



Striving Readers and Kurzweil 3000™ Alignment

Striving Readers Grant Overview:

Striving Readers is a discretionary grant program designed to fund new reading initiatives, or the expansion of existing initiatives that will help our nation build a strong scientific research base identifying essential components of effective adolescent literacy models, and replicable school- and classroom-level strategies that raise the reading achievement of struggling middle and high school students. The *Striving Readers* grant is akin to *Early Reading First* for early childhood and *Reading First* for K-3 elementary students. Title I eligible schools, particularly those at risk of failing to meet AYP requirements under *NCLB*, are eligible to apply for the *Striving Readers* grant. The full grant application can be obtained at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/strivingreaders/applicant.html>.

It is expected that the desired outcomes of the *Striving Readers* grant will be achieved by addressing three overarching grant goals:

Striving Readers Grant Desired Outcomes		Striving Readers Grant Expected to Be Achieved Through Desired Outcomes
Goal 1	Enhance the overall level of reading achievement in middle and high schools through improvements to the quality of literacy instruction across the curriculum.	School level strategies designed to increase reading achievement for students. These strategies must include, at a minimum, needs assessment, professional development, and a process for monitoring student performance.
Goal 2	Improve literacy skills of struggling adolescent readers.	Intensive, targeted intervention for struggling readers (i.e., students who read at least two years below grade level, including limited English proficient students and students with disabilities).
Goal 3	Help build a strong, scientific research base around specific strategies that improve adolescent literacy skills.	A project evaluation that includes a rigorous experimental research evaluation of the intensive, targeted intervention for struggling readers. The evaluation of the intensive, targeted intervention must include a randomized control trial. There must also be a rigorous evaluation of the school-level strategies designed to increase reading achievement for students by integrating enhanced literacy instruction throughout the curriculum and the school. The evaluation of the school-level strategies may, but need not, include a randomized control trial.



How *Kurzweil 3000* Aligns With and Supports *Striving Readers*:

The *Striving Readers* grant application includes nine key components (Page 2) that have been derived from recent publications by literacy experts and practitioners regarding recommended elements that should be included in efforts to help middle and high school students master reading skills and comprehension. The chart on the following pages outlines the manner in which *Kurzweil 3000*™ addresses the elements.

Brief Overview of *Kurzweil 3000*

Kurzweil 3000 is the premier reading, writing, and learning software for struggling readers, from those with disabilities to English language learners. The software is widely recognized as the most comprehensive, integrated solution for addressing language and literacy difficulties.

Kurzweil 3000 supports teaching and learning of the five essential components of reading recommended by the National Reading Panel (NRP) – the same foundational skills that struggling adolescents need to become proficient readers: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Because it is content- and curriculum-independent, *Kurzweil 3000* enables teachers at all education levels, using any curriculum or subject lesson plan, to use the software to help students move from struggling, to striving, to thriving readers.

For students, *Kurzweil 3000* software provides the tools they need to improve reading speed and comprehension, as well as features that make it possible for them to both learn and study independently. Using a multi-sensory approach, the software reads words aloud to students in clear, human-like, synthetic speech, while a patented dual highlighting feature adds visual reinforcement. Accessible and customizable features that promote repetition and practice put the pace of progress into students' hands.

Added assistance from *Kurzweil 3000* helps students complete reading and class assignments, as well as classroom and standardized tests. A comprehensive set of tools allows students to learn and practice critical study skills. Integrated writing features provide students with a wide range of supports to show their mastery of material through their writing.

Independent research studies have proven *Kurzweil 3000* to have a lasting impact on the motivation of struggling students, particularly in middle and high school levels, to learn both inside and outside of the classroom – a major factor not only in achieving academic progress and success, but also in promoting life-long active learning.



