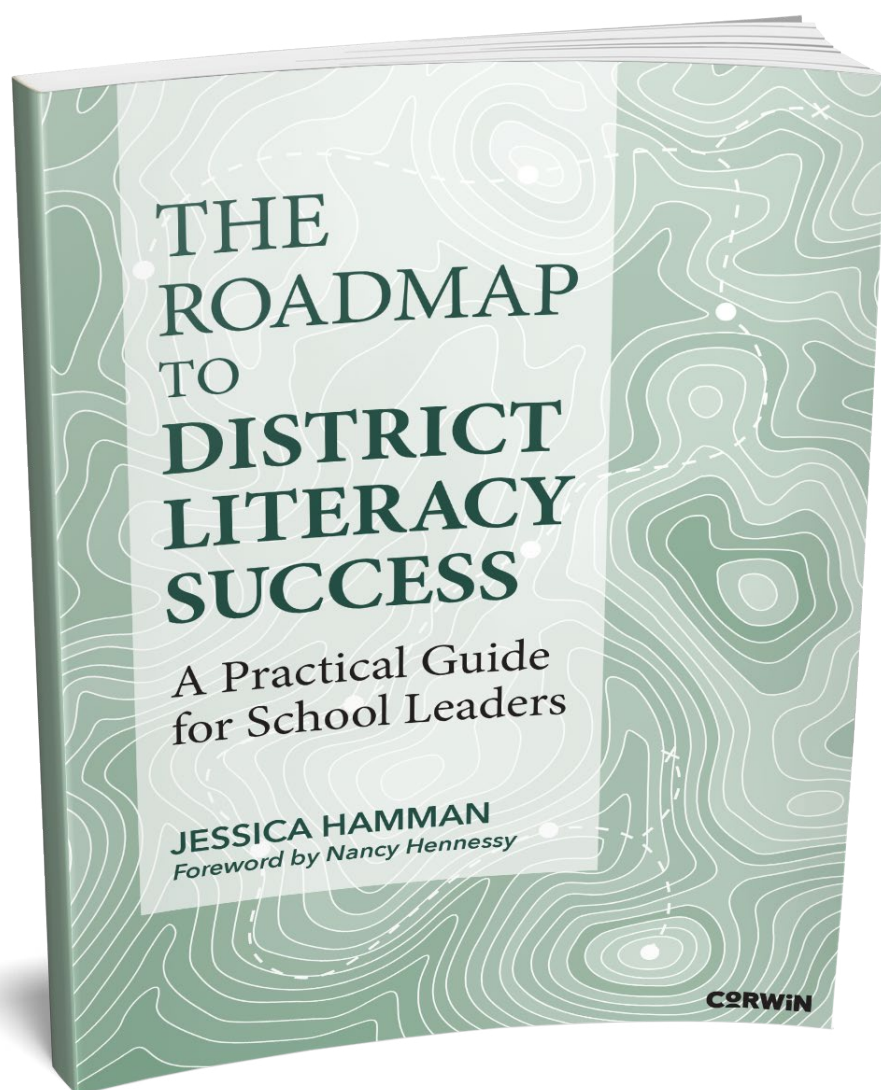


**Complimentary
excerpt**



**[Click here](#)
to learn more
about this title**

PIT STOP

Prepping for Departure

How do we plan and pay for where we're headed?

"The secret to change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new."

—Socrates

If you've ever taken a road trip, you know that the prep can be a huge amount of work. You need to choose a destination, chart a course, and, importantly, figure out a way to pay for it. Although this is the least glamorous and exciting step for many, financing the journey is arguably the most important factor in ensuring this journey becomes a reality. So, before we get you started on the content of this book, we need to acknowledge one critically important fact that will affect your ability to dive into this work wholeheartedly: how exactly is your district going to fund this?

First, let's break down what an endeavor to take on literacy improvement may cost.

Professional Development: Your journey to district literacy success cannot be undertaken without professional development. This can take the form of school leader consulting, educator training, and classroom coaching. This can range anywhere from \$250 to \$10,000 per teacher, depending on the scope and depth of your professional development. If you consider this an ongoing cost, which professional development should be in order to drive deep knowledge building, and the type of ongoing job-embedded support needed to initiate and sustain a serious initiative, you are looking at hundreds of thousands of dollars for professional development alone. Professional development, which we will talk more about in later chapters, can be divided into three areas:

- Training on linguistic/literacy knowledge and content acumen
- Training on programs and/or curricula
- Coaching

New Assessment Systems and Instructional Materials: Many districts adopt new literacy assessments and screeners, along with new curricula or supplementary programs, in their efforts to improve literacy outcomes (you'll read more about this in Chapters 3 through 6). This can range from a few thousand to several million dollars,

depending on what needs to be purchased and the size of your district. The purchase isn't the only cost. If you need to take on new assessment systems and instructional materials, the time, energy, and money put into piloting, adopting, and adequately training/coaching teachers on these systems are quite costly as well.

