



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER  
OFFICE OF SCHOOL INNOVATION  
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November 26, 2012

Superintendent Bolgen Vargas  
Rochester City School District  
131 West Broad St.  
Rochester, New York 14614

RE: Award Notice: School Innovation Fund Round 2– Grant #TA-09  
Award Amount: \$2,499,833  
Time Period: January 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015

Dear Superintendent Vargas:

On behalf of the New York State Education Department (NYSED), I wish to thank you for your participation in our recent School Innovation Fund Round 2 grant competition. I am pleased to inform you that your proposal for Dr. Louis A. Cerulli School #34 is one of five applications statewide that have met the preliminary standard for funding. These results are preliminary, pending the review and approval of the New York State Comptroller.

Once NYSED has obtained approval, you will receive a final approval notice from our Grants Finance Unit. *No work should be initiated until you receive final notice of approval of your award. All grants, regardless of type or dollar amount, are subject to further review, monitoring, and audit to ensure compliance. NYSED has the right to recoup funds if the approved activities are not performed and/or the funds are expended inappropriately.*

The grant resulting from this award will require that grantees accept electronic payments for amounts due on the grant. Additional information and authorization forms are available at the State Comptroller's website at [www.osc.state.ny.us/epay/index.htm](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/epay/index.htm).

Staff in the NYSED School Turnaround Office (STO) will serve as your lead program office for project oversight, assistance, monitoring, and reporting. Once our Grants Finance Unit has issued your final Grant Award Notice, NYSED STO staff will reach out to you directly to discuss next steps. We look forward to working with you on this project. Should you have any immediate questions, STO staff can be reached at (518) 473-8852.

Sincerely,

  
Sally Bachofer

c: Sandra Herndon  
Owen Donovan

## **Executive Summary**

American schools have maintained an education formula that has held time constant and has allowed learning to be the variable outcome. This outdated formula has failed to close the achievement gap for students who suffer from poverty-related challenges and are under prepared in early childhood, often creating lifelong barriers for learning. This early gap is exacerbated by summer learning loss which has a disproportionate negative impact on students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Although the system may allow disadvantaged youth to make progress with a slope of improvement parallel to students from higher socio-economic status groups, fixed time inputs make full recovery from an initial achievement gap nearly insurmountable.

Through expanded learning time, schools can begin to broaden learning experiences and opportunities for youth development. Extended time for academic learning can enhance intervention options and offer varied enrichment opportunities. Management of extended learning programs and coordinated community partnerships can ensure intentional learning through additional time and strengthen the opportunity for students to meet challenging academic standards demanded by the shifts in the Common Core State Standards, thus improving problem-solving and critical thinking, leading ultimately to college and career readiness.

The National Center for Time and Learning recommends that learning time is expanded by at least 300 hours which allows extra time for additional academic instruction and integration of enrichment into the regular schedule. Additional recommendations include a focus on schools that serve large numbers of low income students. While room exists for additional evidence of effectiveness to be gathered many foundations, including Wallace and C.S. Mott, have commissioned national studies and randomized controlled trials resulting in findings that students who participate in high quality expanded learning time demonstrate higher levels of overall school engagement, higher work quality, higher grades, improved attendance, better work habits, and lower dropout rates. Non-academic outcomes include improved self-esteem, improved physical and mental health, and reduced incidence of anti-social behavior, sexual activity and crime.

As New York State embarks on an initiative to reform our educational outcomes by investing in expanding learning time, Rochester City School District is as an ideal demonstration project for studying evidence of effectiveness and building on promising practices. The previously outlined models of successful practice have guided Rochester City School District in its expanding learning time efforts, thus positioning the district as an ideal demonstration site for New York State's ELT reform agenda.

School 34 – a school identified as a Priority School by the New York State Education Department – has several unique characteristics that form a solid platform on which to build: a stable staff of highly qualified teachers; a long history among many families at the school; a walk-to-intervention and enrichment program in English Language Arts at every grade level; community and college student volunteers who tutor Level 2 students; and a successful afterschool program – Quad A for Kids – that serves 130 students for three hours after school. The staff and community partners are poised for drastic and dramatic change. The staff is committed to change and have participated in the initial planning process.

