

# **Pennsylvania Department of Education Accountability Block Grant**

## *2006-2007 Guidelines and Information*

**Mission Statement**– *The mission of the Pennsylvania Department of Education is to lead and serve the educational community to enable each individual to grow into an inspired, productive, fulfilled, lifelong learner.*

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) is moving forward in the implementation of our strategic plan framework that will focus on student achievement and success through four components – Quality Teaching, Quality Leadership, Artful Use of Infrastructure, and Continuous Learning Ethic in every school and every school system. As an integral part of the vision for improved student performance, we present the following guidelines and information to help districts meet the high standards and rigor of the 2006-07 Accountability Block Grant application process. The Department is committed, through the Accountability Block Grant program, and through all other educational initiatives that it administers, to seek out those solutions to improved student achievement that are research or evidenced-based and predicated on proven best practices.

### **Background and Context**

Pennsylvania is committed to helping all students reach proficiency in reading and math so that they graduate from our high schools adequately prepared for college and the high-skills workforce of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. To achieve these goals, PDE is focusing on four key areas:

1. **Early Success in School:** All students will experience success in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and the primary grades so that they have a strong learning foundation to support future achievement.
2. **Increased Achievement:** All students will be proficient or advanced in core subject areas.
3. **Equitable Outcomes:** There will not be an achievement gap among student subgroups.
4. **Student Preparedness:** All high school students will graduate prepared for post-secondary education.

We know that many of our students reach proficient and advanced levels of achievement and are prepared to succeed after high school. These students have been well served by their public school systems, and have had the appropriate learning experiences and supports necessary for future success.

However, our data also tells us that too many of our students are not succeeding. In 2004-05, 19% (574 schools) did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as outlined in the No Child Left Behind Act. Statewide, 39% of all assessed students across the Commonwealth scored below proficient in mathematics, and 36% scored below proficient in reading. We must do more to help all our students meet these important milestones of academic success.

A core strategy for improving achievement in Pennsylvania is the *Accountability Block Grant*, which has provided \$200 million in each of the past two years, for schools to invest in a menu of

proven educational programs. Since Governor Rendell first signed the Accountability Block Grant into law for the 2004-2005 school year, a total of \$400 million has been used by school districts through the Commonwealth to make strides in meeting the AYP targets of the federal statute. School districts have used approximately \$2 out of every \$3 of this funding on quality early childhood education programs providing strong evidence of local communities' commitment to support students at the earliest school ages in order to achieve long-term success as well.

The results noted in the 05-06 Accountability Block grant – Mid Year Report document the following achievements overall:

#### **Investing in Early Childhood Education**

- 3,052 children in 40 districts benefited from quality pre-kindergarten.
- 58,318 students in 318 school districts benefited from full day kindergarten.
- 18,165 students in 93 school districts benefited from smaller classes in kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

#### **Investing in Support for Struggling Students**

- 31,431 students in 74 school districts benefited from tutoring through the Accountability Block Grants.

#### **Investing in Teacher Qualify**

- 292,442 students in 91 school districts benefited from increased teacher training.
- 223,461 students in 101 school districts benefited from reading and math teacher coaches.

#### **Investing in Other Proven Programs**

- 96,472 students in 119 school districts benefited from programs that focused on under-achieving students subgroups.
- 106,962 students in 58 school districts benefited from Social and Health Service programs.
- 150,587 students in 84 school districts benefited from Science and Applied Knowledge programs.
- 11,141 students in 22 school districts benefited from other Research-based school improvement strategies.

Act 70 of 2004 (HB 564) maintained the Accountability Block Grant funding at \$200 million through for the 2005-06 school year. Governor Rendell has proposed an increase in overall funding for the ABG Program to \$250 million for the 2006-07 school year. School districts are requested to complete a 2006-07 application at the 2005-06 funding levels. In addition, PDE is providing a contingent application for the 2006-07 proposed funding level. School districts are to complete both applications in sequence -- an application for the \$200 million allocation and then an application for the \$250 million allocation. This contingent application will enable school districts and PDE to plan and implement programs in a timely and effective manner.

