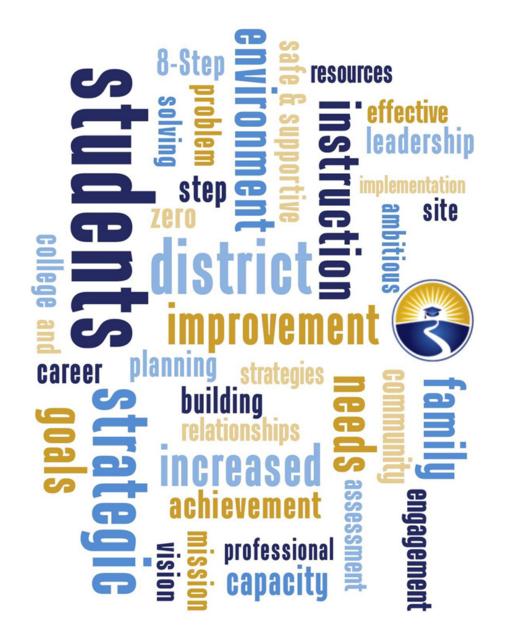# UNISIG APPLICATION
29 - Hillsborough

Mr. Jeff Eakins, 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 of 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

Deilverables 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).

Each school principal (and leadership team) is supported by an Area Superintendent or Principal Supervisor. Together, through the process of a thorough needs assessment, they develop areas of focus for the school. The Office of School Improvement supports schools in developing the SIPs from those areas of focus.

Implementation and progress monitoring is a collaborative activity, involving all stakeholders at the school as well as the Area Superintendents and Principal Supervisors. Progress monitoring will take place at the school level and also with the ALT. Progress monitoring will include data analysis, walkthroughs, school-based Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) work (focus on teacher professional development needs, student work, and data), Area Superintendent Leadership Team (ALT) work, and problem solving.

The ALT, in conjunction with Teaching and Learning and the ILT, will begin with an initial instructional learning walk within the first few weeks of school. This will include a review of the professional development plan, instructional priorities, and SIP. The learning walk will conclude with a shared data analysis. Various members of the ALT will conduct ongoing instructional learning walks, at least monthly, with members of the ILT. Data will be collected on different elements of the SIP goals and instructional priorities. Post walkthrough meetings will be held with the principal and/or ILT to review and analyze data collected, including any formative academic data, and next steps will be developed. The ALT will work with Teaching and Learning and the ILT to provide instructional support and professional development as indicated by a review of the relevant data.

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.

HCPS has initiated a unique support structure for chronically under-performing schools - Achievement Schools (AS). AS functions as one unit with cross-over support from all district divisions in an effort to ensure that all schools succeed. The AS Leadership Team (LT) will provide individualized supports to schools in a smaller learning network model consisting of a 13:1 ratio of schools to LT support. The smaller ratio will ensure that members of the AS LT can truly serve as side-by-side coaches to school leaders and/or teachers.

School support is divided to ensure that Achievement Schools receive the supports necessary to quickly remove any barriers and immediately achieve greater student outcomes. The Achievement Schools are under the direct supervision of the Assistant Superintendent for Leadership, Professional Development, and School Transformation. The Smaller Learning Networks (SLN) are then guided by two area superintendents and three principal supervisors. Each SLN is also supported by a Support Specialist and a Professional Development Liaison. Specific on-the-ground content coaches will be assigned to work specifically with school-level coaches at the Achievement Schools.

Achievement Schools will be supported by district practices that provide them with quality talent. HCPS is committed to placing principals with proven track records at our highest needs schools, along with experienced leadership teams, supported by professional development. Our HR practices will direct strong and experienced teachers where they are needed most, provide them specialized training and support, seek to fill all of our highest need vacancies first, and provide incentives to assist in these efforts.

The AS LT meets weekly, beginning with discussions targeting teacher vacancies and teacher quality.

Should a school outside of our Achievement Schools fall into D.A., their school level support will be provided by The Area Superintendent and the Area Leadership Team (ALT). The ALT includes the following members: Principal Coach, ESE Supervisor, Elementary Generalist, Professional Development Liaison, and Human Resource Partner. Specific content and job embedded curriculum support is provided by area On-the-Ground Coaches in ELA, math, and science. The goal of the Area Leadership Team is to support the Area Superintendent in providing differentiated supports to principals in his/her area, and to support all schools through the use of the school improvement plan at least monthly. Support will be focused on schools in turnaround, while also making sure to provide the supports necessary for all schools to be successful.

