

## **QUESTIONS GENERATED DURING THE THREE REGIONAL BIDDERS CONFERENCES AND ANSWERS TO EACH**

### **DATA COLLECTION/MANAGEMENT**

- 1) Some districts have already initiated the implementation of a problem-solving model in some schools and/or may already have data collection systems in place. How flexible will the project model be with regard to things that districts may already have established?**

There is not just one way to go about using a Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Model. There will be more flexibility with the statewide trainings...less so with the demonstration districts and pilot schools. As noted in the presentation, a primary purpose of the demonstration projects is to provide for data-based evaluation of the implementation of the model in a diverse range of school settings. From that perspective, there will be specific types of data that will be needed to enable the Project to do that evaluation. It is entirely possible that some districts may already be collecting some of the data that will be needed. In such cases, there is no need to duplicate that effort

- 2) How do you see aspects of this model interfacing with existing data systems? Will there be a way to download existing school/district data into the project data system?**

Please see the answer to #1. The creation of fluid systems of data collection and dissemination is a goal in all PS/RtI models. Districts will vary in the type of data systems in existence and efforts will be made to establish connections between existing systems and project systems.

- 3) Do you know, yet, the kind of data that needs to be collected...what variables you will be measuring?**

Consistent with the priority for the Florida Department of Education, as well as with the values reflected in No Child Left Behind and IDEA, student outcome data, particularly with regard to academic performance and behavior will be of primary importance. Process data regarding implementation of the PS/RtI and demographic data will also be collected to enable us to examine the relationship between those variables and student outcomes.

## **FUNDING**

### **1) If a district has salaries that are higher, \$100,000 may not cover coaches, etc. Can districts match funds?**

The \$100,000 grants for each year (up to \$300,000 across three years) very likely would not cover all of the costs associated with a district's implementation of the PS/Rtl model. It is expected that district's wishing to commit to this model will themselves be investing in that effort through personnel, as well as through other resources. So, yes districts can and very likely will have to contribute funds. However, it also should be noted that the district will benefit from substantial support in addition to the \$100,00 grant each year. A description of other forms of support that the Project will be providing (e.g., training, technical support, mentoring for coaches) is included in the application packet.

### **2) The grant allows up to 6 pilot schools...but if the \$100,000 would only fund one coach, is the district then limited to three schools? Could the \$100,000 be used to hire one coach for three schools?**

No. As noted in the response above to question #1, we do not expect that \$100,000 will be sufficient to fully fund this project and do expect that districts will contribute funds of their own. The Project's contribution will be up to \$50,000 per coach to serve three pilot schools.

### **3) Can a district use IDEA discretionary dollars to support this project?**

Yes. Districts would need to include this in their plan. However, efforts should be made to collaborate with general education in supporting implementation of the PS/Rtl model.

### **4) What is meant by "fiscal commitment" from the district?**

Fiscal commitment is referring to costs such as those needed to support personnel participation in professional development activities, instructional or curricular supports that may be needed, routine copying, etc.

## **Demonstration Districts/Pilot Schools/Comparison Schools**

**1) Will the project provide training on a large-scale basis to teachers at the pilot schools regarding behavior and academics, how to develop Tier One, etc?**

The Project, through the coaches and Regional Coordinators/trainers will be working with a building implementation team to identify training needed for them, as well as for other building personnel. Initial trainings will focus on topics including the problem solving process, data-based decision making, tiered systems of instructional delivery, and progress monitoring. Initial activities would involve assessing the effectiveness of Tier One and making any indicated changes.

**2) You've asked for D and F schools....will professional development be tailored to these schools, since the professional development needs of teachers at these schools could be quite different from the needs at other schools?**

The training that will be provided will be determined by the needs of each building implementation team and building personnel. While there are core professional development components, different school buildings will have varying professional development needs.

**3) Regarding D/F schools, are you looking for schools that have the potential for success, for example some level of infrastructure, rather than schools where there is no consensus, no infrastructure, correct?**

In selecting the schools that it will propose as pilot sites, districts should be looking for settings that have the highest potential for success. Regardless of the assigned grade, there should be a fundamental readiness for change present in a building, including a core consensus with regard to implementation of this model, etc. Building consensus is likely to take time. However, there needs to be at least buy-in by the staff with regard to entering into this project.

**4) If a district does not have six elementary schools, or is too small to include six pilot schools and six comparison schools, can fewer schools be identified?**

Yes, fewer schools may be identified. Up to six schools can be identified as pilot schools. Comparison schools need to be similar to pilot schools with regard to demographic characteristics, as explained in the application packet. A rationale might be made for submitting a smaller number of comparison schools, as long as those identified provide an appropriate basis for comparison with all pilot schools.

**5) We are a medium-sized district. Is there a minimum number of pilot schools you are looking for?**

A fully funded coach would be expected to support three schools.

**6) Is the purpose of the comparison schools simply for data collection? Will it be necessary to ensure that comparison schools refrain from PS/Rtl implementation prior to and during the three-year grant period?**

In order to evaluate the impact of PS/Rtl methodologies, it is necessary that the pilot schools engage in those methodologies and the comparison schools do not. Otherwise, the comparison schools would no longer serve the purpose for which they are intended.

**7) You've talked about looking at diversity between districts. Are you also looking at diversity between schools within a district?**

Not necessarily. We will be able to establish the diversity we need by taking a statewide perspective. The Project needs to reflect a diverse representation among all of the pilot schools selected statewide.