## **Scope of the Accountability Block Grant**

The Accountability Block Grant provides Pennsylvania school districts with financial assistance to implement effective educational practices and initiatives to improve student achievement. The legislation identifies the following proven practices as acceptable expenditures of Accountability Block Grant funds:

1. Establishing, maintaining or expanding a quality pre-kindergarten program aligned with the state's current academic standards;
2. Establishing, maintaining or expanding a quality full-day kindergarten program aligned with the state's current academic standards;
3. Establishing, maintaining or expanding a class-size reduction program so that school systems appoint and assign, at a minimum, one certified teacher for every 17 students or two certified teachers for every 35 students enrolled in a kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom;
4. Establishing, maintaining or expanding programs that promote the availability, coordination, integration and utilization of social and health services, associated resources and ancillary resources to meet the needs of children and families in addressing issues that may serve to limit student academic achievement;
5. Providing tutoring assistance;
6. Improving the academic performance of subgroups identified under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001;
7. Establishing, expanding or maintaining programs to assist in building strong science and applied-knowledge (e.g. information technology, computer) skills;
8. Providing additional programs for continuing professional education;
9. Establishing, expanding or maintaining math and literacy teacher coaching programs within schools to improve reading and math instruction;
10. Providing financial incentives to highly qualified tenured teachers to work in the most academically challenged schools in a district, or providing financial incentives to aid in the recruitment of certificated math, science, language arts and English as a Second Language teachers to work in the most academically challenged schools in a district; and
11. Implementing research-based improvement strategies that the Board of School Directors of a school district determines are essential to achieving or maintaining academic performance targets.

**The attached appendices provide a framework and examples of proven practices for each of the above program areas.**

## **General Guidance:**

The following provides additional information and guidance for all districts as they complete their 2006-07 Accountability Block Grant applications:

- **Evaluation and Core Work Measurement of Student Success** – One of the key factors in determining student achievement and success is through quality data collection and evaluative measurement tools. The Department is committed to providing guidance and support to districts to help them in planning and collecting their student achievement information. We are providing several tools to help improve your data collection process, and to align your goals and objectives with your results. These tools may be found at [www.pde.state.pa.us/abg](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/abg). In addition, the Department provides several other data assessment tools, which can be found on the PDE website under the “Accountability System.” (Click on Pre-K-12 tab under the Accountability System and School Improvement tab on the left of the home page).

An important part of each program’s eGrant application is a section called “Core Work.” This section helps the district and the Department to clearly understand how student achievement and success are being measured and addressed. Please note that this year we provide definitions and examples in the Core Work section, to help guide the districts in both their understanding and implementation of effective evaluative measurement.

- **“Establish, Expand, Maintain--1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3rd Year Block Grant.”**  
As stipulated in the legislation, the Accountability Block Grant shall be used by school districts to attain or maintain academic performance targets by establishing, expanding or maintaining one or more of the designated programs. When districts report the status of the programs funded by the Accountability Block Grant, they must report, by program area, whether they are “establishing, expanding or maintaining” an initiative, program or effort. If a district has any questions about which of these three categories is most applicable to its program, it should refer to the following definitions for guidance.

**Important change:** Because this is the third year for the Accountability Block Grant, districts need to be clear about their approach to their 2006-07 programs. For example, if a school district “established” or “expanded” a full-day kindergarten program in 2004-05 using ABG funding, and is continuing that program in 2006-07, the district should indicate “3<sup>rd</sup> Year Block Grant – Maintain” for that program. If a school district “established” or “expanded” a Full-Day Kindergarten Program in 2005-06 using ABG funding and is continuing that program in 2006-07, the district should indicate “2<sup>nd</sup> Year Block Grant-Maintain”. This will help us to understand the district’s specific use of the funding for each year. In addition, please note below that there are two reasons to indicate, “expand” on your application.

*Establish:* To set up or bring into existence a new initiative or program within the district. This means that the district did not have this program prior to the 2006-07 Accountability Block Grant funding. (Example: Establishing full-day kindergarten when the district only provided 1/2-day kindergarten in the past.)

*Expand:* To increase the number, extent, impact or scope of a program or initiative that has already existed within the district. (Example: Expanding full-day kindergarten from one school to three schools.) This definition would also apply if a district either established or

maintained a program with the 2004-05 and 2005-06 Accountability Block Grant, and now wishes to *expand* its current or it's existing program.

*1<sup>st</sup> Year Block Grant - Maintain:* To preserve and support a pre-existing program or initiative that has and is resulting in documented student achievement. (Example: The district plans to continue an already existing pre-kindergarten by using Accountability Block Grant funds in place of funds that had been used to support the program.)

*2<sup>nd</sup> Year Block Grant – Maintain:* This category represents a second consecutive year of Accountability Block Grant funding and is an option for the district to choose that helps to identify where a district established or expanded a program initially with 2005-06 Accountability Block Grant funding and now wishes to continue it for 2006-07. This “2<sup>nd</sup> Year Block Grant – Maintain” option will help provide the distinction between the “maintain” option and continuing to use the funds after initially “establishing” or “expanding” the program in the 2005-06 Accountability Block Grant year.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Year Block Grant – Maintain:* This category represents third year Accountability Block Grant funding and is a **new option** for the district to choose that helps to identify where a district established or expanded a program initially with 2004-05 Accountability Block Grant funding and now wishes to continue it for 2006-07. This “3rd Year Block Grant – Maintain” option will help provide the distinction between the “maintain” option and continuing to use the funds after initially “establishing” or “expanding” the program in the 2004-05 Accountability Block Grant year.