The Area Superintendents are part of the Superintendent's staff that meets at least bi-weekly, with the responsibility to focus on school turnaround as well as the success of all schools in their assigned areas. Area Superintendents will be held accountable for helping their assigned principals to set, monitor, and achieve high academic achievement for all students and for setting challenging goals based on student outcomes.

Progress monitoring to ensure that students are being taught to the rigor of the standards will take place at the school level and also with the ALT. Progress monitoring will include data analysis, walkthroughs, school-based Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) work (focus on teacher professional development needs, student work, and data), and problem solving.

The ALT, in conjunction with Teaching and Learning and the ILT, will conduct an initial instructional learning walk within the first few weeks of school. This will include a review of the professional development plan, instructional priorities, and SIP. The learning walk will conclude with a shared data analysis. Various members of the ALT will conduct ongoing instructional learning walks, at least monthly, with members of the ILT. Data will be collected on different elements of the SIP goals and instructional priorities. Post walkthrough meetings will be held with the principal and/or ILT to review and analyze data collected, including any formative academic data, and next steps will be developed. The ALT will work with Teaching and Learning and the ILT to provide instructional support and professional development as indicated by a review of the relevant data.

Resources are aligned to support schools in the most appropriate and efficient manner. Federal and State categorical funds often go directly to schools now. Schools are supported through a coordinated effort by Area Superintendents, the Grants Department, Title I, Teaching and Learning, Instructional Technology, and School Improvement in aligning their resources, making appropriate choices, and completing expenditures in a timely manner. In this way schools are using their resources to procure items that will impact student learning, are evidence-based, align with best practices, and meet the needs of the school.

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.

HCPS utilizes the Area Superintendent and the Area Support Teams to build and strengthen school based leadership teams. The principal works directly with the ALT to help build capacity of the Instructional leadership Team (ILT). Job-embedded professional development is supported through content coaches which the principal directly hires from a pool of screened applicants.

The addition of the Achievement Schools, with its Smaller Learning Networks, is being implemented to decrease the number of schools assigned to each Principal Supervisor. This increases the amount of time that each Principal Supervisor is afforded with each Principal for modeling, coaching, and building leadership capacity. It will also help to focus district efforts on our chronically under-performing schools in a systematic manner.

This new support structure is under the purview of The Assistant Superintendent for Leadership, Professional Development, and School Transformation. The schools will be divided into five small learning networks (each with five - thirteen schools), all supervised by two Area Superintendents with the support of three additional Principal Supervisors. Each learning network is further supported by a Support Specialist, and Professional Development Liaison. The Achievement Schools, including D.A. schools, will be supported by individual points of contact across all divisions, including ESE, School Improvement, Academic Coaches, Instructional Mentors, Professional Development, and Support Services.

Achievement Schools, including D.A. schools, cannot and will not be a one-size-fits-all, top-down model as we focus on equity. Support will be based on schools' individual needs. We are committed to the elimination of systemic disparities by implementing systems and practices that strengthen and support equitable practices as follows:

Then and now: Our district has been using an area model with eight area superintendents. Each area superintendent has been creating their own individual strategy resulting in diluted district support. Under the Achievement Schools model (including D.A. schools), there will be a centralized support system and

focused strategy to provide more resources to our highest needs schools.

Then and now: We've now had a deeper conversation about equity and a School Board Equity Policy is in place. With past processes – like STAR and Focus – schools were identified as needing help, but the district's structure and way of work weren't cohesively organized to make those schools a priority. With Elevate, district systems weren't in place to achieve equity. Under the area model the past two years, the district utilized a team approach to better provide support to schools. Progress has been made. In order to now get more dramatic increases in achievement, our district is pulling together the highest-needs schools and aligning resources to accelerate achievement through a core district strategy. Achievement Schools, including D.A. schools, will all be given an increased level of support and increased responsiveness to schools' needs. Our district's laser-focus on equity and training began last year at the Leadership Institute with four structures that lead to equity: human conditions, structural conditions, learning conditions, and conditions for hope and realized dreams. Our Board's Equity Policy is the driving force behind the work to implement these procedures.

