

# UNISIG APPLICATION

## 17 - Escambia

A word cloud featuring various educational and administrative terms in blue and yellow. The largest words are 'students', 'strategic', 'district', 'improvement', and 'instruction'. Other visible words include 'environment', 'needs', 'family', 'engagement', 'increased', 'achievement', 'relationships', 'building', 'planning', 'strategies', 'ambitious', 'implementation', 'site', 'effective', 'leadership', 'resources', 'safe & supportive', '8-Step', 'problem', 'solving', 'step', 'zero', 'college and', 'career', 'goals', 'mission', 'vision', 'professional', 'capacity', 'assessment', 'community', and 'needs'. The Escambia County logo, which depicts a sun rising over a river, is positioned to the right of the word cloud.

Mr. Malcolm Thomas,  
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

### **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).

Under the guidance of the LEA's Continuous Improvement Office, schools are provided guidance for improvement planning. Coordinated efforts of the Directors of Elementary, Middle, and High Schools, the Exceptional Student Education Department, Title I, and Continuous Improvement ensure that schools are efficiently supported with timely guidance. The Curriculum & Instruction Office expects all schools to focus on rigor and increased capacity to deliver standards-based instruction to all students and subgroups. Schools maintain flexibility in addressing specific student and teacher needs.

Technical assistance emails and documentation are provided to schools, and the Continuous Improvement Office hosts walk-in Technical Assistance Lab Days, wherein administrators and their school leadership teams can work in an insulated environment to efficiently navigate through the new Pilot School Improvement Dashboard and the drafting of their plans. The main focus of these days are on data analysis and alignment of a focus with action steps specific to increased student achievement. School Advisory Councils receive training as well, and are provided a SAC Handbook to outline their role in the SIP process. Their assessment and input is garnered by school leaders throughout the school year.

To support the schools in the implementation process, UniSIG budgets are reviewed to ensure allocations are being spent on research based activities and purchases that will focus on student academic achievement. Throughout the year the Continuous Improvement team, directors, and subject area specialists will be meeting with the school leadership team from each school every ten days to review data and discuss needs and next steps. Based on initial and on-going data analysis support from coaches and subject area specialists will be implemented.

### **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.

Needs assessments are conducted at both the district and school level annually. District and school needs are addressed by Curriculum and Instruction Directors with input from content specialists. The budget allocations are released to the schools for discussion and decision-making with staff and School Advisory Councils. The Continuous Improvement team, Level Directors, and Subject Area Specialists provide guidance on analysis of the needs assessment and alignment of resources to target the identified needs. The approved budgets are entered into the district's financial management system by Budgeting Team staff. Oversight of this process is monitored by the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, with input from Directors who manage the programs, including Title I Parts A and C, Titles II, III, IX, UniSIG, and the Reading Allocation.

### **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 plan for 2018-2019 school year has been reviewed and has guided planning for the progress of the Targeted Support and Improvement and Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools in the district. For 2018-19 the District will implement the following components: 1. Use of STAR 360 and district identified probes to track and monitor student progress by teacher and school. 2. Use of the Escambia Educators Evaluation (E3) to track and monitor teacher effectiveness, 3. A new protocol has been developed for implementation of coaching using a full coaching cycle for assigned teachers in target schools, 4. Support of instructional coaches through district content area specialists, a division of professional learning, the office of Continuous Improvement and Title I, Part A, 5. Evaluation of principals of identified DA schools will be completed by the Elementary and Middle School Director using the school-based administrator evaluation system, (also a part of the E-3 system), 6. Support to schools has been tiered based on a rubric developed by the District Leadership Team, 7. All schools in grades K-8 will be implementing I-Ready in both ELA and Math with bi-monthly data analysis and training. 8. 10 of the schools will be working with Rensselaerville Institute in a partnership to develop leadership behaviors that increase teacher effectiveness and student performance. 9. Close monitoring of school progress will be a function of the District Leadership Team and the Superintendent with bi-monthly meetings and school visits.

### **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).

Schools who must implement a district-managed turnaround model will have limited operational flexibility over staffing, scheduling, and budgeting which is defined in Chapter 1

Section 1.19 of the District Policy and Procedures Book. Oversight will be provided by a designated team of district staff who will provide support and advise the school leadership. Schools will submit requests for support which may fall outside of the staffing allocation table, variations in scheduling, and budgeting revisions. All requests will receive serious considerations. All staff will be selected and hired at the school level, except for instructional coaches and administrators. Staffing at identified schools has been determined based on the needs of the student population rather than average class size allocations applied to all schools in the district. Administrative and coaching staff will be assigned by the Superintendent in consultation with the District Leadership Team (DLT). Those elements of flexibility ruled by the Master Contract will be negotiated with the local bargaining agent, Escambia Education Association.

### **External Partners**

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

Multiple external companies were reviewed through a rigorous interview with the Superintendent and the District Leadership Team (DLT). Aspects of the partnership, the companies' guarantees and assurances, and the data of their work with other districts and schools were part of the analysis by the Superintendent and DLT. The Rensselaerville Institute was identified as the top selection for Escambia County due to their demonstrated 18 year record with turning around 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.

Information regarding the UniSIG will be discussed at School Advisory Council (SAC) meetings which take place four times per year. The complete UniSIG plan and budget will be made available at each school site after approval for parent review. School grades will be made available to parents and published in the local newspaper and other media sources. The information will also be disseminated using the School Public Accountability Reports. This report (SPAR) will be available on each school's website and a copy will be available at each campus. Information will also be made available through Internet access and the local media.

After each administration of the the K-8 district progress monitoring for ELA and math using STAR and I-Ready, the results will be shared with stakeholders (i.e., students, families, school staff, district leadership, and local businesses and organizations).