- **Budget.** Districts should align their Accountability Block Grants with their strategic plans as defined by Chapter 4, as well as their school improvement planning framework, if applicable. The Accountability Block Grant funding should be allocated for expenditures directly related to improving student achievement, including but not limited to: learning materials and resources; instruction (including salaries and benefits, where permitted), consistent with the limitations in sections 2599.2(b)(3) and (e)(5) of the ABG legislation; professional development (including coaching); technical assistance; strategic partnerships with community organizations, universities and parents; and direct services to students.

The Accountability Block Grant is not available to cover administrative costs because the authorizing legislation prohibits this practice. Districts are advised that, as a general matter, administrative costs are defined by the Department of Education as those that refer to such items as salaries for principals, central office or clerical staff; utilities and phones; indirect costs; or other like expenditures associated with central, administrative, or other logistical supports. If districts have specific questions about whether expenses they are charging are administrative in nature, they should consult the specific program lead listed at the end of this document to obtain more information.

Districts also may not place Accountability Block Grant funds in a reserve account and may not use the funds to increase salaries, except in the case of Accountability Block Grant Program #10 (Incentives for Certified Teachers) in which districts may offer financial incentives to teachers working in the most academically challenged schools in a district.

The Accountability Block Grant is funded via state dollars, and therefore, carryover funds are not permitted. All allocated grant dollars identified on your 2006-07 ABG Application must be encumbered or spent by June 30, 2007.

Please note: Additional budgetary guidance can be found in the Appendices for individual programs.

- **Number of students served.** PDE's goal is to arrive at the most accurate, but reasonable, method to determine the number of students served by programs supported by the Accountability Block Grant. For the purposes of this 2006-07 Accountability Block Grant application, we ask that you include in that number the students directly served and/or affected by the ABG program that you are implementing. For Professional Education, you could use the following example: Assessment Anchor training was provided to: 48 elementary teachers serving 1,248 students; 31 middle school teachers serving 968 students; and 40 high school teachers serving 900 students.

### **Eligible Applicants**

School districts in Pennsylvania are eligible for an Accountability Block Grant at the start of the 2006-2007 school year. Funding amounts are determined by a set formula:

- 75% of allocated funding is determined by the percentage of students scoring below proficiency on the PSSA as a way to target those students who need the extra assistance the most.
- 25% of allocated funding is determined by the percentage of students scoring proficient or above on the PSSA in an effort to maintain the achievement of those students.

Estimated 2006-07 funding amounts can be accessed from the PDE website and will be outlined in a PennLINK to district Superintendents at the release of the 2006-07 Accountability Block Grant eGrants application. The proposed 2006-07 ABG allocations are contingent on approval by the PA Legislature.

### **Application Process and Review**

In order to receive funding, all eligible applicants will be required to complete and submit an application via the eGrant system. Districts will be required to complete the requested information and a plan for each program they select. The purpose of the application is to collect data on districts' use of their Accountability Block Grant and provide recommendations to districts on their plans for specific program areas. In the case of districts that are applying under Program #11, "Research-based Improvement Strategies (District-Specific)," the Office of the Secretary has the authority to approve or disapprove district plans for that program area. Please note that the criteria for submitting under option #11 this year are different from the previous year, and will require several additional preliminary steps before eligibility is determined.

**Applications must be received by PDE via the eGrant system by 5:00 pm, April 10, 2006. The eGrant system will not allow districts to submit an initial application after that time. Paper copies, faxes or other forms of submission, other than through the eGrant system, of the Accountability Block Grant application will not be accepted by PDE.**

Applications will be reviewed by readers with expertise and experience in the program areas. **Questions concerning a program area, effective program practices or the Accountability Block Grant application should be directed to the PDE contact for that program.** Contact information is listed below and in the appendices. Districts that select the 11<sup>th</sup> program option, “Research-based Improvement Strategies (District-Specific),” will work directly with representatives from the Office of the Secretary.

