

# UNISIG APPLICATION

## 31 - Indian River



Dr. Mark J. Rendell, 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).

The district is committed to supporting all schools, particularly any school identified as CS&I and/or TS &I, and leadership holds individuals accountable for their respective areas. The district Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) department has developed a tiered approach that mirrors the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework for supporting schools. Vero Beach Elementary is identified as a Tier 3 School for C&I support. Thus, the district C&I department provides support on at least a bi-monthly basis to Vero Beach Elementary School from the district core content curriculum specialists, professional development specialists, and the District Title I team. This support includes modeling of lessons, coaching with immediate feedback to both classroom teachers and school-based coaches, supporting the collaborative planning process, data analysis to drive instruction, and other professional development to support student engagement and achievement. The district also provides or makes available professional development to all instructional and administrative staff to support the following three areas of focus: culture and climate, standards-based instruction, and formative assessments. School administrators will monitor school improvement plans at the school level to ensure the data-informed instruction is provided through highly engaging strategies as gained in the on-going professional development activities. In addition, the principal supervisors monitor each school's implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) as documented by the monthly progress monitoring tool, the McREL Balanced Leadership framework, and the McREL Change Initiative Plan. The principal supervisor for Vero Beach Elementary School is the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. The principal supervisor, along with other district personnel, provides support in the form of site visits to assist the Principal and other school staff in implementing and monitoring school improvement efforts that include the following: learning walk experiences with the school leadership team, conferences before and after learning walk experiences, data chats, coaching, and monitoring the general education and schoolwide Title I program. Non-negotiable Strategies to Improve Student Performance include: • Timely identification and assessment of students for the proper instructional placement and support (MTSS) • Monthly District and Differentiated Accountability (DA) meetings and classroom observations with school and district leadership and the DA team • Monthly monitoring of the implementation of the SIP that includes follow-up to ensure that strategies are being implemented with fidelity and that modifications are made as a result of data analysis. This effort will be driven by the School Leadership

Team and the District Leadership Team, led by the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and the Executive Director of Elementary Education.

### **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.

The School District of Indian River County works closely with Targeted Support & Improvement and Comprehensive Support & Improvement schools. The Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) helps to deepen the understanding for multiple levels of support both academically and behaviorally for all students. MTSS drives the need for improvements in all Tiers of instruction in our schools. Quarterly department data review meetings will take place to monitor performance assessment data to identify trends and specific needs within the district. Action plans will be created and adjusted within the DIAP and the SIPs throughout the year as new trends or areas of need are identified.

Collaboration occurs between district, federal (i.e. Title I Part C, Title II, Title III, Title IV, and IDEA), state, and local programs and services, including Head Start, Early Learning Coalition of Indian River County, and the Educational Foundation of Indian River County. The LEA also collaborates with local homeless shelters including the Youth Transition Center, HOPE Center, and Samaritan Center to facilitate services to homeless students. Through regular meetings between district and federal program staff, including SAC, PTO-PTA, and MPAC meetings, services are integrated to target the identified areas of need for students, including migrant students as well as coordinate parental involvement activities across programs. School-based Title I staff work closely with all programs to eliminate duplication or fragmentation of services and enhance delivery of services. Numerous methods are used to ensure that collaboration and integration of services occur between federal programs and other state and local educational programs at both the district and individual school levels. For example, District staff are represented on the Board of the Indian River Early Learning Coalition, the Substance Abuse Council of Indian River County, and the Health and Wellness Advisory Committee among others. The district has a strong partnership with the Educational Foundation of Indian River County. The Educational Foundation collaborates with the district to support initiatives including teacher mini-grants, science fairs, town hall meetings, shoe drives, health/wellness walks, and provide backpacks and school supplies for needy students. The LEA's partnership with The Learning Alliance facilitates supplemental after-school, summer programs and professional development at the district's highest-need elementary schools. Federal program administrators focus on needs identified through a needs assessment process and direct resources to best meet the needs and priorities of students. The overarching priority is increasing student achievement. All program activities are reviewed to ensure that all funded programs and training activities meet the ESSA guidelines for evidence-based research. Federal program administrators and district review teams will meet on an ongoing basis to monitor program effectiveness and review implementation and planning. This collaboration has resulted in enhanced strategies for program planning, consistent program design, and fully aligned services. This collaboration provides the added benefit of maximizing funds without duplicating effort among programs. The primary goal of all federally funded programs is to enhance student achievement in the specific ways appropriate to each program. This will be accomplished through alignment of services to focus on academic improvement, effective professional development, improved communication and increased parental involvement. Whenever possible, these services are designed collaboratively to avoid placing additional burdens on school staff and to eliminate the possibility of presenting conflicting information or services. District and school staff meet regularly throughout the year to review program design and implementation and to assess the need for change. The Curriculum and Instruction department meets weekly to review academic,

