

Early-Phase Competition Absolute Priority 2 (General)

CommonLit, Inc.

S411C220171

CommonLit 360: Expanding Access to a Content-Rich Digital English Language Arts Program to Accelerate Learning Among Underserved Students

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The goal of this project is to accelerate student achievement in reading, writing, and speaking and listening through the refinement and demonstration of CommonLit 360, a scalable, comprehensive, digital English Language Arts (“ELA”) open educational resource (OER) blended learning curriculum with aligned PD, assessments, and school district support framework. It will support the acquisition of students’ knowledge, language, academic and social emotional skills through digital formative assessment, job-embedded and collaborative teacher professional learning, and cultural and technology-based supports for underserved students (defined as students of color, students experiencing poverty, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities). This application seeks an early-phase grant to (1) further refine and develop CL360, including through feedback from a pilot year in at least two high-need districts to better address disparities in the wake of COVID-19, and (2) conduct a three-year, mixed methods randomized control trial in three distinct high-need districts led by external evaluators from the Consortium for Policy Research in Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. This project will directly reach roughly 80,000 in students in grades 6-12 across four districts, but will almost certainly reach millions more when made available for free at CommonLit.org, which already reaches between 7 to 10 million monthly site visitors with its current offerings. It addresses Absolute Priorities 1 and 2, and Competitive Preference Priorities 1 and 2. Project objectives include further developing the CL360 curriculum for grades 6-12 based on stakeholder feedback aggregated from stakeholders in 50 schools; creating an integrated vocabulary experience to better support multilingual learners within the curriculum; developing Tier 2 supports (e.g. graphic organizers, “Target Lessons”) for struggling adolescent writers, developing technology (e.g. IEP accommodations within assessments, student grouping suggestions) to better support learner variability and advance accessibility in a blended learning environment; engineer tools including a missing assignment alert to help teachers and schools reengage students and families, and pilot a district-wide rollout model that includes stakeholders within schools and communities to lead the effort, analyze new data, and proactively address disparities. Teacher-level expected outcomes are increased confidence in teaching ability and utilization of effective technology; student-level outcomes are higher scores on state ELA assessments, growth on valid reading benchmark assessments, growth in confidence to tackle rigorous academic tasks, and improved academic performance in reading and writing.