

# UNISIG APPLICATION

55 - St. Johns



Mr. Tim Forson, Superintendent

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## Table of Contents

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<b>Purpose and Outline of the UniSIG Application</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Part I: Eligibility and Program Requirements</b>	<b>4</b>
Eligible Schools and Allocations	4
Assurances	4
Supports for School Improvement	5
<b>Part II: Needs Assessment</b>	<b>0</b>
Problem Identification	0
Problem Analysis	0
<b>Part III: District Problem Solving</b>	<b>0</b>
Goals Summary	0
Goals Detail	0
Action Plan for Improvement	0
Implementation Timeline	0
Professional Development Summary	0
Technical Assistance Summary	0
<b>Part IV: Budget</b>	<b>0</b>

## 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 LEA will support the school by having the Curriculum Area Specialist Team (CAST) will provide ongoing professional learning to teachers, with a focus on 4th and 5th grades. The members of the CAST Team will help teachers fully understand the ELA, Math, Science and, Social Studies curriculum standards and best instructional practices that will ensure instruction is differentiated to meet the learning needs of all students in all content areas. This support will also help teachers track data and develop formative assessments for the purpose of monitoring student learning. The Director of Elementary Curriculum will provide biweekly collaboration to the administrative team. Additionally, the CAST team will work with the Instructional Literacy Coach and the Math Coach to provide ongoing support in best instructional practices. An additional district program specialist will provide ongoing teacher support in best practices to use to ensure that students are engaged, organized and prepared for future education opportunities. The school will collaborate with an independent vendor to provide K through 5 teachers with training to best implement assessment and instructional tools with fidelity.

### **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.

St. Johns County aligns resources in a variety of ways to meet the needs of all students and maximize the desired student outcomes. The district staffing committee meets weekly to review the budget formula to address the method needed to provide funding to schools to include relevant data sources. The committee consists of Directors, Principals and Budget staff. The funding formula provides additional funding to each school to meet the unique needs of each school beyond the standard FTE formula. The district FTE formula provides the necessary number of teacher to meet statutory requirements. The committee meets during the year and makes the recommendation to the Superintendent and School Board before developing spring budgets for the following year.

In the spring, financial budgets are reviewed during annual budget meetings with school staff and select district departments (Finance, Human Resources, Grants and select District Administrators). The district closely monitors student enrollment and encourages schools to monitor their budgets as students enroll throughout the summer. Schools are able to monitor funds via an online data system that is live to provide accurate data to school and district staff.

The Federal Programs Department coordinates the Title I grants along with the Title II, Title III and Title IV grants. The Title I grant is formula driven, through an analysis of the free/reduced lunch rates at all schools. With the funds the district provides Title I services to the most economically disadvantaged students. Schools complete a Comprehensive Needs Assessment and submit to the district. Based on their needs, additional funds are provided to schools to provide additional supplemental support to students and staff to meet the needs of the students.

Based on data analysis and district needs, the Title II grant provides staff for supplemental training with special focus on training on the Florida Standards, recruitment and retention of effective teachers and administrators and additional focus on teachers for low achieving students. The Title IV grant provides supplemental funding to grow well-rounded students and promote safe and healthy schools.

The Budget and Finance Departments meet annually to allocate Supplemental Academic Instruction funds. A formula is developed utilizing data from the Early Warning System and other sources ensuring schools and students with the greatest needs are provided additional resources and services. This year our district was able to reserve SAI funds to provide funding to school with additional needs. Those funds that were distributed to the lowest performing schools were called Supplemental At Risk funds. The team that meets to review the needs assessments and discuss funding allocation includes Associate Superintendents, Directors and Program Coordinators.

### **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.

Recently the district formed a leadership team that serves as a problem solving team to discuss how we can help our lowest performing schools become more successful. Members of the team meet weekly at the district office or at the school site they are focusing on. The team includes Associate Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Curriculum and Early Childhood and Federal Programs Directors, Curriculum Area Specialists, Coordinators and school-based team members. The problem solving meetings began in June after the state released the school grade and will continue throughout the year.

The school district's emphasis to build capacity and independence at each school is demonstrated within the recently created Director for Leadership Development focusing on improving instruction and student achievement.

St. Johns County is focused to strengthen the systems that supports school-based leadership teams. Recently our district has added a program that provides professional development for principals and district/school-based administrators to focus on improving instruction and improving student achievement.

The Director for Leadership Development plans, organizes and oversees the professional development opportunities. She works with district and school staff when planning calendars and topics to benefit the leaders that participate.

District Directors will additionally meet with the administration at the lowest performing schools about curriculum, revamping RTI, attendance, and instructional minutes. The discussion from these meetings will help the school based leadership team provide additional services for students as their unique

population requires.

Each school is provided additional general operating funds to meet the unique needs of the students based on a formula addressing multiple student identifiers, including matrix level, free/reduced lunch rates, socioeconomic factors and other student data. The Associate Superintendent of Accountability and Intervention Services is responsible for implementation and following up. School based leadership teams will be able to provide additional services for students as their unique population requires.

Additional funds (Title I, SAR, & SAI) are being utilized to strengthen systems that support school-based leadership teams implement interventions. Funds are spent on intervention programs and staff to create time during the school day for interventions as well as RTI revamping, attendance and instructional uses. Follow-up will occur during the school year as the weekly staffing committee meets to review school staffing needs. All existing funding sources are reviewed during these 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).

