UNISIG APPLICATION
42 - Marion

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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).

Principals were assisted with understanding the steps involved in developing a comprehensive plan that would address the needs of the school. Individual sessions were set up with each principal in the spring to go through the first two phases outlined on a developed template that given. Phase I involved data analysis followed by considering staff development in Phase II. "Quick Fact Sheets," which included data such as Attendance, Discipline, Family and Community Engagement, and Diagnostic Testing Results for English Language Arts and Math were created by the district. These documents for each school assisted with the initial disaggregation of data.

In addition, multiple sessions were offered to principals to go over the "Principal's Guide for the Pilot School Improvement Plan" and was given to use as a reference. Multiple sources of data were utilized during problem solving sessions conducted by the school leadership team. For example, students were identified through the indicators in the Early Warning System. Following the professional development session, on-site support was provided by Area Directors. Time was spent reviewing the data to determine "Areas of Focus" and action steps to help align efforts and expenditures to execute the School Improvement Plan.

A district team (Director of Turnaround Schools, Director of Elementary Schools, and Area Directors) will meet with principals weekly on a rotational basis. These regular meetings and site visits will involve discussions regarding current academic and behavioral data. In addition, classroom visits and campus walks will help monitor the fidelity of implementation of best practices.

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.

Ongoing conversations between building administration and district staff will help determine if action plans and progress points need to be altered. This partnership will provide continual checkpoints regarding implementation of turnaround strategies. In addition to onsite visits, the principal will be required to meet formally with a one of the directors on a monthly basis to review progress toward meeting the action steps outlined.

As a result of ongoing observations and visits, differentiated support will be provided by various district departments such as ESE, ELL, and Curriculum/Instruction to address the socioeconomic, academic, and behavior needs of the school. For instance, curricular support will be provided to ensure that teachers understand how to plan and deliver instruction to the depth of the Florida Standards. Also, the School Counseling and Assessment department will be an integral part of working closely with the staff in disaggregating current data to help drive focused instruction as well as supporting students in need.

The superintendent and executive cabinet set the mission and vision of our district. Decisions are ultimately made to best meet the needs of students across the district through the lens of three focus areas: Equity, Evidence, and Efficacy within a multi-tiered system of support for systems' improvement. Our district's data-based problem solving process helps determine the expenditures and guides the development of action plans, implementation, and the progress monitoring to reach the following goals:
1. If teachers receive targeted professional development and collaboration aimed at standards-based instruction and differentiation, then the performance of students overall will increase with respect to learning gains and proficiency.
2. If MCPS focuses on academic achievement and career/educational planning in all students, then the percentage of students graduating on time and well prepared for post-secondary education or other career path will increase.

Tier 1 - Core Instruction Implementation
Our district has adopted the Florida Standards methodology for instructing all students. Teachers utilize differentiated instruction to meet the unique needs of students within tier 1 core instruction. Emphasis is being placed on several key areas to support effective, core instruction. These key areas include the implementation of Standards-Focused Board to align standards to instruction, regularly monitoring data to ensure student understanding of standards, displaying authentic student work artifacts that align to the rigor of the Florida Standards and collaboratively planning to ensure impactful standards-based instruction.
Strategically, ELA comprehension standards will be taught in clusters each nine weeks, K-5. Focused standards review within the fourth quarter will be determined by local assessment data for each grade level. Utilizing this approach, the district will be afforded the opportunity to design PD, instructional support, and vertically align planning for all ELA teachers, K-5.

Tier 1 - Progress Monitoring of Core Instruction
I-Ready ELA and math diagnostic testing will be utilized 3 times to year for all students in grades K-5 to determine proficiency as well as to monitor ELA and math growth. Locally generated Quarterly Standards Mastery Assessments will be administered to all K-5th grade students at the end of the 1st three nine weeks to determine student mastery of the standards. Students identified as non-proficient in ELA and math will be frequently progress monitored utilizing I-Ready growth monitoring assessments. In addition, MCPS has developed an Early Warning System based on the following 5 indicators that are predictive of on time graduation: Attendance, Course Failures, Office Discipline Referrals, Mobility and Retention. These groups will then be disaggregated and the problem solving process will be utilized to provide intervention(s) and monitor progress of getting these students back on track. Action planning takes place based on progress monitoring data encompassing all of these areas.

