

UNISIG APPLICATION

13 - Dade



Mr. Alberto M Carvalho, Superintendent

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Purpose and Outline of the UniSIG Proposal

Under section 1003 of Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act, Public Law No. 114-95, each state educational agency (SEAs) shall reserve funds for school improvement, no less than 95 percent of which shall be used to make grants to local educational agencies (LEAs) on a formula or competitive basis, to serve schools implementing comprehensive support and improvement activities or targeted support and improvement activities under section 1111(d).

For 2017-18, Unified School Improvement Grants (UniSIG) will be awarded on a formula basis. Eligible applicants are local educational agencies (LEAs) with funded Title I schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement, as well as LEAs with high schools, Title I or non-Title I, that have a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate of 67 percent or less, regardless of the school grade earned.

Part I: Eligibility and Program Requirements

The district reviews the list of eligible schools and allocations and ensures the requirements of UniSIG are met by providing assurances and summaries as applicable.

Part II: Needs Assessment

For each eligible school, the district demonstrates it has completed a thorough analysis of state-, district-, and school-level data (qualitative and quantitative) in order to identify points of strength and opportunities for growth to inform strategic goal formulation.

Part III: District Problem Solving

The district documents one or more strategic goals for improving the identified schools, anticipates barriers to the goals, identifies strategies to reduce or eliminate the barriers, and creates an implementation plan for each strategy to include both action steps and monitoring activities.

Part IV: Budget

The district incorporates a budget that indicates the amount of UniSIG funds the district will use in each eligible school. Each budget line item, except indirect costs, is directly tied to an action step identified in Part III.

LEA Eligibility and Program Requirements

Eligible LEA and Allocations

LEA Assurances

Request for Applications

We have read the Request for Applications (RFA) in its entirety and understand the intent and requirements of the Unified School Improvement Grant (UniSIG) program.

YES

General Terms, Assurances, and Conditions

We understand the LEA must have a signed statement by the agency head certifying applicant adherence to FDOE's General Terms, Assurances, and Conditions for Participation in Federal and State Programs.

YES

Risk Analysis

We understand the LEA must have a Risk Analysis (DOE 610) on file with the Florida Department of Education in order to apply for UniSIG.

YES

Supplement, not Supplant

We understand that each school the LEA will serve must receive all of the state and local funds it would have received in the absence of UniSIG funds.

YES

Allocation to Schools

We understand the LEA must allocate 100 percent of funds (less indirect costs) generated under UniSIG to the eligible schools.

YES

Alignment of Strategies

We understand strategies to be implemented under this program must be aligned with Florida's State Board of Education Strategic Plan.

YES

Alignment of School Improvement Plans (SIP)

We understand each strategy to be funded under this program must be identified as an **Activity** (within the Standard SIP) or an **Area of Focus** (within the Pilot SIP), with associated budget lines for each school to be served.

YES

Greatest Need

We understand programs, activities, or strategies to be implemented must specifically address the academic achievement of schools and students that demonstrate the greatest need.

YES

Instructional Programs

We understand evidence-based instructional programs must be implemented.

YES

Extended Learning Time

We understand that extended learning time activities required of an elementary school designated as one of Florida's lowest performing must not be funded through UniSIG.

YES

Deliverables and Monitoring

We understand deliverables will be monitored quarterly by the LEA for each school site funded through UniSIG. The LEA must monitor deliverables and be prepared to submit them to the Bureau of School Improvement (BSI) upon request. BSI reserves the right to do desktop or on-site monitoring of each school site and LEA.

YES

Supports for School Improvement

Improvement Planning

Describe how the LEA will support each school identified as comprehensive support and improvement (CS&I) and/or targeted support and improvement (TS&I) in developing and implementing a school improvement plan (SIP).

