

UNISIG APPLICATION

16 - Duval



Dr. Patricia Willis, 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).

Duval County Public Schools recognizes the essential insight and expertise needed to truly turnaround the learning trajectory of a school that is under performing as demonstrated by the academic success of the students it serves. Our plan of designing a comprehensive system of support for these schools begins with understanding the essential competencies that a large urban school district requires at its highest levels in order to ensure that the greatest needs of our most challenged school communities are met.

Duval's Executive leadership team under the direction of the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Diana Greene, includes all cabinet level members and other essential executive level staff . This team was established to identify and provide both comprehensive and targeted levels of support to each identified schools. To lead the implementation of the identified supports for continuous improvement of schools in Duval County, the Superintendent also appointed a Turnaround Region Superintendent who has demonstrated evidence of the essential competencies needed to direct the work of turning around Duval's most challenged schools. Additionally, the Turnaround Region is further supported by 2 executive directors who have demonstrated evidence of successfully turning around under-performing schools; a human resource hiring specialist, data analyst, reporting specialist, content area specialist, and other key district staff. The team, along with each school's academic leadership team, teachers, staff, parents, and other stakeholders who are essential to supporting the needs of the school in improving the academic success of every enrolled student collaborate on methods of improvement on a continuous basis.

The 2018 -2019 School Improvement Process, and planning for support began immediately after the receipt of school grades and the identification of those schools in need of comprehensive and targeted support. This team, which includes, the chief of schools, the chief academic officer, the turnaround region superintendent, several executive directors who support the region and the office of school improvement, our district's Community Assessment Team, identified school's leadership teams and other community stakeholders, engage in a comprehensive problem solving process through a series of meetings and data reviews. The aforementioned team reviews both qualitative and quantitative data which encompassed state, district, and school level data to identify evidence of strengths and

opportunities for growth within five key areas as identified by the 5 Essentials System: Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Involved Families, Supportive Environment, and Ambitious Instruction.

Additionally, the team worked collaboratively with each school identified as being in need of comprehensive and/or targeted support to conduct a problem solving analysis that began with a historical review of all available data to identify content specific barriers to student learning, student attendance and discipline, teacher attendance and retention rates, and other non-instructional impacts that may have impacted the school's academic progress. The resulting findings by the team and each school's leadership were then used to make informed decisions and strategies of support necessary for implementing sustainable instructional practices at each identified 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.

All resources and materials are carefully reviewed and selected by district content director and specialist, regional teams, school leadership and other key staff which includes classroom teachers to ensure alignment to the Florida standards and the identified remedial needs of students. The district's curriculum guides are created by teachers who are experts in their content areas and are familiar with both the core materials and supplementary resources used for each subject. The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction oversees the content area directors who are charged with ensuring that all curriculum and resources are followed and used with fidelity. Persons responsible include the Superintendent's leadership team and meetings are held weekly to ensure implementation is aligned with the district strategic plan.

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.

Duval County Public Schools Superintendent and the district's Human Resources department partners with our differentiated accountability school's administrators and district staff to effectively recruit, employ and retain high quality, diverse teachers, instructional leaders and support staff to increase student learning in the district's TOP schools. The effective recruitment of highly qualified administrative and instructional employees to lead students and teachers is the single most high-yield strategy to improving student outcomes. Having strong preparation for teaching increases teachers' efficacy, a key factor related to the likelihood that teachers will remain in the profession. Growing evidence demonstrates that attrition is higher for those who enter the profession without adequate preparation. The Learning Policy Institute's report *Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators* provides a comprehensive review of the research on teacher recruitment and retention policies. The skills needed to teach in schools serving large proportions of low-income and minority students are greater because teachers must be much more expert at diagnosing student learning, differentiating instruction to address gaps while accelerating progress, and supporting a range of social, emotional, health, and psychological needs, in addition to sometimes complex academic needs.

Priority Staffing and Professional Support - The district has initiated a comprehensive plan to recruit instructional staff locally, regionally and nationally to work within our Turnaround School Region. To ensure that additional necessary professional development is made available to the teachers at these

schools, instructional and administrative staff are also provided a early start to the school year, prior to district's scheduled work calendar for teachers, in order to better plan and prepare teachers for providing high quality standards based instruction on day one of the 2018-2019 school year. This will allow systematic and sustained collaboration among the schools teaching staff and allow the increased time necessary for productive collaboration, which leads to improved efficacy and teacher retention.

Teacher Incentives - Instructional staff who agree to remain on staff for 2 consecutive school years are eligible to receive a recruitment/retention incentive. These incentives are conditioned on staff attending professional development on providing differentiated instruction and other best practices that directly support an increase in student achievement. Professional development is tiered based on the need of individual school staff. Additionally, performance bonuses are also made available for all instructional and administrative staff based on the overall increase of the school's accountability grade in an attempt to provide consistency in instruction and the school educational environment.