Tier 1 – Behavior Implementation and Progress Monitoring
Expectations and rules are posted and taught. Classroom and common area rules are tied to school wide expectations, resulting in an orderly and positive learning environment. Office discipline referrals

and out of school suspensions are monitored at the following levels: district, level (elementary, middle, high), and school. Action planning is based on progress monitoring data. Discipline meetings help student management staff track data and receive professional development to support schools.

Tier 2 - Instruction Implementation
Intervention needs will be determined through tri-annual Tier Talk discussions between the teacher, counselor, coach, and administrator and through on-going problem solving team meeting to discuss specific student needs. Universal screening data is used to help assess the effectiveness of tier 1/core instruction. Data sources may include, FSA for 3rd-5th, I-Ready for K-5th, DRA for K-2nd, Early Warning System, District created Standards Mastery Assessments. These data elements also reveal the students in need of tier 2 group interventions. Once identified as needing supplemental support, the data is disaggregated to group students by "common need" for implementation of tier 2 intervention. Aligning the intervention to the identified need is essential as well as ongoing monitoring of implementation and data results. MCPS has a reading and math intervention protocol that outlines recommendations to be used based on problem identification. Tiered interventions are implemented with the ultimate goal being that all students are successful.

Tier 2 – Progress Monitoring
Students placed in a tier 2 intervention are monitored by the teacher to determine their response to the intervention (positive, questionable or poor) and to guide the problem solving process. Ongoing monitoring by the administrative team and content area specialists would help ensure the intervention is being provided with fidelity. Additionally, weekly intervention observations by school-based administrators at all CSI and TSI schools would help ensure that the intervention matches both the problem identified as well as the severity of each student's needs.

Tier 3- Individual Student Instruction
Progress monitoring data is used to determine students' responses to tier 2 interventions and decide when individualized, intensive, tier 3 interventions are warranted. When progress monitoring data is not readily available (e.g., a student moves into our district with no documentation of interventions) and academic or behavioral performance indicates a need for intensive support, tier 3 interventions may be implemented concurrently with tier 2 support. Tier 3 interventions are typically developed during a problem solving meeting comprised of a multi-disciplinary team that includes both school based personnel and district support personnel. Tiered interventions are implemented with core/tier 1 as the ultimate goal.

Tier 3 – Progress Monitoring
Students receiving tier 3 interventions are monitored to determine their response to the intervention (positive, questionable or poor) and to guide the problem solving process to ensure the intervention provided matches both the problem identified as well as the severity of the students' needs. The problem solving process (i.e., problem identified, problem analyzed, intervention implemented, response to intervention evaluated) is utilized in a cyclic manner (i.e., applied repeatedly) until the problem is solved. This may result in refining the intervention implementation until the right match is found, or could result in a referral for a special education evaluation or even a change of placement. Progress monitoring occurs on a monthly basis at this level.
Program Specialists from the Elementary Education Department, working in conjunction with the Professional Development Department will provide training for interventions identified on the ELA and math protocols to ensure program efficacy and effectiveness. Intervention materials the Bottom 300 Schools will be provided through FEFP funds. Additionally, a Reading Program Specialist dedicated to CSI and TSI schools will monitor diagnostic and summative data, will support Tier I reading instruction in classrooms with literacy coaches, as well as monitor and support reading intervention programs. This Reading Program Specialist will maintain inventory of intervention materials for TSI and CSI schools.

Alignment of Media Resources

School library media centers contain a variety of resources for students. Print materials, electronic books, and databases are available throughout the district. While the majority of library resources contained in schools are funded with the state's instructional materials allocation for school libraries, the district supplements the state's allocation by covering the costs of online research resources for all school library programs. The district also funds and uses Destiny Library Manager to circulate print and digital materials. This software allows all students to access materials at school and at home via individual accounts. School library media specialists are responsible maintaining an inventory of all print and digital library materials; they utilize Destiny Library Manager to facilitate the process. All items are barcoded and entered into the circulation system. Complete inventories are conducted annually.