attendance, and behavioral data. Trends are identified across the district and within each schools. As a result of this data analysis, C&I leadership team works collaboratively with school leaderships to identify and plan for appropriate tiered supports.

School administrators will monitor school improvement plans at the school level to ensure the data-informed instruction is provided through highly engaging strategies as gained in the on-going professional development activities. In addition, the principal supervisors monitor each school's implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) as documented by the monthly progress monitoring tool, the McREL Balanced Leadership framework, and the McREL Change Initiative Plan. The principal supervisor for Vero Beach Elementary School is the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. The principal supervisor, along with other district personnel, provides support in the form of site visits to assist the Principal and other school staff in implementing and monitoring school improvement efforts that include the following; learning walk experiences with the school leadership team, conferences before and after learning walk experiences, data chats, coaching, and monitoring the general education and schoolwide Title I program. Non-negotiable Strategies to Improve Student Performance include: • Timely identification and assessment of students for the proper instructional placement and support (MTSS) • Monthly District and Differentiated Accountability (DA) meetings and classroom observations with school and district leadership and the DA team • Monthly monitoring of the implementation of the SIP that includes follow-up to ensure that strategies are being implemented with fidelity and that modifications are made as a result of data analysis. This effort will be driven by the School Leadership Team and the District Leadership Team, led by the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and the Executive Director of Elementary Education.

### **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 School District of Indian River County has integrated the 8 Step Process as a practice to lead systems thinking and change within our schools. District leaders are trained in the 8 Step Process, and this training continues individually on an as needed basis. Principals work with their school staff to ensure every member is a part of the school's plan to support all students. All school based action plans are expected to be tied directly to the School Improvement Plans that have been created by the school based faculty, in coordination with School Advisory Councils, and updated as data suggests. These plans will be monitored through the implementation of Instructional Rounds conducted by district staff and Role Alike sharing at administrator meetings.

### **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).

The District Turnaround Committee consisting of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, the Director of Assessment and Accountability, Executive Director of Elementary Education, Executive Director of Secondary Education, Director of Exceptional Student Education, Director of Federal Programs, District Instructional Support Specialists for Math, Reading and Science all met several times to review data, including FSA, i-Ready and attendance. The data was disaggregated to identify scores for Vero Beach Elementary by grade level, by subgroups and by subject. We also looked at the students data showing exact number of student's proficient or making gains for ELA, Math and Science. The school also went through this same data with teachers, administrators, and families prior to working on their SIP. They identified strategies by grade level that will assist in increasing the proficiency levels of the students. Vero Beach Elementary

School will implement weekly data chats where teachers and administrators will be able to discuss formative assessment, state assessment, unit assessments, and i-Ready data.