At the close of the 2017-2018 School Year, schools completed an End-of-Year Reflection Process which included the following steps:

- o Using the 2017-2018 Continuous Improvement Reflection Worksheet, the leadership team met with all grade level/departments to solicit input in identifying areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in the following areas: academic programs and support, school culture, professional development, and school leadership.
- o The leadership team reflected on the feedback from the grade level/departments. The team used the departments' feedback to guide the development of one comprehensive 2017-2018 Continuous Improvement Reflection Worksheet.
- o The administration hosted a faculty meeting in which the faculty/staff completed the 2017-2018 School Improvement Survey which provided feedback on instructional and leadership decisions in order to ensure continued school improvement.
- o During the faculty meeting the principal shared the findings from the 2017-2018 Continuous Improvement Reflection Worksheet and sought consensus from faculty/staff to ensure that the findings accurately represent the identified areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in the following areas: academic programs and support, school culture, professional development, and school leadership.
- o The survey results were shared with the school's leadership team at the 2018 Summer Synergy Institute. These results were utilized to support instructional and leadership decisions and to ensure continuous school improvement for the 2018-2019 school year.
- o During 2018 the Summer Synergy Institute, each school's leadership team conducted a root cause analysis, using the 2017-2018 Continuous Improvement Reflection Worksheet, Data Maps for both academic and culture trends, and the 2017-2018 School Improvement Survey results to address the data points and essential practices that have sustained results, have caused neutral results or showed regression .
- o Through a collaborative process, the school's Synergy team used the findings to create the 2018-2019 Phase I of the School Improvement process. During this process the school leadership team investigated all data points to identify the essential practices to improve and sustain results in the areas of Academic Achievement and School Culture.

- o Schools will use this information to drive continuous improvement for the 2018-2019 school year. Following 2018 Summer Synergy Institute, schools are required to:
- o Create Phase 1 of the M-DCPS 2018-2019 School Improvement Process.
- o The D schools with the assistance of the district School Improvement Team will complete the 2018-2019 School Improvement Plan using the State template on floridacims.org
- o Develop a series of professional development activities for the opening of schools to be shared at the opening of schools, along with the the Synergy data findings. The school faculty and stakeholders will be invested in the school improvement process and guided in establishing ownership in the priority actions to enhance the essential practices to improve and sustain results in academic achievement and school culture.
- o Participate in a Region Center peer review process in which each school presents the 2018-2019 SIP to a team consisting of regional director, an assistant principal and staff from the Office of School Improvement.
- o Seek approval of the 2018-2019 SIP from Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (EESAC.)

The schools are supported throughout the year in implementing the plan through the Instructional Review, and Strategic Planning processes, where qualitative information is gathered and the implementation of the action steps are evaluated. During Phase 2 the school leadership team will conduct a thorough reflection process to analyze the success of the implementation of the identified essential practices. The school site leadership team, along with ETO and Region personnel will observe the overall implementation of the identified essential practices. Following the walkthrough, a debrief of observations occur. The Education Transformation Office in collaboration with Region, State, and school-site leadership teams will identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in the implementation of the essential practices to develop an individualized school-site plan of support to ensure continuous improvement. This School Improvement plan is a living document that will serve as a roadmap for improvement and sustainability throughout the school year. In addition, three times a year M-DCPS conducts DATA/COM meetings which allow the Education Transformation Office, district staff, region personnel, and principals to analyze the previous year's Florida State Assessment (FSA) data, topic assessment results, Mid-Year Assessments, End-of-Course Assessment data, i-Ready data and make strategic decisions regarding support and resources. Furthermore, during Strategic Planning Meetings, the ETO and Region personnel collaborate with each school to evaluate the impact of identified structures and systems as well as the available resources and make modifications as needed.

Alignment of Resources

Describe the process through which the LEA identifies and aligns all district resources (e.g., personnel, instructional, curricular, policy) in order to meet the needs of all students and maximize desired student outcomes. Include the methodology for coordinating and supplementing federal, state and local funds, services and programs to align to interventions in comprehensive support and improvement (CS&I) and targeted support and improvement (TS&I) schools. Provide the person(s) responsible, frequency of meetings, how an inventory of resources is maintained, and any problem-solving activities used to determine how to apply resources for the highest impact.

Process of Identifying and Aligning Resources

The process through which Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) identifies and aligns all district resources to meet the needs of all students is directly linked to the Education Transformation Office (ETO) . The Education Transformation Office (ETO) aligns the support from multiple district offices and provides direct instructional school-site support to ensure the needs of the District's most fragile schools are being met. Additionally, the Education Transformation Office (ETO) utilizes a Tiered Support Model by which the allocation of school support is determined based on student performance data and school need. The support provided is fluid and consistent to effectively maximize support and increase student achievement of the District's most fragile schools. Each year, all the schools in the district are categorized into tiers based on their performance on previous year Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) in reading and math as well as End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments. Schools are designated as

Tier 1, Tier 1 Watch, Tier 2, or Tier 3 and receive individualized support based on their distinctive tier. Schools that are identified as needing Comprehensive Support and Improvement are categorized as Tier 3 schools and receive the highest level of support.

