



Wyoming Department of Education

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MEMORANDUM NO. 2010-003

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Joe Simpson, Deputy State Superintendent

DATE: January 4, 2010

SUBJECT: Race to the Top (RTTT) Grant

IMPORTANT DEADLINE: PLEASE RESPOND

I am sending this memo to request your participation in Wyoming's Department of Education's (WDE) upcoming application for national Race to the Top (RTTT) Grant competition supported by the United States Department of Education (USDE). Writing teams, including external stakeholders have been working on the application for almost a month. The State Superintendent's Public Education Advisory Council provided input about the Wyoming Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In order for a State Education Agency (SEA) to participate they must reach out to school districts/Local Education Agencies (LEA) and obtain school districts' support. Specifically, districts must sign MOU's. I have attached a Wyoming MOU version based upon a sample provided by the USDE. We have tailored the sample for Wyoming and added section IIE. Our goal is to have all 48 districts participate. Each participating district will be awarded formula funding based upon Title I student population numbers.

The Wyoming RTTT Grant application will focus on the following core themes:

Section B: Standards and Assessment.

Wyoming's plan to support the statewide transition to and implementations of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation, and high-quality assessments tied to these standards is based on 4 goals: (1) Develop a Plan for Rolling Out the Standards; (2) Acquire, Develop, Disseminate, and Implement High Quality Instructional Materials and Assessments; (3) Acquire, Develop, and Deliver High-Quality Professional Development; and (4) Align High School Exit Criteria for Post-Secondary Entrance Requirements.

Section C: Data Systems to Support Instruction

The WDE requested funding from the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) through the Statewide Longitudinal Data System Grant under the American Recovery and Reinvestment ACT to fill in substantive gaps within the existing system and expand

and improve upon the capacity of its longitudinal data system by implementing Wyoming's vision of an enterprise education information system. It will serve as the unified data source that will empower an information culture focused on continuous improvement from the student and classroom to the state legislature thus enhancing the state, the nation's workforce and local communities. Implementing this next-generation information system, called LDW19, will better support education and non-education stakeholders in their decision-making throughout the state, which is not otherwise possible under the existing longitudinal data warehouse.

Funding from the IES would enable the WDE to link through a preschool to postsecondary education pipeline and across state agencies (including workforce services); ensure that that data can be accessed, analyzed and used, and communicated to all stakeholders; and build the capacity of all stakeholders to use the longitudinal data for effective decision-making. Specifically, the WDE would utilize ARRA grant funding to create an improved (a) longitudinal data store, (b) operational data store, and (c) reporting data mart that would support increased transparency, accountability, and improvement.

Section D: Great Teachers and Leaders

A significant component of the RTTT Grant is the State's plan to measure and improve the effectiveness of teachers and principals, and to ensure that high poverty and high minority students have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals. Specifically, the grant requirements are:

- Providing high-quality pathways to licensure for aspiring teachers and principals,
- Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance – rigorous and fair evaluation systems that include student achievement data and inform decisions regarding promotion, retention, professional growth, compensation, and removal of ineffective teachers. The current certified personnel evaluation system work (Chapter 29) will continue with support and some guidance from the grant,
- Ensuring the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals,
- Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs, and
- Providing effective support to teachers and principals – recruiting and hiring, induction, professional development, coaching, and system development. A principal leadership academy and a teacher leader academy are major activities planned for this section.

WDE's approach to those requirements is a plan that assists districts with the development and implementation of comprehensive human resource systems that address the grant requirements and authentically meet the needs of each district.

Section E: Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

WDE will provide leadership, direction, professional development and technical assistance through the State System of Support to better assist LEAs/schools in data-driven decision-making. Wyoming has the legal, statutory, and regulatory authority through the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, the Wyoming State Statute Rules Chapter 6, and the approved Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook.

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Similarly, the LEA's in the state have legal, statutory, and regulatory authority in helping low-performing schools (and all schools). Schools and LEAs are required to meet achievement targets for all subgroups on the state assessment. Through the RTTT grant, WDE and LEAs will work together in a systems-based model to more effectively and efficiently improve the performance of, not only the lowest-achieving schools/students, but all schools/students. By participating in the RTTT grant, LEAs/schools will be agreeing to the systems-based approach, creating partnerships with the WDE, and working on a regional and individual basis.

I am requesting that each district sign the attached Wyoming MOU and complete the Exhibit 1 – Preliminary Scope of Work document. The LEA MOU will need to be signed by the district Superintendent, Board Chair President and the Local Teachers' Union Leader. Districts will need to return both signed documents by Friday, January 8, 2010 COB. Please scan and PDF the documents and email them to tlockw@educ.state.wy.us. I know this is a short turn around but the final grant must be sent to USDE by January 15, 2010 COB. If you have any questions about this request, please call Tim Lockwood, WDE Public Information Officer at 1-307-777-6386.

Js:sl

Attachment

cc:

Mark Higdon, Executive Director, Wyoming School Boards Association
Dan Stephan, Executive Director, Wyoming Association of School Administrators
Sue Belish, President, Wyoming Association of School Administrators
Kathleen McKinley, Governor's Education Policy Consultant
Kathryn Valido, President, Wyoming Education Association
Bill Anthony, Chair, Wyoming State Board of Education
Connie Pollard, Executive Director, Professional Teaching Standards Board

Wyoming Participating LEA Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) is entered into by and between the Wyoming Department of Education (“State”) and _____ (“Participating LEA”). The purpose of this agreement is to establish a framework of collaboration, as well as articulate specific roles and responsibilities in support of the State in its implementation of an approved Race to the Top grant project.