### **External Partners**

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

The district receives support from a variety of governmental agencies, educational institutions, nonprofit groups, and community businesses. These collaborative partnerships are vital in planning, promoting and funding instructional activities and extracurricular opportunities. In addition, partners provide a wide range of research information, relevant field knowledge, and mentoring services which assist teachers and students in all educational aspects. Mentoring services are especially crucial for students in high-risk subgroups, such as racial minorities, migrants, SWD, homeless and ELL's. For access to current information about government funding, program regulations and guidance, district staff relies on federal agencies, including the US Education Department, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Department of Agriculture, and their state counterparts. At the local and regional levels support is provided by entities such as the East Coast Technical Assistance Center, FASFEPA, and FASA. These organizations assist by providing consultants, up-to-date information, and coordination of multi-district initiatives, and assistance with implementation of specific activities such as leadership training. The FL Atlantic University and Indian River State College assist with professional development for district and school staff, as requested. Collaborative partners are also essential to the support of specific academic initiatives. Sponsors include the Pelican Island Audubon Society, Environmental Learning Center, United Way of Indian River County, Indian River Sheriff's Dept. Riverside Children's Theater, FAU/Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, NASA, Educational Foundation of Indian River County, The Learning Alliance, Environmental Learning Center, Riverside Children's Theater, Marty Fish Foundation. The supported provided by the partners are especially beneficial to at-risk subgroups such as economically disadvantaged students, migrants, homeless students SWD and ELLs because it provides these students with rich learning opportunities that may not otherwise be available. The district receives support from a variety of governmental agencies, educational institutions, nonprofit agencies & businesses. These collaborative partnerships are vital in planning, promoting & funding instructional activities & extracurricular opportunities. In addition, partners provide research information, relevant field knowledge, & mentoring services, which assist teachers & students in all educational aspects. Mentoring services are especially crucial for students in high- risk subgroups, such as racial minorities, migrant, SWD, homeless & ELL's. In coordination with Big Brother and Big Sisters (BBBS), SDIRC has implemented a mentoring program entitled "RISE UP IRC;" SDIRC employees are granted flexible time within the work week to serve as mentors to students, and BBBS provides training to support effective mentoring. At both district and school levels local businesses, such as Space Coast Credit Union, Valic, Vero Beach Book Center, Sun Ag Inc., amongst others, provide support and make financial contributions, directly and through in-kind services. For example, stores have provided door prizes for parent involvement meetings, prizes for student academic competitions, shoes for needy students, discount printing for school materials, and funds for purchasing instructional support materials in Title I schools. With these collaborative efforts, is to promote the increase of student achievement. The district's ESOL program ensures that all home-school communication is in the parents home language, if feasible. ESOL program staff provide technical assistance regarding the requirements of providing home-school information is in the parents' home language prior to start of school. The ESOL department monitors the dissemination of home-school communication including newsletters, parent letters, parent guides, district and school report cards, FSA information. In addition, district bilingual personnel are available to facilitate the home-school communication.



## 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.

District offices and school sites will coordinate strategies to keep parents apprised of their children's progress as well as programmatic changes and outcomes. Information, (including but not limited to) the District/school websites, district/school social media sites (Facebook, Twitter), Title I application, District Report Card and Differentiated Accountability status and School Improvement initiatives will be disseminated to public and private school parents and the community as appropriate through regular progress reports (at least twice per grading period, and more frequently if indicated by students' needs); school newsletters; district, school and student report cards; parent meetings; SAC meetings; electronic media; local newspapers; and other forms of communication as appropriate. All communications will be in a language and form parents can understand, whenever feasible, including parents of ELL students. Information is also distributed through the district web site, social media channel, and television station. The means of communication listed ensure that stakeholders other than parents can keep up-to-date with outcomes and other information related to the program. The frequency of communication varies according to the urgency of the information being communicated, the intended audience, and the means of communication. For example, student progress reports go home twice each grading period or more frequently if needed, while FSA scores are reported annually, the district web site is updated daily, and newspaper reports can be run on short notice at any time that information needs to be disseminated to the entire community. When information requires significant explanation, such as state budget cuts, the district schedules meetings for all stakeholders in all parts of the district. Face-to-face communication, with translation assistance if needed, helps ensure understanding among parents who are not fully literate in any language.