A District Support Formula (DSF) is used to determine the level of support needed for each school within the District. This data-driven approach utilizes the sum of all academic components to determine the school tier. Each grade level configuration is ranked separately. Schools are then ranked based on their DSF score from lowest to highest. Reading proficiency is rated double to ensure students demonstrating the lowest literacy skills receive the maximum support to accelerate closing the achievement gap.

The Education Transformation Office provides maximum levels of support within each grade configuration to Tier 3 schools that are below the 15-percentile rank using the DSF, the Lowest 300 Elementary Schools as identified by the State, as well as Comprehensive Support and Improvement under Differentiated Accountability as identified by the State. Tier 2 supported schools are those who are ranked between the 16th and 30th percentile using the DSF and were Tier 3 the previous year and currently do not meet the Tier 3 criteria. The purpose of Tier 2 support is to build autonomous leaders with less oversight from the district's turnaround office, while still maintaining a significant layer of support. Schools designated as Tier 1 Watch do not meet the criteria for Tier 2 support. However, these schools are also provided with support to ensure sustainability and to avoid regression. The remaining schools, Tier 1, are supported by geographical region and district offices.

The Education Transformation Office (ETO) has led the District's transformation efforts in M-DCPS for the last eight years. During this time, ETO has become a national model in turnaround efforts as noted by its many accomplishments during the 2017-2018 school year. There was a 10 percent increase in the amount of schools scoring a B grade, the number of D schools was reduced from 14 to 5, and for a second year in a row, M-DCPS public schools recorded no F schools as reported by the Florida Department of Education. Additionally, the 2016-2017 graduation rate increased from 80.4 to 80.7 percent.

ETO provides direct, ongoing support to all Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools as well as other lower performing schools within the district. Dr. David K. Moore, Assistant Superintendent, leads the ETO office and has an extensive history in improving fragile schools across the District. The ETO Administrative Team is composed of three administrative directors, who oversee curriculum and instruction at the tiered schools. Ms. Tracie Abner, Tier 2-3, elementary/K-8 schools, Ms. Trynegwa Diggs, Tier 2-3 secondary schools and Mr. Yaset Fernandez, Tier 1 Watch schools and data development. Ms. Cecelia Magrath, Executive Director provides additional support to administrators in developing and enhancing the skills of instructional leaders and evaluating the impact of the transformation work. Dr. Sarah Chatel, Executive Director, leads the professional development initiatives, as well as, supporting the entire district in the school improvement process. The directors have extensive experience and success in improving low-performing schools within the district. They each have direct contact with school-site administrative teams to maximize desired student outcomes. Additionally, there are 14 Instructional Supervisors and 48 Curriculum Support Specialists who provide on-site job-embedded content-specific support to transformation coaches and teachers at the school sites.

District Policies and Practices

Identify specific policies and practices the LEA shall seek to add, modify, or remove in order to establish or strengthen systems that support school-based leadership teams to implement interventions. Provide the rationale for the proposed changes and the steps required to make the modifications, including person(s) responsible for implementation and follow-up.

The district has developed a strong system to support school-based leadership teams in implementing interventions. This year, all tiered schools participated in two master schedule reviews prior to the start of

the school year. The PowerBi data tool is utilized to identify all students who need to be placed in intervention courses. During the review, the master schedule and student placement is analyzed to ensure correct placement. A tracker has been developed this year to collect all data points on targeted students and to provide an early warning system that identifies students not progressing within the interventions and core instruction. This system allows schools to make timely adjustments to ensure academic progress. In addition, tiered schools are allocated additional intervention dollars to provide an extra level of support to identified students through extended days in the L300 schools, push-in small group instruction, Saturday School and Spring Break Academy. This plan is developed at the school site, reviewed and approved by the ETO office and region directors. The intervention plan implementation is consistently monitored during on-site visits and Instructional Reviews. Feedback and support is provided by the curriculum support specialist to ensure a maximum return on investment.