Striving Readers Element	Kurzweil 3000 Alignment
<p>Extended learning time for literacy</p>	<p><i>Kurzweil 3000</i> takes advantage of current and portable technologies to broaden access and increase time for literacy beyond classroom-based and one-on-one instruction.</p> <p>Networked stations throughout a classroom or school enable teachers and administrators to distribute curricular material, while providing struggling students with access to content, assignments, as well as tools and supports while in class, in resource rooms or information centers. The License-to-Go feature enables home use, while <i>Kurzweil 3000 USB Edition</i> provides access from any computer at any location, and Web Licensing offers access via the Internet. The ability to save material to audio files (MP3 and WAV) means students can listen to chapters or books wherever they go.</p>
<p>Direct, explicit instruction in comprehension</p>	<p>Improving comprehension requires a number of strategies: activating prior knowledge; using graphic organizers to focus on the main idea concepts; generating and answering questions; and summarizing to determine what is important.</p> <p><i>Kurzweil 3000</i> aids teachers and schools in direct and explicit instruction in comprehension as well as the systematic and direct instruction of proven study skills strategies. Because of <i>Kurzweil 3000</i> features' ease of use, instruction can be tailored for individuals' specific requirements.</p> <p>Notes in a variety of accessible forms (footnotes, text notes, sticky notes, bubble notes, voice notes, column notes) offer teachers the ability to strategically place embedded explanations of concepts and instructions for students to access as they read and write. Students can use these electronic notes to express learned information or formulate questions for teachers.</p> <p>Electronic highlighters enable teachers and students to prepare an array of pre-reading material, vocabulary lists and study guides. The Word List feature enables teachers to bring difficult words, as well as topic- or unit-based vocabulary, for students to use while reading and writing in <i>Kurzweil 3000</i>. Outline and Brainstorm features allow for quick creation of study guides or graphic organizers to spur critical thinking.</p> <p>In addition <i>Kurzweil 3000</i> includes built-in tools that enhance the teachers' ability to provide instruction, while promoting independent learning. These include the Syllables tool for decoding words; a recursive dictionary and picture dictionary support for learning word meanings; comprehensive reading settings, including Reading by Highlights for skimming and isolating key information; Read the Web for external sources of contextual meaning; and writing tools such as Word Prediction to aid in expressing knowledge in written form.</p> <p>Furthermore, <i>Kurzweil 3000</i> can be used with White Board technology both in the special ed and general ed classroom to provide struggling students with the same instruction as their peers, but through an accessible medium and format.</p>



<p>Modeling of reading and thinking strategies for comprehension</p>	<p>Being a good reader requires the ability to read fluently (i.e., quickly, accurately, and with expression) and to grasp the meaning of the content. <i>Kurzweil 3000</i> offers multiple features for teachers to model, and students to practice, reading and thinking strategies.</p>
<p>Self-selected reading at students' ability levels to build motivation</p>	<p>Text-to-speech technology and voice notes, in which teachers or aides can record reading, can serve to model pronunciation and expression. Students in turn can use voice notes to practice and show teachers their progress. Reading settings such as speed can be used to guide students through the levels of reading fluency, increasing the speed as fluency and comprehension improves. Electronic highlighters and a variety of electronic notes enable teachers to model and students to apply study skills such as extracting key concepts as a way of pre-reading, highlighting unfamiliar words as a way to learn vocabulary, and compiling important passages as a way of demonstrating comprehension. Brainstorm and Outline tools enable teachers to model and students to emulate the process of synthesizing and organizing thoughts.</p>
<p>Cooperative learning and discussion of texts among students</p>	<p><i>Kurzweil 3000</i> lets teachers or students easily bring all types of reading material into the program, facilitating the participation of students who read below grade level in cooperative learning activities and discussions with their grade level peers, ultimately building the students' motivation and sense of achievement.</p>
<p>On-going progress monitoring</p>	<p><i>Kurzweil 3000</i> generates usage logs to track student statistics, including reading rate, dictionary use, length of reading sessions, and more.</p> <p>In addition, the Universal Library can be set up for students and teachers to share documents. In this way, teachers can listen to students' voice note reading to monitor pronunciation, or read students' notes to answer questions or to monitor comprehension.</p>