work with local summer day camps. If there aren't, check to see if a local government agency or state-level non-profit can help you bring a provider to your community. If your school attendance zone includes densely populated areas like apartment buildings, consider asking the apartment manager if you can use the community room during the summer months for book clubs or tutoring sessions that are staffed by volunteer teachers, parents, and community members.

Finding Partners

Your SIC will likely not have all of the expertise and resources it needs to implement these project ideas by itself. That's when it's time to look for partners who can bring the missing pieces to the table.

The Read to Succeed law encourages schools to develop partnerships with a variety of different community partners. These include public libraries, local arts organizations, community non-profits, social service agencies, businesses, faith-based institutions, pediatric and family practice personnel, and SCETV. Professors and graduate students at local colleges of education are also good resources. Every SIC will have unique needs -- let those needs drive your search for potential partners.

Don't forget to check the resources available within your school and district. Partnerships between SICs and PTAs/PTOs can be very effective. District personnel as well as school administrators, media specialists, reading coaches, and other teachers can often provide valuable advice and expertise. In any case, your SIC should always consult with the principal

and school literacy instructors early on to ensure that your SIC goals and activities are aligned with -- and do not duplicate -- other ongoing efforts to support improved student literacy.

Finally, there are a multitude of resources on the Web with many great ideas for literacy goals and projects. One site that our office has found particularly useful in addressing the needs of elementary school readers and their families is "Reading Rockets" (www.readingrockets.org).

Have Questions? Contact the SC-SIC office at 803-777-7658 or sic@mailbox.sc.edu and a member of our staff will be happy to help.