



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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August 31, 2012

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

RE: Notice of Award: Systemic Supports for District and School Turnaround Grant
Award Amount: \$2,048,055
Time Period: September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2014

Dear Superintendent Vargas:

The New York State Education Department, School Turnaround Office (NYSED STO) is pleased to inform you that the Rochester 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: O. Donovan

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rochester City School District (RCSD) is committed to implementation of the Regents Reform Agenda as a means to bring about school improvement and help all students prepare for post-secondary success. The District has dedicated many resources and implemented many processes to improving RCSD schools and increasing student achievement. Leaders and staff strive to implement reform, and training has been provided, but internal capacity is not sufficient to take initiatives to the next level. Instructional and school leaders are carefully trained in RRA, but they do not have time to “spread the word” and need additional support to be successful so that all activities can be aligned strategically with the vision and mission of the Regents Reform Agenda.

In order to create an environment where continual improvement in student achievement is not only expected, but achieved, RCSD is committed to aligning all its resources with the Regents Reform Agenda and implementation of its three elements: the Common Core State Standards, the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR), and data-driven instruction. When instruction is centered on the Common Core, APPR is implemented as part of a data-driven culture, and data are strategically linked to professional development, a true culture change will occur and RCSD will succeed in its mission to prepare all students for success in a global economy.

The SUPES Academy has been selected as RCSD’s partner organization for each of the four service strands of the *Systemic Supports for School and District Turnaround* grant. The SUPES Academy has an extensive scope of successful experience building capacity at the school, district, and state level. As the partner organization for this project, the SUPES Academy will collaboratively develop and implement a problem-based academy for three leadership tracks: Executive District-level leadership, school principals, and assistant principals. Each track will be supported by a separate and unique scope and sequence of content designed to meet the specific needs for each respective leadership group. Approximately 250 RCSD leaders will participate in the SUPES Academy training.

The SUPES Academy incorporates problem-based learning situations that integrate theory and practice, infuse case method pedagogy, and create field-based projects in an effort to provide leaders with learning experiences that reflect authentic work context. This experience will develop a strong foundation for leadership and enhance the capacity of District and school leaders to improve the instructional core, better understand the technical requirements for implementation of the Common Core State Standards, coherently manage organizational elements to support the work associated with this effort, and use data to inform decisions. Formal workshop sessions will be supplemented with intensive executive coaching support specific to goals and objectives of the *Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness’s* six tenets: district leadership and capacity, school leadership practices and

decisions, curriculum development and support, teacher practices and decisions, student social and emotional developmental health, and family and community engagement.

At the school level, principals and assistant principals will also participate in a formal workshop series provided by the SUPES Academy and receive supplemental support through weekly and biweekly executive coaching. The scope and sequence of the academy curriculum will be customized to address the Regents Reform Agenda, Common Core State Standards, and the *Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness* within a context unique to Rochester City School District. Participant buy-in will be established and meaningful learning experiences will be created to strengthen the systems that bind school improvement.

The NYS Department of Education will provide additional training support to 200 RCSD leaders from Central Office and all schools. The training will occur through the Network Team Institutes with follow-up support provided by the Office of School Turnaround in Rochester. District and building leadership will be immersed in professional learning on the Common Core and data-driven instruction in order to create an internal capacity to drive the Regents Reform Agenda and support Rochester children.