Digital resources purchased by the district are reviewed on an annual basis. Usage statistics, direct input form school library media specialists, and district priorities help determine the types of materials purchased. There are several components within the digital resources provided by the district that support Differentiated Accountability Schools. World Book Online contains an early learning database that contains resources to support lower level readers such as beginning reader Lexile level interactive electronic books with audio. It also includes a Spanish language database to support English Language Learners with resources such as visual Spanish-English interactive dictionary. The MCPS Coordinator of Special Programs, is responsible for district library purchases.

Individual school library media specialists are responsible for the selection and purchase of materials for their individual school library programs. The primary objective of the school's library media center is to implement, enrich, and support the educational program of the school. School library media specialists work to provide a wide range of materials on all levels of difficulty, with diversity of appeal, and the representation of different points of view.

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 Superintendent's "Boots On The Ground" initiative is a change in structure that will offer ongoing, direct assistance for schools. The schools across the district were divided into three regional areas. A director is assigned to each area and works in conjunction with the Director of Turnaround and the Director of Elementary Education. These four directors will rotate through Comprehensive Support and Intervention Schools to give weekly support and monitor instruction (core and intervention). These site visits will offer the opportunity for ongoing support and checks for fidelity of effective implementation of the School Improvement Plan.

District supported personnel composed of Content Area Specialists, school psychologists, social workers, and ESE specialists participate in monthly problem-solving meetings facilitated by building level leadership to ensure alignment and efficient and effective identification of barriers to school success and support for action planning to remove those barriers. Ongoing conversations between building administration and district staff will help determine if action plans and progress points need to be altered.

As a result of ongoing observations and visits, differentiated support will be provided by various district departments such as ESE, ELL, Federal Programs, Student Services, Professional Development, and Curriculum/Instruction to address the socioeconomic, academic, and behavior needs of the school. For instance, curricular support will be provided to ensure that teachers understand how to plan and deliver instruction to the depth of the Florida Standards. Also, the School Counseling and Assessment department will be an integral part of working closely with the staff in disaggregating current data to help drive focused instruction as well as supporting students in need.

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).

Operational flexibility is defined as affording schools the opportunity to make decisions regarding staffing, time-task calendars, and budgeting to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes. The district will provide flexibility to schools in staffing decisions by allowing priority hiring as well as staffing for a lower class size ratio. It will provide flexibility to schools in building master schedules, including extended learning time for students and teachers.

The district will assist and support school-selected researched-based professional development and collaborative planning based on student and teacher needs analysis. The schools will have flexibility in developing their school-based assessments, professional development, in school and out of school enrichment activities, school events, parent engagement initiatives, and the ability to use instructional time flexibly while maintaining the required instructional minutes per subject area. This "operational flexibility" will contribute to ultimately increasing student achievement.

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

A search committee was created that included the following members: Chairperson of the School Board of Marion County, Deputy Superintendent, current Principal and School Advisory Council President of Evergreen Elementary School, district-level Principal on Assignment and School Board Attorney. The committee researched various companies, listened to presentations that were open to the public to attend, and conducted interviews.

The search committee generated specific questions. Companies received these questions in advance with the expectation to incorporate the requested information into their presentation. The presentations were scored based on their responses to the questions presented to them. Before selecting Educational Directions as the external organization to work with Evergreen Elementary School, The committee discussed their scores and overall impressions. A final recommendation was provided to the School Board. The School Board provided their feedback to the community and the process was complete with a final vote by board members. A contract was executed on May 22, 2018.

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.

Community Assessment Team meetings will provide opportunities to share with stakeholders how the expenditures of Uni-SIG are used to increase student achievement. Other avenues of communication of the awarded grant may include School Advisory Council Meetings, Parent Teacher Organizations, and school-wide newsletters.

Information regarding student proficiency in ELA and Math is sent home to parents with the 1st nine weeks report cards in the language spoken in the home. Information regarding supplemental instructional services and supports through the Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) process is communicated in a variety of ways. Parents are welcome to attend the problem solving meetings to at the school level. Additional examples of communication regarding student progress include: notifications in writing, e-mail, and parent conferences conducted both by in person or by phone.

All TSI and CSI schools are also Title I schools; therefore school compacts will be reviewed with parents and sent home in the language spoken in the home. This compact outlines how parents, students, and teachers will work together to ensure student success. In addition, Tri-annually, i-Ready diagnostic data is sent home to parents via a printed parent friendly report.