Operational Flexibility -The Regional Superintendent for Turnaround works with the executive directors for school improvement to conduct observations for all DA Schools. Observation reports are submitted to the Executive to support and monitors the strategies of support for all CS&I and TS&I and works to remove necessary barriers to ensure the successful implementation of all strategies of support. Each school's principal will meet weekly with a member of the turnaround region leadership, to problem solve any barriers to improving student learning. Additionally, these weekly meetings will also be used to glean insight and provide mentoring regarding best practices in educational leadership.

Instructional Support - The district also plans to provide ongoing and continuous support in culture and climate, organizational leadership, and academic data analysis through the Turnaround Office and the Office of Curriculum & Instruction. Ongoing action plans will be created based upon instructional walks at each school and will include timelines and quantitative evidence to determine success. Coaching plans of support will be developed based upon school leadership and evidence gained during instructional rounds. All developed coaching/support plans will have consistent monitoring by the Chief of Schools, Chief Academic Officer, Turnaround Region Superintendent and the Executive Director of School Improvement to provide immediate action to support the school's improvement plan. Finally, the school's principals are given flexibility in the use of all Titled funds as determined during their continuous data reviews and problem solving process. The Director of Federal programs works collaboratively with the Region Superintendent for Turnaround and each school's leadership to align available resources based on analysis of their school-wide data to implement necessary programs and strategies to support their school's improvement.

Operational Flexibility

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

As previously mentioned, the district prioritizes funding sources to enhance the staffing and support provided at all Comprehensive (CS&I) and Targeted (TS&I) support schools. For example the District provides funding to support fully released content specialist, mathematics and reading coach, and other instructional support staff at each of these schools.. Principals meet with their Regional Leadership team to discuss specific school needs and operating flexibility pertaining to scheduling, budgeting, staffing and curriculum needs to meet goals outlined in the School Improvement Plan. Schools are given autonomy with staffing, creating schedules, and budgeting within an allocation model based on FTE and other available grant funds.

Once class size has been achieved, principals possess the flexibility to use school based positions to offer additional programming, lower class sizes in particular subject areas, or supplement the core curriculum with specific intervention 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.

Under the guidance of the Superintendent, the Chief of Schools, Chief Academic Officer, Turnaround Regional Superintendent, content area executive directors, and other key district staff turnaround partnership are created and established based upon the schools tiered intervention needs and with considerable collaboration with the schools' administrative leadership teams, parents, preexisting community partners, and other stakeholders who are essential to the success of the students at each of the state identified schools. With a shared understanding, Executive Leadership works with our community to create a multifaceted support system through both not for profit and contracted partnerships to meet the needs at each school, based upon the schools problem solving process and the needs of the students.

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.

To increase the public's awareness, understanding, and acceptance of Duval County Public Schools' plan for improving schools in need of comprehensive and target supports, the Turnaround Region team, Office of School Improvement, and each school's principal will work collaboratively with our Chief Communication Officer to identify and implement effective public information systems and communications strategies to ensure that all efforts are communicated in a parent-friendly format while also providing opportunity for active engagement by all stakeholders. Our first avenue to support the dissemination of this application to our stakeholders is to public publish our application via the district's website. The following web links will take you to the district's: 1) Office of School Improvement, 2) Family and Community Engagement Plan, and 3) the Turnaround Region Office:

1. <https://dcps.duvalschools.org/Domain/5552>
2. <https://dcps.duvalschools.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=14298>
3. <https://dcps.duvalschools.org/Domain/7469>

Additionally the district has collected and analyzed information regarding each school's parent and community

needs, including teacher, student, parent and community member perspectives. Using the qualitative and quantitative data available, the district has identified and prioritized qualities of strong parental and community engagement essential to addressing the specific needs of the school. Focus group discussions conducted last spring of 2018 revealed that stakeholders want the school to be a warm and welcoming place for students, parents, teachers, and the community. Stakeholders want the entire community to

contribute to the success of students. Stakeholders also expressed through surveys that they want to be a part of the vision and mission creation process. They want teachers and school staff to receive professional development on the best ways to effectively communicate with parents and the community using a variety of methods. Stakeholders want to trust teachers and school leadership with the educational process. Stakeholders want a range of accessible opportunities for parents and community members to be involved in the continuous improvement process.

In addition Turnaround leadership in collaboration with the offices of school improvement and family and community engagement to advertise and host Community Assessment Team meets which are published on the districts websites and advertised at each school site. During these meetings, schools' and district leaders share and discuss the strategies of support embedded within this application as well as articulated within the district's strategic plan. As mentioned in the previous section, the district

established the Turnaround Region through a comprehensive needs analysis approach, quarterly state of the school's meetings that include parents, teachers, community partners, faith based leaders, and other key stakeholders to problem solve and gather input on avenues for elimination of barriers which are impeding student achievement. These meetings center on the strategies outlined within this plan as well as student achievement, human capital, and the distribution of resources.