Then and now: HR practices have been modified to support hiring the best and brightest teacher talent at our D.A. schools by filling vacancies at those schools with the most qualified candidates first. HR also tracks, throughout the year, all teachers with a state VAM score of NI/U to ensure that D.A. schools maintain the appropriate teaching force as defined in D.A. legislation. This includes the monitoring of teacher movement during pool periods. An extended transfer period for instructional vacancies was created for our Achievement Schools (including D.A. schools) to allow for transfers from non-Achievement (D.A.) schools, no transfers between schools, and no transfers out of Achievement (D.A.) schools (unless it is an administrative transfer or required for compliance with state mandates). Two advertised hiring fairs were targeted specifically to these schools as well, with invitations purposefully targeting highly effective teachers across the district.

Then and now: Unit assignments used to be largely formula-driven. Now, unit assignments will be based on need. Achievement Schools, including D.A. schools, will receive additional support personnel, including psychologists, social workers, academic coaches and resource staff.

The superintendent and his staff will be directly held accountable for the success of all schools, including our highest needs schools. This is a district strategy that is dependent upon every divisional leader and their teams. Everyone who has a role in providing support to these schools will be held accountable for the success of students and our 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).

HCPS principals lead with a great amount of autonomy and operational flexibility. Principals work directly with their Principal Supervisors to develop plans unique to their school sites and the needs of their students. Principals are given discretion over a wide variety of things within the school, including hiring, teacher placement, budgeting, scheduling, and use of non-adopted materials.

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

Our RFP process was utilized by Procurement Services to recruit external partners. RFP#17146 External Operators for Turnaround Schools was publicly posted on 11/15/17 with a due date of 12/12/17 for the purpose of seeking proposals from one or more school turnaround or education management organizations to operate schools in our district, working as partners with our committed leaders and school communities to achieve dramatic, fundamental improvement in student achievement and school

culture. The RFP was posted in two online bidding systems, VendorLink and Demandstar. VendorLink is a Florida-based bidding system for governmental entities serving 274 agencies in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Georgia and currently has 33,988 registered vendors. Demandstar is used nationwide by almost 400 public agencies.

The screening began with the Bidders' applications, to include required information for committee evaluation. The initial screening performed by Procurement Services is intended to (i) evaluate Bids for compliance with required format, (ii) ensure completeness of forms, and (iii) ensure submission of required experience requirements, including but not limited to proof of insurability, licenses, articles of incorporation, business tax certificates, and references.

Selection and Evaluation began with Phase 1. Phase 1 consisted of the committee's review and scoring of all proposals, and Phase 2 consisted of vendor presentations and the subsequent committee scoring, ranking, and award recommendation. The committee consisted of HCPS employees, parents, and community members.

Phase 1 Criteria included: Proper bid format, coversheet, licenses, and forms; Utilization of Small Business Enterprises; Organizational Management/Instructional Leadership (experience with turning around low performing schools, evidence of capacity to open a well-designed school with adequate resources); School Leadership (Experience supporting and developing effective school leaders); Curriculum and Instruction (Curriculum aligned with State of Florida Standards); Assessments (Evidence of a comprehensive and coordinated approach to assessment); Professional Development (Professional development plan with comprehensive evaluation process); Cost/Financial Management (Services offered and the accompanying cost structure); Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (Florida Statute 1003.42(2)(H)); Community Involvement (Explain plans to authentically engage the community).

The Bidders invited to Phase 2 were required to provide a multi-media presentation to include, but not limited to, a best and final offer, a question and answer session, and highlight its capabilities and industry advantages in accordance with the HCPS-allotted time. The Phase 2 Criteria included, for the Oral Presentation: Answers to Committee-provided questions; Why Proposer is the "best fit" for HCPS; and Explanation of benefits to the community stakeholders (including utilization of OSD-registered SBE vendors); and for the Cost Effectiveness: The committee will rank Bids regarding prices after the provision of oral presentations. Best value shall mean the highest overall value to HCPS based on factors that include, but are not limited to, price, quality, design, and workmanship.

Procurement Services will prepare and submit an agenda item to the superintendent who will recommend the award to the Board. The Board has the final say as to whether it will authorize the award. This contract will be awarded to the highest ranked, responsive, and responsible Proposer(s) after the Bids are evaluated.

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.

This application will be shared with all stakeholders during the regularly scheduled stakeholder meetings that have been established as part of the Achievement Schools (District, Community/Business, Parents, Students). Measures of student progress will be shared with all stakeholder groups that have been established, at least twice annually. That information will be reported verbally during those meetings, and will be provided graphically as a handout as well. The graph will be presented in an easily-understood manner (translated as necessary).