I. SCOPE OF WORK

Exhibit I, the Preliminary Scope of Work, indicates in each area of the State’s proposed reform plans (“State Plan”) the Participating LEA is agreeing to implement. (Note that, in order to participate, the LEA must agree to implement all or significant portions of the State Plan.)

II. PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

A. PARTICIPATING LEA RESPONSIBILITIES

In assisting the State in implementing the tasks and activities described in the State’s Race to the Top application, the Participating LEA subgrantee will:

- 1) Implement the LEA plan as identified in Exhibits I and II of this agreement;
- 2) Actively participate in all relevant convenings, communities of practice, or other practice-sharing events that are organized or sponsored by the State or by the U.S. Department of Education (“ED”);
- 3) Post to any website specified by the State or ED, in a timely manner, all non-proprietary products and lessons learned developed using funds associated with the Race to the Top grant;
- 4) Participate, as requested, in any evaluations of this grant conducted by the State or ED;
- 5) Be responsive to State or ED requests for information including on the status of the project, project implementation, outcomes, and any problems anticipated or encountered;
- 6) Participate in meetings and telephone conferences with the State to discuss (a) progress of the project, (b) potential dissemination of resulting non-proprietary products and lessons learned, (c) plans for subsequent years of the Race to the Top grant period, and (d) other matters related to the Race to the Top grant and associated plans.

B. STATE RESPONSIBILITIES

In assisting Participating LEAs in implementing their tasks and activities described in the State’s Race to the Top application, the State grantee will:

- 1) Work collaboratively with, and support the Participating LEA in carrying out the LEA Plan as identified in Exhibits I and II of this agreement;
- 2) Timely distribution of the LEA’s portion of Race to the Top grant funds during the course of the project period and in accordance with the LEA Plan identified in Exhibit II;
- 3) Provide feedback on the LEA’s status updates, annual reports, any interim reports, and project plans and products; and
- 4) Identify sources of technical assistance for the project.

C. JOINT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) The State and the Participating LEA will each appoint a key contact person for the Race to the Top grant.
- 2) These key contacts from the State and the Participating LEA will maintain frequent communication to facilitate cooperation under this MOU.
- 3) State and Participating LEA grant personnel will work together to determine appropriate timelines for project updates and status reports throughout the whole grant period.

4) State and Participating LEA grant personnel will negotiate in good faith to continue to achieve the overall goals of the State's Race to the Top grant, even when the State Plan requires modifications that affect the Participating LEA, or when the LEA Plan requires modifications.

D. STATE RECOURSE FOR LEA NON-PERFORMANCE

If the State determines that the LEA is not meeting its goals, timelines, budget, or annual targets or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, the State grantee will take appropriate enforcement action, which could include a collaborative process between the State and the LEA, or any of the enforcement measures that are detailed in 34 CFR section 80.43 including putting the LEA on reimbursement payment status, temporarily withholding funds, or disallowing costs.

E. LEA AGREEMENTS

In the event there is a conflict between the terms of this MOU and the terms of any agreement executed between the local educational agency and an alternative educational association or organization/agency, the local educational agency shall maintain the right to collaboratively renegotiate or amend the terms of the agreement between itself and the alternative educational association or organization/agency.

III. ASSURANCES

The Participating LEA hereby certifies and represents that it:

- 1) Has all requisite power and authority to execute this MOU;
- 2) Is familiar with the State's Race to the Top grant application and is supportive of and committed to working on all or significant portions of the State Plan;
- 3) Agrees to be a Participating LEA and will implement those portions of the State Plan indicated in Exhibit I, if the State application is funded,
- 4) Will provide a Final Scope of Work to be attached to this MOU as Exhibit II only if the State's application is funded; will do so in a timely fashion but no later than 90 days after a grant is awarded; and will describe in Exhibit II the LEA's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures ("LEA Plan ") in a manner that is consistent with the Preliminary Scope of Work (Exhibit I) and with the State Plan; and
- 5) Will comply with all of the terms of the Grant, the State's subgrant, and all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, including laws and regulations applicable to the Program, and the applicable provisions of EDGAR (34 CFR Parts 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98 and 99).

IV. MODIFICATIONS

This Memorandum of Understanding may be amended only by written agreement signed by each of the parties involved, and in consultation with ED.

V. DURATION/TERMINATION

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be effective, beginning with the date of the last signature hereon and, if a grant is received, ending upon the expiration of the grant project period, or upon mutual agreement of the parties, whichever occurs first.

VI. SIGNATURES

LEA Superintendent (or equivalent authorized signatory) - required:

Signature/Date

Print Name/Title

President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable):

Signature/Date

Print Name/Title

Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable):

Signature/Date

Print Name/Title

Authorized State Official - required:

By its signature below, the State hereby accepts the LEA as a Participating LEA.

Signature/Date

Print Name/Title

A. EXHIBIT I – PRELIMINARY SCOPE OF WORK

LEA hereby agrees to participate in implementing the State Plan in each of the areas identified below.

Elements of State Reform Plans	LEA Participation (Y/N)	Comments from LEA (optional)
B. Standards and Assessments		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments		
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems		
(ii) Professional development on use of data		
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers		
D. Great Teachers and Leaders		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth		
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems		
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations		
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development		
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion, and retention		
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification		
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal		
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High-poverty and/or high-minority schools		
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas		
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development		
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development		
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools		

For the Participating LEA

For the State

Authorized LEA Signature/Date

Authorized State Signature/Date

Print Name/Title

Print Name/Title