Furthermore, twenty schools, including Brownsville Middle School, Georgia Jones Ayers Middle School, and Madison Middle School, the Comprehensive Support and Improvement secondary schools, participate in the AmeriCorps, City year program. The program places 7-8 corps members to provide support with attendance monitoring and incentive programs. AmeriCorps members tutor students one-on-one and in small groups, implementing intervention strategies in foundational skills that supplement the schools' curricula to increase student academic performance. AmeriCorps members also support whole class instruction and lead out-of-class activities that complement classroom learning and help put students on a path towards High School graduation. AmeriCorps members work closely with students to monitor and improve attendance through attendance initiatives, direct student coaching, and communication to parents and guardians. In addition, City Year provides behavioral support as AmeriCorps members coach students in developing various lifelong social, emotional and leadership skills through instruction in social emotional learning, and near-peer coaching and goal setting. Adjustments have been modified in the contract to include quarterly and yearly goals for academic interventions. A Services Impact report is utilized to track interventions during and after school. The report is reviewed with the school site administrators, ETO and City Year personnel to ensure fidelity and return on investment. An executive director has been assigned to oversee the fidelity of the implementation of the City Year program.

M-DCPS believes in community partnerships to support the school improvement process. M-DCPS has partnered with Florida International University (FIU) to place aspiring teachers as paid interventionists in ETO schools to provide academic support to students with a large focus on mathematics and science. This will also assist M-DCPS in recruiting future teachers to difficult to staff schools.

Operational Flexibility

Provide the LEA's definition of "operational flexibility" provided to comprehensive support and improvement (CS&I) and targets support and improvement (TS&I) schools to enable full and effective implementation of the school improvement plan (SIP).

Schools implementing a District-Managed Turnaround are provided with sufficient operational flexibility (such as staffing, scheduling, and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach that substantially improves student achievement outcomes and increases high school graduation rates. Principals have the flexibility to hire a community involvement specialist, a positive behavior coach, and transformation coaches (reading, mathematics, and/or science), with recommendations from ETO. Principals also have flexibility as it applies to school site budget, to purchase additional programs, materials, partner with specific organizations, and/or hire interventionists/hourly staff for enrichment, as well as, provide Saturday School and/or Spring Break Academy. With regards to scheduling, principals have autonomy to schedule the school day to best meet the needs of students. This includes scheduling of common planning, lesson study, job-embedded professional development, and increased learning time added to the school day through adjustments to the master schedule providing with students additional courses in lieu of non-academic electives.

External Partners

Describe the LEA's rigorous review process to recruit, screen, select, and evaluate any external partners with whom the LEA will partner.

To strengthen the systems that support school-based leadership teams in the implementation of interventions, the Office of Academics and Transformation holds annual Student Impact Meetings. Student Impact Meetings are conducted with vendors who provide programs or services to students in M-DCPS. The meetings provide the opportunity for district staff to reflect on the impact of the program/ service and determine overall value of the program for students. A rubric is utilized to identify the overall impact and return on investment. This determines if M-DCPS will continue to utilize a product or service.

Dissemination

Provide the methods for dissemination of this application to stakeholders (i.e., students, families, school staff and leadership, and local businesses and organizations) and describe the methods and timelines for reporting student progress, including how communication is provided in a parent-friendly, understandable format, and in multiple languages, if necessary.

The Community Assessment Team (CAT) meetings play an integral role in the transformation dissemination process. The Community Assessment Team is composed of representatives from FDOE, district personnel, feeder pattern representatives, parents, business partners, community members, and school-site teams. CAT meetings will be held three times this year, prior to the start of school in August, prior to, February 28, 2019 and May 31, 2019 to engage stakeholders in the review of school performance data, progress, and projected outcomes. Teams collaborate to determine the root cause of the low performance of the schools, make recommendations, and identify next steps. Teams make decisions as to resources that can be appropriately leveraged to ensure the school's improvement. A report with recommendations is presented to the Superintendent who recommends next steps. In addition, the Educational Excellence School Advisory Council (ESSAC) comprising of parents, teachers, and community partners meet monthly to discuss the progress of the School Improvement Plan. These meetings are advertised via the school website, through Connect Ed, and the school marquee. Parents are encouraged to attend. Schools also sponsor parent activities throughout the year and provide updates on the school's progress. Translators are provided to individuals whose 1st Language is not English and can benefit from this service. The school's Community Involvement Specialist (CIS) conducts monthly parent engagement activities and serves as a liaison between the school and home. The CIS supports parents in advocating for their child throughout the year.