



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

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
OFFICE OF SCHOOL INNOVATION
ROOM 475 EBA
Tel. 518/474-4817
Fax 518/474-7558

September 25, 2012

Dr. Laval Wilson, Superintendent
Poughkeepsie City School District
11 College Avenue
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

RE: Notice of Award: Systemic Supports for District and School Turnaround Grant
Award Amount: \$936,490
Time Period: September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2014

Dear Superintendent Wilson:

The New York State Education Department, School Turnaround Office (NYSED STO) is pleased to inform you that the Poughkeepsie City School District has been approved for the above referenced grant. As stated in the initial grant application, this award is contingent upon the submission and approval of the final Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the LEA and the partners no later than November 30, 2012.

The NYSED STO will serve as your lead program office for project oversight, assistance, monitoring, and reporting. Within the next several weeks you will be contacted by a representative from NYSED STO to set up an initial welcome and introduction telephone call.

We look forward to working with you and your leadership team on this innovative opportunity to improve student achievement in underperforming schools.

Sincerely,

Sally Bachofer

c: Owen Donovan

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE SUBMISSION

I. Executive Summary

Provide an overview of the district approach to supporting school turnaround and its desired impact on the all students and/or specific sub-groups. Describe the evidence of district readiness to build upon its current strengths and opportunities for improvement in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards, and its ability to embed a cycle of data-driven inquiry in its chronically underperforming schools. Identify the key partner organizations that will support the LEA in these efforts. The executive summary should be suitable for sharing with the general public, as NYSED will post the executive summaries of award winning LEAs on the web and share them with other essential stakeholders such as families, students, and school-level educators upon request. This executive summary may also be used by NYSED to share district plans with State-level stakeholders and with other districts to facilitate sharing and networking.

The Poughkeepsie City School District began its efforts to support school turnaround prior to being awarded funding by the State for Race to the Top and for the School Improvement Grant (SIG). The Superintendent of Schools and his administrative team read through the Regents Reform Agenda, took a proactive approach and immediately implemented aspects of the Transformation Model for the Poughkeepsie High School. This movement began in the 2009–10 school year. During the 2010–11 school year, the Poughkeepsie High School was officially identified as a Persistently Lowest Achieving school, which allowed us to submit an application for the School Improvement Grant (SIG). In August 2011, the District was officially notified that we were awarded the SIG. The Poughkeepsie High School became a driving force for the rest of the school district to work on the implementation of the four components of the Regents Reform Agenda. During the summer of 2011, the District implemented a curriculum-writing institute to modify the ELA and Math Curriculum and therefore, began the transition to the Common Core State Standards. This work was done in house, where staff members were hired to serve as facilitators. These facilitators were Title II Professional Development Coaches, Secondary Literacy and Math Coaches, as well as highly qualified Science and Social Studies teachers. Teachers were also hired to work on writing curriculum that interfaced the Common Core Standards with the 2005 Standards for instructional use for the 2011–12 school year only. In the core content areas outside of ELA and Math, the Common Core State Standards were infused into the Science, Social Studies, and other content area curriculum. The curriculum is web-based and incorporates measures to monitor implementation and student outcomes, as well as provides instructional strategies and techniques to differentiate instruction and address academic underperformance of students in the schools.

The district has provided a series of professional development opportunities related to the Annual Professional Performance Review, as indicated in the New York State Guidance Document. Administrators and designated teachers have been trained on the NYSUT Teacher Practice Rubric. In addition, designated administrators have also been trained to utilize the Reeves Leadership Performance Matrix as the evaluation tool to be utilized for principals. Related to the other 40 points of the evaluation composite score, pedagogical staff have been trained to understand the difference between State growth and Local growth and/or achievement. All schools are utilizing the MAP assessments as a State approved measure for State and/or local growth and achievement, as well as to drive instruction from the student data that has been gathered.

The district has offered training sessions from the NWEA MAP Assessments for administrators and designated teaching staff members consisting also of counselors and coaches. The training involved understanding of the MAP Assessments and applications of the data in the instructional environment. This served as the first phase for administrators to begin looking at school-wide data in order to determine the growth trends and deficiencies. For purposes of utilizing statewide assessment data to drive instruction at the building level, administrators have participated in numerous training sessions to disaggregate and analyze building-wide performance data. These trainings have been offered utilizing NYStart, L2RPT, and BARS.

Information obtained from these trainings allowed administrators to determine which schools were underperforming and which areas needed improvement in order to meet the New York State Accountability Standards.

The District will continue its work with the BOCES network consortium and designated local staff members to work on other aspects pertaining to the Regents Reform Agenda. On July 1, 2012, the District was diligent in meeting deadlines to submit all of the items required on the New York State Education Department Annual Professional Performance Review Portal. This was a collaborative effort with designated Central Office Administrators and the Poughkeepsie Public School Administrators Association (PPSAA) and the Poughkeepsie Public School Teachers Association (PPSTA), in order to meet the requirements.

The District along with the BOCES Network Consortium Team is working on completing Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in several content areas. The district will also work locally on other content areas requiring the SLO.

In the very short time of preparing for this grant, the District spoke and interviewed several agencies and higher institutions. We asked all the right questions to ensure

that our partner will provide the services and support we are seeking to ensure that Strand 1 would be met most appropriately and effectively for the District. For purposes of this grant, the district will partner with SchoolWorks.

SchoolWorks was the best fit for the Poughkeepsie City School District to serve as a District Support Partner in order to build capacity within Strand 1, the District Support Systems and Structures strand.

Specifically, SchoolWorks will begin their work by working collaboratively with district personnel to conduct a self-assessment of strengths and opportunities for improvement, as well as a survey of existing turnaround initiatives in place across the district, with a focus on the effective implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), systems for teacher and leader effectiveness, and a cycle of data-driven instruction (DDI)/inquiry and action. In order to ensure the aforementioned, our partner will also work on sorting out the district's existing efforts and the work that we are doing related to the Regents Reform Agenda in its school turnaround efforts.

SchoolWorks will review and assess the implementation of the existing plans of action being implemented in the district. They will look at School Improvement Grant, Race to the Top Scope of Work plan, Comprehensive Education Plans, Consolidated Applications, Smaller Learning Communities Grant, and the IDEA per pupil allocations, etc. This review will enable SchoolWorks to determine if the various grants and/or plan action items and funds are being maximized and aligned to the goals of the district. This work will assist the district to effectively develop one cohesive integrated approach that addresses the effective implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), systems for teacher and leader effectiveness, and a cycle of data-driven instruction (DDI)/inquiry and action, and addresses the criteria outlined in the RFP for Systemic Supports for District and School Turnaround.

SchoolWorks will also provide on-going recommendations and address pertinent issues and concerns to the Superintendent of Schools in order to ensure the delivery of high quality outputs, as outlined in the plan. They will also work with the Superintendent of Schools in attending to necessary resources set forth in the plan, such as overseeing associated contracts with outside providers and liaising with assistance provider.

Throughout this two year partnership, SchoolWorks will provide monthly reports relating to meeting the goals of the district in its efforts towards student achievement for all focused and priority schools. They will also provide other reports and minutes

pertaining to meetings and assessments of their findings along with their recommendations.

The partnership and the consultants mentioned in this grant will commit to working solely on Strand 1, while addressing fundamental elements indicated in the other strands listed in this grant.