**8) Will pilot schools be expected to implement a behavior component, or can there just be an emphasis on reading?**

Pilot schools will use their data to select their own targets for improvement. The application asks for schools to provide data and to explain the specific needs that would be addressed through implementation of the PS/Rtl model.

**9) Will additional demonstration districts be added at some point, or will the Project just keep the six initial districts?**

At this point, the project is funded to work with the six initial demonstration districts.

**10) Are there schools within the state that are currently using the project's PS/Rtl model?**

There are many districts within and outside of Florida involved in PS/Rtl projects. This purpose of this Project is to establish model demonstration sites across the State of Florida.

## **COACHES**

### **1) Will the coach be responsible for collecting data from the comparison schools, in addition to the pilot schools?**

Yes, but those data collection activities very likely will involve harvesting existing data and should not represent a cumbersome, on-site, challenge.

### **2) Will districts be required to hire two full-time coaches? Would it be possible to have more than two, part-time, on-site coaches?**

The Project is designed to implement a model based on one full-time coach serving three schools. You could propose and provide a rationale and justification for using a different arrangement.

### **3) Would it be possible to employ two coaches for four schools? Will there be flexibility with respect to this?**

It is expected that a fully funded coach would support three schools.

### **4) The application calls for vitas for the coaches. This could create a conflict with district contractual agreements and hiring procedures?**

The requirement to supply vitas has been removed and replaced with an “explicit commitment to identify and hire individuals with the characteristics described” in the presentation.

### **5) We have an existing reading coach at a school. Could the grant money be used to supplement the efforts of that coach?**

The coaches will be hired as PS/Rtl coaches and will not be content (reading, math, behavior, etc.) specific. Their role will be to facilitate and mentor school teams through the process of adopting PS/Rtl as a way of work on their campus.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

**1) Are districts that don't have D/F schools at a disadvantage re: the application process?**

No, the goal of the Project is to include a diverse group of pilot schools from across the state.

**2) If a district includes a D/F school, does that mean they get 25 extra points?**

Points are awarded as described in the application. It is important to note that total points awarded will be an important consideration in the selection of demonstration districts. However, it also is important that a diversity of students, schools, and districts be represented among the demonstration districts and their pilot schools. After all applications have been evaluated against the criteria described in the application packet and have received a final score of from 0 to 175, additional factors will be considered prior to the selection of sites. Districts and pilot schools will be selected to include sites that are diverse with respect to:

1. Size of districts (i.e., small, medium, and large)
2. Geographic location
3. Student population demographics
4. Inclusion of D/F schools

**3) Are certain areas of the application weighted differently?**

Weighting is addressed through the assignment of varying points for components. Each area and the potential total points for each area is described in the application packet

**4) Do we need to submit a budget as part of the grant application?**

No budget is necessary. Districts being selected will enter into a written agreement with the University of South Florida regarding their commitment to the fulfillment of responsibilities and the provision of support for the Project.

**5) Is much of the data needed for the application available on the FCRR data base?**

The student performance data requested are AYP and FCAT data and would not be archived in the FCRR database. However, a school or district may use the

reading data available in the FCRR database to identify areas to target for improvement.

**7) Under Mini-Grant Application Requirements, 5. B, is this asking for the percent FTE already assigned by the district?**

This is asking for the district's commitment to the Project by the official assignment of specific personnel for a percent, i.e., FTE of their total workload.

**8) We have 20 indicators from the state, as well as an annual report. Could we submit this as part of our documentation?**

It would be important that all documentation submitted be clearly identified with regard to the specific aspect of the application to which it applies.

**9) Looking at the District Commitment, do the letters and demographic data contribute to the 25 page limit?**

No, they do not. Letters of commitment and data should be included in appendices and clearly identified.

**10) Within the application, there is an emphasis on district level commitment, school level commitment, etc. Should there also be a commitment from parents? Could input from the SAC committee be part of our documentation regarding parental involvement?**

The Project is asking for a commitment to parental involvement. Input from the SAC committee would be one way to demonstrate this.

**11) On page 12 of the application, item 11 makes reference to "full implementation." Does this imply that schools would be expected to implement in grades K-5 from the outset of the project?**

By "full implementation" we mean that a school would embrace all components of the PS/Rtl model and not just certain aspects of it. The sequential steps of a) Establishing Consensus, b) Building Infrastructure, and c) Implementation will guide activities and efforts over time. Complete implementation from the outset is not an expectation.

**12) The due date of April 1 for the grant application is a Sunday.**

The effective due date is April 2, 2007, a Monday.

## **SELECTION PROCESS**

### **1) Who will select the demonstration districts?**

The project directors, project leader, regional coordinators, and Florida DOE personnel will be involved in the selection process.

### **2) What is the timeline for selecting the demonstration districts?**

The target date for district selection is May 1, 2007.

### **3) Will two districts be selected for each of the three geographic regions?**

Not necessarily.

### **4) Could a true small district (under 7- 8 thousand students) be selected as a demonstration district?**

The applications will drive the selection process. A small district would be considered based on the viability of its application.

### **5) Will the selection of demonstration districts be based more on need, or on their willingness to change?**

Both would be considered. However, willingness to change is essential.

### **6) Is funding from other sources relevant to a district being selected?**

Fiscal commitment from the district will be a consideration.

### **7) When will the grant money be awarded to the selected districts? Will districts have to wait for the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1?**

The funds will be provided as soon as practicable after a written agreement is signed between the University of South Florida and the selected district.

