

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: STUDY GROUPS



WITS' Rochelle Lee Teacher Award (RLTA) provides a collaborative space for educators to ask questions, find solutions, and share successes with peers at their school. The first step in joining the RLTA community is learning about our study groups and professional development workshops. Review the frequently asked questions below for more information!

Do teachers form a study group or are they placed in a study group?

Teachers must form the group on their own at the school. WITS does not assign or place individual teachers in groups. Teachers can be from different grades and different content areas (math, science, art, music, librarians, etc). What's important is that all the educators are interested in improving their teaching practice and want to collaborate together to have a bigger impact at their school.

What do study groups work on throughout the year?

Study group members decide together on an instructional topic that they'd like to study for the year and an instructional goal that they'd like to achieve. Topics and goals can vary and can start broad, groups will work to refine them once accepted. Examples include – implementing social emotional learning strategies in classroom practice, enhancing comprehension through small group instruction, improving writing practice across grade levels. You can find more examples on our website.

How many people can be in a study group?

Minimum of 4 and maximum of 8 people.

Can a school have more than one study group?

Yes. Each study group will need its own leader.

Who leads the study group?

Every group must select a leader before the group members submit their applications. WITS will provide a study group coach that supports the leader and members of the group throughout the school year.

What does it cost?

It's free. All teachers in study groups receive a free copy of their professional text from WITS in addition to their classroom library grants.

Does every teacher in the study group get a classroom library grant?

Yes. Every member of the group receives \$425 to spend at Booksource for their classroom library.

I've never been a Rochelle Lee Teacher Awardee before, can I be in a study group?

Yes. No experience with RLTA is required to be a study group leader or member.

Does every member need to submit an application?

Yes. Every group member and group leader need to submit an application.

How many application questions are there?

There are four or five questions (depending on if a teacher is returning to the program or new to the program) that require short answers. There is more information about the questions and a scoring rubric [here](#).

When do applications close?

Applications close on March 15th.

When does the professional development happen?

During the summer – throughout July and early August. The professional development takes place during what WITS calls Summer Institute. During Summer Institute WITS offers a variety of literacy professional development workshops that participating teachers can sign up to attend. Educators do receive continuing education credits (CPDUs) through WITS and ISBE.

What type of professional development do you offer?

It's a mix of required workshops to help get awardees acquainted with the program and elective workshops that are more specific to certain teaching topics. Here is our most recent Summer Institute catalog of workshops. Workshops are led by current educators, and some are facilitated by education non-profits or other professional development organizations. All workshops are vetted and approved by WITS staff.

Are the workshops for teachers working in certain grades?

WITS does our best to offer a variety of workshops that meet the needs and interests of educators working with prek-8th grade students.

Will the workshops be in-person this summer?

All workshops will be virtual this summer.

Can teachers attend Summer Institute workshops if they are not a study group member?

Yes. Summer Institute workshops will be open for pre-k to 8th grade teachers that are not in study groups. They will not be considered awardees and they will not receive book grants.