Staffing: You may already have the staffing in place to execute your district literacy improvement plan, but you may not. You will need someone at the district level to take the lead (often a director of educational services or director of curriculum and instruction). While they may already be staffed, a significant amount of their role will be lent to this endeavor. Districts also may find it necessary to staff their intervention work in a different way. That may mean taking on new interventionists to run their Tier 2 groups. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 7 of this book, it is wise to support all these efforts by implementing coaching. The best way to do this is to build districtwide capacity by staffing district literacy coaches who are in positions to support initiative pull-through and ensure that literacy best practices are happening across the tiers. Coaching can help with instructional fidelity to the curriculum and to evidence-based best practices and can support principals and teachers alike as collaborators who are not evaluative.

Sample Budgets

Budgets needed for literacy success will vary by district size:

- **Small Rural:** Assuming ~500 students, ~30 teachers
- **Medium Rural:** Assuming ~1,000 students, ~60 teachers
- **Small Suburban:** Assuming ~2,500 students, ~150 teachers
- **Medium Suburban:** Assuming ~5,000 students, ~300 teachers
- **Small Urban:** Assuming ~25,000 students, ~1,200 teachers
- **Medium Urban:** Assuming ~150,000 students, ~7,500 teachers
- **Large Urban:** Assuming ~350,000 students, ~25,000 teachers

Table 1.1 shows potential sample budgets for each of these district sizes.

Funding Source

With such a significant investment, there must be prior planning to ensure proper capacity is being built to support the work. In seeing this, it may feel like the journey has stopped before you even get started. But all this work need not come from your general fund or the district's reserves (if you're lucky enough to have them). There are ways to fund this work if you don't have those resources.

Table 1.1 • Sample district budgets for literacy improvement

District Size	Professional Development (training, coaching, leader consulting)	Assessment Systems (screeners, diagnostic tools)	Instructional Materials (curriculum and supplemental materials)	Staffing (leadership, intervention, coaching)
Small Rural	\$25k–\$75k	\$15k–\$40k	\$150k–\$250k	\$125k–\$250k
Medium Rural	\$50k–\$150k	\$80k–\$120k	\$750k–\$1M	\$175k–\$200k
Small Suburban	\$100k–\$250k	\$200k–\$400k	\$1M–\$1.5M	\$400k–\$800k
Medium Suburban	\$75k–\$150k	\$600k–\$1M	\$1.25M–1.35M	\$2M–\$4M
Small Urban	\$400k–\$650k	\$800k–\$1.2M	\$3M–\$5M	\$3M–\$5M
Medium Urban	\$1.8M–\$3.2M	\$2M–\$3M	\$5M–\$8M	\$6M–\$10M
Large Urban	\$8.5M–\$14.5M	\$4M–\$6M	\$10M–\$15M	\$15M–\$25M

Literacy Grants: Several states run grants that districts can use to fund their literacy improvement work. In past years, states have funded this work through federal grants, like the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grants, in which the U.S. Department of Education gives grants to school districts to work on literacy. Districts may be able to apply for this funding to use in ways the grant has deemed “allowable.” Often, districts can use these funds to purchase assessment systems or instructional materials, interventionist or literacy coach staffing, and professional development.

- **State-Funded:** Some states offer grants for literacy initiatives. An example of this is the Alaska Reads Act.
- **Federally Funded:** Some states have funding from grants at the federal level. A past federal literacy grant was the Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant.

District Reserves: Many districts have significant reserves that can be tapped into for instructional imperatives like literacy improvement, particularly to support time-limited investments such as professional learning, instructional materials, universal screening tools, and initial system redesign.

District Education Foundations: Another avenue districts can pursue is education foundations. These are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, separate from a school district, that raise money to support the school district’s vision, mission, and initiatives beyond what can be afforded by public funds. Additionally, education foundations engage the community in district initiatives.

Education foundations are often started with a specific need in mind, but their broader vision for supporting the district may develop over time as the organization matures and builds relationships with the community and district leadership. Education foundations commonly fund one or more of the following:

- Professional development
- Programs such as the arts, athletics, physical education, STEM, and counseling/mental health
- Extracurricular opportunities like tutoring or after-school classes
- Scholarships
- Child care
- Teacher grants

If your district lacks the resources for a major literacy initiative, an education foundation could be an option. If you have an education foundation in your area, reach out to the board of directors with a proposal. Make sure the board understands the community impact and specifically how much you need in order to drive the work.

If you don't have an education foundation in your area, you can gather the community to gauge interest in starting one. While leaders typically aren't involved in the foundations themselves due to conflicts of interest, you can gather others to help drive your goals.

You can find more information in these resources on education foundations:

- National Association of Education Foundations (<https://www.educationfoundations.org/>)
- Candid (<https://candid.org/>)
- *Creating Foundations for American Schools*, by McCormick, Bauer, & Ferguson (2000)

Either way, considering the role of funding in any initiative, but especially an initiative as expansive and comprehensive as a literacy initiative, is an essential starting point. Having a plan is critical.