

UNISIG APPLICATION

14 - Desoto



Mr. Adrian Cline, 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 LEA has identified one school, Nocatee Elementary School, as a turnaround school. The LEA has hired an External Operator to implement a needs assessment, develop professional development, provide intensive coaching services, monitor diagnostic data to ensure student growth, monitor the lowest quartile monthly due to the transient nature of this school, and develop formative assessments that will inform the district and school as to additional curriculum resources that may be needed. The district will monitor the deliverables required of the EO and provide guidance for developing community outreaches that will be needed in order to improve student attendance and parent involvement at the school.

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.

- 1) School and district leaders are expected to develop a school or division improvement plan and submit budget requests (for both capital and student projects) and reports that identify and meet the needs of students, and maximize desired student outcomes.
- 2) Such requests are submitted annually during the spring, and are reviewed individually by the district leadership team, and then submitted to the Superintendent. At the time the project is considered, funding sources are identified.
- 3) Each department (Instructional Resources, Technology, Human Resources/Finance, Facilities) is responsible for aligning the request against current inventory, or the impact of the request on current or future programs. If consideration of the request requires any additional information, the appropriate director/department is charged with gathering the

information and bringing it back to the leadership team for further review of the request.

4) Should a need arise, school and district leaders may submit requests at any point in the year.

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.

- 1) Staff Recruitment: The district will estimate staffing allocations by April 1 of the coming year so that the recruitment and hiring process can be started earlier. Additionally, the district plans to attend additional recruitment fairs and events throughout the state.
- 2) School based spending: The Director of Instructional Services will be meeting with principals monthly to monitor the effective allocation and spending of school based budgets.
- 3) Goal Setting: Each school will submit a School Grade Improvement Plan. The Director of Instructional Services and Associate Director of Instructional Services, and support staff, will meet with building leadership periodically to monitor the effectiveness of the plan from the previous quarter, and identify new goals, or continuation of the same goal, for the next quarter.
- 4) Fidelity Checks: District and school level staff will participate in weekly school walkthroughs to ensure effective implementation of instructional strategies, standards, and intensive interventions.

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 school leadership teams develop their own school master schedule, based on state guidelines. The schedules are developed and tailored to specific school needs. Intervention hours will be implemented at all elementary schools. Elementary schools will attempt to align grade level planning times to allow for grade level professional development across the district

The Director of Finance, Director of Federal Programs, and support personnel will be meeting with principals monthly to monitor the effective allocation and spending of school based budgets. Each school determines how to spend their budget depending on needs to students.

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 LEA began the process of reviewing External Operators in 2017 with the understanding that a plan was to be in place if Nocatee Elementary School were to not attain a school grade of C. The district first looked at operators who were suggested from the DOE. Many of these operators were in larger districts or were complete takeover charter schools. With Nocatee only three percentage points from a C, the community was not accepting of a charter school taking over Nocatee Elementary School. The district then began to look at smaller, rural districts who had previously partnered with an EO. The Superintendent made contact with other small, rural district Superintendents and received recommendations of EO's used in these districts. After reviewing the data regarding EO impact on the intended

schools, and comparing the school size and demographics to those of Nocatee, the district decided to meet with three EO's. All the EO's interviewed provided relatively the same oversight with regards to professional development, coaching services, curriculum, and assessment. One provider, MGT, included a community engagement and public relations component. Quotes were obtained from all three providers. One provider, at a price of 1.3 million was not doable to the budget of a small school district. Another provider did not appear to have the connections needed to bring in personnel specifically experienced in turnaround schools.

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.

Once approved by the RED, this application will move to the School Advisory Council at Nocatee Elementary School for review by local businesses and families. An interpreter is always available at these meetings. Additionally, the plan will be shared with school staff and leadership at a faculty meeting. The plan will then be advertised as part of the School Board Agenda for 10 days prior to the meeting. The community will be invited to speak on the agenda item during the school board meeting. The School Board will then approve the application and implementation of the plan become official.