

**From:** Lee, Laurie  
**Sent time:** Monday, October 24, 2011 12:34:05 PM  
**To:** Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) <Cari@excelined.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Elementary Reading Block Grant

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Cari,

I think I told you that when Kevin, Hope and I were working for Evan at IRA I ran into Sarah McCuster – the person that took my old job. She told me that funding was discontinued – it was on a year by year basis but the grant had existed for a while. When I was there it was \$76 million dollars. I checked the website at [http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/html/contact\\_info.htm](http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/html/contact_info.htm) and see that Sarah is now assigned to Striving Readers, so I'm sure that, unfortunately, the grant was not funded this year. Illinois is in a world of hurt financially. The state is way behind in providing the funds owed to universities, nursing homes, etc. and I read one article that said they may not be able to pay those entities at all's really sad.

Thanks!

Laurie Lee  
Middle School Reading Specialist  
Just Read, Florida!  
325 West Gaines Street  
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850-245-0503

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**From:** Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org) [mailto:Cari@excelined.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2011 12:27 PM  
**To:** Lee, Laurie  
**Subject:** RE: Elementary Reading Block Grant

Sorry, got another question: is there continued year-to-year funding for the Elementary Block Grant? Their website only shows information from 2009-2010.

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**From:** Lee, Laurie [mailto:Laurie.Lee@fldoe.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2011 10:21 AM  
**To:** Cari Miller (Cari@excelined.org)  
**Subject:** RE: Elementary Reading Block Grant

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Laurie Lee  
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**From:** Cari Miller ([Cari@excelined.org](mailto:Cari@excelined.org)) [<mailto:Cari@excelined.org>]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2011 10:20 AM  
**To:** Lee, Laurie  
**Subject:** RE: Elementary Reading Block Grant

Thanks Laurie. This is really helpful. So glad to have an Illinois insider!

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**From:** Lee, Laurie [mailto:Laurie.Lee@fldoe.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2011 10:19 AM  
**To:** Cari Miller ([Cari@excelined.org](mailto:Cari@excelined.org))  
**Subject:** RE: Elementary Reading Block Grant

I remember as well that the Reading Recovery Grant was something that was applied for separately although it came out of the 2%. If you Google up Reading Improvement Block Grant and my name, you'll see some newsletters that were published that might provide some insight into the grant as well. One thing I did was participate in rule making to change the timeline of the grant. When I first arrived, grant funds were awarded ~~at~~ before districts were deemed eligible to receive funds. It seemed only logical that the reports that demonstrated eligibility be due in advance of releasing funds...so you'll probably see a reference to the change in the timeline in those newsletters. Also, there were quite a few districts that used the ISAT (Illinois State Achievement Test) at their outcome measurbut they didn't have to.

I hope this helps...also, I still know a few people there if you need a contact...but many have moved on. Thanks and have a great day!

Laurie Lee  
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**From:** Cari Miller ([Cari@excelined.org](mailto:Cari@excelined.org)) [<mailto:Cari@excelined.org>]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2011 10:08 AM  
**To:** Lee, Laurie  
**Subject:** RE: Elementary Reading Block Grant

Very helpful info. Thanks so much Laurie!

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**From:** Lee, Laurie [mailto:Laurie.Lee@fldoe.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2011 10:03 AM  
**To:** Cari Miller ([Cari@excelined.org](mailto:Cari@excelined.org))  
**Subject:** RE: Elementary Reading Block Grant

Cari,

Some of the 2% did go to Reading Recovery. Those funds came to the department and then were disbursed to train Reading Recovery teachers, trainers, etc. I'm not sure how it was decided to utilize Reading Recovery – that happened before I got there. Also, some districts paid their Reading Recovery folks out of the side I administered (the 98%). It was very expensive – the trainers were especially well paid. This was fairly widely done when I first began my work there, but became less so because of the expense and the limited amount of students that were impacted (first grade students only, and one at a time).

Let me know when you would like to get together ☺

Laurie Lee  
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**From:** Cari Miller ([Cari@excelined.org](mailto:Cari@excelined.org)) [<mailto:Cari@excelined.org>]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2011 9:59 AM  
**To:** Lee, Laurie  
**Subject:** RE: Elementary Reading Block Grant

Thanks!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Reading Recovery? It suggests that 2% of the funding could be for Reading Recovery. Was this widely implemented? Was this the PD that was provided with the 2% you mention?

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**From:** Lee, Laurie [<mailto:Laurie.Lee@fldoe.org>]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2011 9:45 AM  
**To:** Cari Miller ([Cari@excelined.org](mailto:Cari@excelined.org))  
**Subject:** RE: Elementary Reading Block Grant

Cari,

I'd be happy to talk with you about the grant. I'm heading to Sarasota County on Wednesday and will be gone on Thursday...we could get together tomorrow after lunch with Evan, or if that's not convenient, sometime on Friday?

To answer your initial questions:

1. It was state funded with 98% going to districts (kind of like our FEFP) and 2% to the Department (there called the Illinois State Board of Education or ISBE) for the creation of professional development. I administered the 98% going to districts and provided guidance to all districts except Chicago Public Schools – they basically did whatever they wanted (imagine that).
2. It was an elementary grant, so while the legislation included study skills, it was very much a reading grant.
3. Here's where things became interesting...districts were able to choose what assessments they wanted to use to demonstrate growth of their students. It had to be valid and reliable. This meant that I spent a great deal of time researching various reading assessments to make sure this was the case. We didn't allow them to use a measure within their reading program...it had to be a more standardized measure. The grant required that their students show growth...if they did not, their funds were jeopardized. Districts submitted a plan detailing what they intended to do in regard to their reading instruction, submitted a budget, and detailed their assessment. I was charged with reviewing all of the plans much like we do the K-12 plans. Then, they submitted a report after the school year ended with the results of their assessments. I reviewed all of these as well. It was over 1000. Whew!!
4. I didn't work closely with the Reading First folks, and I can't remember what was used for RF.

Let me know when you would like to get together! See you soon....

Have a great day ☺

Laurie Lee  
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**From:** Cari Miller ([Cari@excelined.org](mailto:Cari@excelined.org)) [<mailto:Cari@excelined.org>]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2011 9:27 AM  
**To:** Lee, Laurie  
**Subject:** Elementary Reading Block Grant

Laurie,

I'd like to bend your ear a bit on the Elementary Reading Block Grant that was implemented in Illinois. Do you have time in the next couple of days to get together to discuss? Off the top, funding, was it federally funded or state funded? The legislation suggests it was focused on reading and study skills-study skills? What assessments were used to monitor progress and identify students with a reading difficulty?

Reading First, what assessment was used to monitor progress and identify students with a reading difficulty?

Sincerely,  
Cari Miller  
State Initiatives  
Foundation for Excellence in Education  
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