St. Johns County implements a school-based leadership decision making philosophy. The principal has final recommendation for staffing, scheduling and assignment of available resources. The LEA does work with the school based-administration to ensure their school goals are aligned with the district goals. St. Johns County recently developed a leadership team to form a bridge between schools and district area experts to support the low performing schools in their school based leadership decisions.

### **External Partners**

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

St. Johns County School District works with many external partners that benefit the students and student achievement. Our LEA partners with local colleges and universities, business partners, St. Johns County Sheriff's Office, consultants and private vendors to improve the education for our students.

Our district Volunteer Coordinators office works very closely with the sheriff's office to make sure everyone that enters a school with children has a background check and is either granted permission to sign in at schools or is contacted and given follow up steps to petition if they are flagged in the system. School guests are provided the instructions to fill out the school access application on the program KeepNTrack and then schools and the Volunteer services office monitors the progress of the individuals as they electronically pass through the screenings. If there are applications that do not pass the screenings, they will be contacted with next steps in the process if they would like to continue.

The Community Relations Department identifies potential partners who support and model the values of the school district. More recently our district has formed an external partnership with The Players Championship that will benefit students of St. Johns County. This partnership aligns with St. Johns County School District values and strategic goals.

St. Johns County School District makes a concerted effort to foster partnerships with local and regional colleges and universities to assist in the training of future educators. With an emphasis on matching the district's highly effective teachers to the intern, it is the intent to train the college student with the very best the district has to offer. All of this is an attempt to recruit these college students to the district once they graduate. The premise is when the best teachers in the district train future teachers, those students should remain in the St. John school district since they received the training here. The LEA Human Resources office works with the college and district and forms a contractual agreement that both parties sign the gives permission for the outside students to be on St. Johns County schools campuses. Once the agreement has been signed by both parties and it has been approved by the St. Johns County

School Board, schools can then host the interns once the interns have been fingerprinted and cleared from their background check. Interns are then visited regularly by college/district administrators and evaluated through holistic rubrics to assess their progress as effective teachers in the classroom.

St. Johns County went through a rigorous process when choosing i-Ready as an external partner for our new testing platform. We had a district committee that included teachers, school administration, curriculum specialists and Planning and Accountability members. We reviewed three different products and then piloted i-Ready in several schools the year prior to the purchase so we could evaluate the system before purchase. We had a few schools that were already using i-Ready instructional materials, which they purchased at the school level. We have had extensive training through i-Ready consultants and continue to work closely with them. As vendors, i-Ready is very responsive in their support and the training has been excellent. The school-based teams work directly with the district partner for their instructional needs and the district works with them for their testing needs.

The Center for the Collaborative Classroom (CCC) is an additional partner with St. Johns County for elementary curriculum. CCC began as a school partner when Being a Writer materials were being used at Osceola, when elementary schools were lacking writing curriculum. They became a district partner when several principals attended an overview session with the consultant, which sparked interest. After a review of the needs at elementary schools, it was concluded that elementary schools were lacking ELA/reading resources. The district then formed the external partnership with Collaborative Classroom for Being and Writer (K-2) and Being a Reader (K-2) materials for any interested elementary/k-8 school. The district left the materials for grades 3 through 5 to be a school based decision using school money. The instructional services department supports schools and evaluates the partnership with CCC using the following criteria when reviewing resources: Strong Social/Emotional Learning component, which aligns with the district strategic plan, Based upon workshop model of instruction, Being a Writer provides systematic instruction for early reading foundational skills, Provided much needed resources for teachers which provides consistent instruction, practices and training and excellent communication to support our specialists, ILCs, and literacy instruction.

St Johns County has included College and Career Readiness as a goal in their Strategic Plan. "All students will graduate with a skill set prepared for college or a career." We support our district's strategic plan through having all Title I schools be active members of the AVID program and support the professional development and use of the tools and instructional techniques in the classrooms. The district reviews a yearly contract from AVID that requires the Superintendent's signature and school board approval. We have a district staff member that does monthly trainings with teachers that supplements their summer professional development. She monitors the school AVID goals through the school AVID Site Team Plan. She also provides coaching and individual training daily. She reviews the site team plans and the progress of the program at the schools through the self-studies the schools electronically complete.

### **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.

St. Johns County has multiple ways they communicate with stakeholders. Communication is provided to parents/guardians through an electronic school messenger program that is able to send e-mails, phone calls and text messages. School based administration and select staff are able to draft these communications. Schools and the district departments also have websites to distribute information to stakeholders. Every 4.5 weeks parents are able to view a report in the Home Access Center that



includes a summary of their child's grades and attendance. Additionally they can log in daily to the system to check work completion and progress. Student state assessment scores are also uploaded into the parent accessible student database. If parents would like a hard copy of grades each 4.5 weeks or a hard copy of the assessment scores, they are welcome to request them at their child's school. School Administrators present their School Improvement Plan goals to the School board and stakeholders in the fall of each school year. Stakeholders are updated three times a yearly at School Advisory Council meetings about the school's progress on their goals in the School Improvement Plan. The district produces a yearly accountability report that includes student test data, student enrollment, student socio-economic data, high school graduation rate, etc. This accountability report is distributed to stakeholder in hard copy and on the district website.