The key strategies of the Dr. Louis A Cerulli School 34 redesign include:

- Adopting a shared governance model;
- Extending the school day by six hours a week and five days per year;
- Delivering mathematics additional instruction and mathematics enrichment;
- Enhancing students’ experiential base through arts enrichment;
- Increasing student access to community enrichment experiences; and,
- Increasing student access to preventive and therapeutic mental health support systems.

#### Adopting a Shared Governance Model

Relying heavily on the community partnerships they have forged over the years the natural growth of these relationships leads the staff to embrace a shared governance model. A School–Partner Leadership Team will oversee school wide decision making, evaluate programmatic success and seek solutions to identified gaps in service delivery. This team will ensure cohesive planning and programing support of the unique needs of students. Under the guidance of the leadership team, the teachers will adopt the common core standards with fidelity. To move this lofty agenda on a quick time line, we will ensure that each teacher receives the necessary professional development and job embedded support through peer coaching. Professors from The State University of New York at Geneseo, who currently supervise students at School #34, will expand their role and offer professional development in all aspects of reading instruction to teaching staff during grade-level meetings. Time will be built into the extended-day model to ensure quality grade level planning and data-driven instruction. The current *Response to Intervention Model* will be refined to ensure that both English Language Arts and mathematics intervention is delivered to fidelity using the response framework as a guide.

#### Extending the School Day by Six Hours a Week and Five Days per Year

By lengthening the students’ school day by six hours per week, students will have the time necessary to receive mathematics intervention or mathematics enrichment and arts enrichment. Mathematics intervention and enrichment will be delivered in a familiar walk-to-intervention model. In addition, the students’ school year will be lengthened by five days by extending school through the February winter break. These days will allow students time within the school year to focus on content or skill development not previously addressed. The planning team will research the work of Brooklyn Generations School and their development of “Career Readiness Intensives” prior to developing the focus for these units. The teachers will have the opportunity to flex their vacation and in their absence the “Intensives” will be taught by trained substitute teachers. The National Center on Time and Learning (NCTL) has a promising record of academic excellence nationwide and has been selected as the “Lead Partner” for school redesign. A signed performance agreement is included. Through the NCTL-RCSD partnership, School #34 curriculum, instruction, school culture, and site-based governance will be strengthened. The NCTL core values are well aligned with RCSD’s core values of achievement, equity, and accountability, and NCTL schools develop and sustain a positive school culture that is focused on achievement.

### Enhancing Students' Experiential Base Through Arts Enrichment

School #34 will expand the existing partnership with Project U.N.I.Q.U.E. to deliver arts embedded academic instruction in dance, drama, music, and visual arts. Artists will collaborate with certified teachers to deliver instruction using an Understanding by Design model. The art projects will be aligned with academic curriculum and skills to enrich and enhance student learning outcomes.

### Increasing Student Access to Enrichment Experiences

Students from School #34 will have the opportunity to access community enrichment. Students from urban settings are often underrepresented at summer camps, cultural activities, and athletic teams and arts courses within the community. School #34 will collaborate with an expanded list of community resources and facilitate students' active participation in one experience per year. Hands-on enrichment activity in sports or arts will enhance vocabulary, social interactions and an experiential base on which to build future learning. Participation in community-wide enrichment will not preclude students from attending summer school currently offered by the RCSD to address the substantial summer academic skill's loss.

### Increasing Access to Preventive and Therapeutic Mental Health Support Systems

Social and emotional needs of students at School #34 often interfere with academic success. Expanding the Positive Behavioral Supports (PBS) model to classroom setting is necessary to address this interference with academic success. Positive classroom management, solid behavior support plans and access to mental health professionals through the Center for Youth will ensure the behavioral support necessary. Additional staff members from the Center for youth will focus on prevention at the primary grades and therapeutic intervention as well as family support outside the school setting.

The budget request (\$2,499,833 for 30 months) for the School Innovation Fund grant for School #34 is predominately for professional staff and teachers to support expanding the school day and eliminating February break. The Ford Foundation is underwriting the cost of NCTL's support to RCSD and School #34 as part of the TIME Collaborative, reserving requested SIF funds to support only the implementation of expanded learning time for students.