### **Timeline**

<u>Official</u> Release of Accountability Block Grant Request for Application	February 27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Districts may begin to apply through the eGrant system. PDE will provide continuous technical assistance and feedback to districts to help them complete their application.</li></ul>	
Accountability Block Grant Applications Due	April 10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Applications to be completed via the eGrant system by 5:00 p.m.</li></ul>	
PDE provides initial response to districts that applied for “Research-based Improvement Strategies (District-specific).”	May 1
Deadline for PDE to approve Accountability Block Grant application	June 16
PDE distributes Accountability Block Grant funding to school districts.	July 28
Mid-Year report due to PDE	December 11
Final Expenditure and Program Report due to PDE for 2006-07 Accountability Block Grant year	July 15, 2007

### **Disbursement of Funds**

**The Department may deny the applications of districts that do not complete the required Accountability Block Grant application via the eGrant system by 5:00 pm, April 10, 2006.**

**School districts may begin to obligate their Accountability Block Grant once funding is distributed by PDE on July 28, 2006. For districts that are applying for the “Research-based Improvement Strategies (District-specific)” program, a district’s application will not be considered complete until it meets the approval of the Secretary of Education.**

## **Grantee Requirements/Reporting**

All school districts that receive an Accountability Block Grant must submit the following to PDE via the eGrant system:

1. A mid-year program and budget report due December 11, 2006; and
2. An end-of-year program and budget report to the Pennsylvania Department of Education due July 15, 2007. NOTE: **The year-end report for the 2005-06 year will be due this July 15, 2006. More information will be provided regarding this requirement.**

Districts will be notified of reporting requirements before the reports are due. The mid-year and end-of-year reports will resemble the grant application and require districts to detail its program's effect on student achievement.

## **Amending the Accountability Block Grant Plan**

Requests for budget and program changes to the Accountability Block Grant plan must be received by April 1, 2007. The district superintendent, or his/her designee as indicated on the cover sheet, should contact in writing the appropriate PDE staff person assigned to the district's original program. The PDE staff person will work with the district and other PDE staff to try to accommodate the request. It is important that districts follow these procedures when making amendments to their plans, including their budgets. If Accountability Block Grant funds are not used in accordance with the identified programs and a district's submitted Accountability Block Grant plan, PDE may determine that it is necessary to reduce a district's state subsidy payment by the amount of funds improperly used.

## **Accountability Block Grant Contact Information**

**All contacts are located at: Pennsylvania Department of Education, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333**

### **General questions related to the Accountability Block Grant:**

**Ed Vollbrecht**

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**ABG Coordinator**

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**Quality Pre-kindergarten Programs**  
**Quality Full-day Kindergarten Programs**

Sue Mitchell  
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**K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Class-Size Reduction**

Jane Daschbach  
Bureau of Teaching and Learning Support  
Phone: (717) 787-7815  
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**Social and Health Services**

Mary I. Ramírez  
Bureau of Community and Student Services  
Phone: (717) 783-3755  
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**Tutoring Assistance**

John Nau  
Bureau of Special Education  
Phone: (717) 346-9990  
E-mail: [jnau@state.pa.us](mailto:jnau@state.pa.us)

**Academic Performance of Subgroups**

Sally Chamberlain  
Bureau of Assessment and Accountability  
Phone: (717) 705-0863  
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**Science and Applied-Knowledge (e.g. Information Technology)**

Nancy Cheris  
Office of Information and Educational Technology  
Phone: (717) 214-8214  
E-mail: [ncheris@state.pa.us](mailto:ncheris@state.pa.us)

**Professional Education**

Dolorez Cobb-Jones  
Bureau of Teaching and Learning Support  
Phone: (717) 783-4307  
E-mail: [dcobb-jone@state.pa.us](mailto:dcobb-jone@state.pa.us)

**Literacy and Math Coaching**

Geraldine Miller  
Bureau of Teaching and Learning Support  
Phone: (717) 783-6746  
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**Incentives for Certificated Teachers**

Sarah Pearce  
School Services Office  
Phone: (717) 783-6610  
E-mail: [spearce@state.pa.us](mailto:spearce@state.pa.us)

**Research-based Improvement Strategies (District-Specific)**

Sheri Rowe  
Bureau of Community and Student Services  
Phone: (717) 787-4860  
E-mail: [srowe@state.pa.us](mailto:srowe@state.pa.us)

# **Appendix 1**

## **Accountability Block Grant**

### *Quality Pre-Kindergarten Programs*

#### **Introduction**

The Accountability Block Grant supports districts in establishing, maintaining or expanding pre-kindergarten programs aligned with the current academic standards. Pre-kindergarten programs should meet the needs of their students, families and communities by incorporating evidence-based and proven early childhood practices. To apply for Accountability Grant funding for pre-kindergarten programs, districts must be prepared to provide PDE the following information:

- Data on the district, the students to be served and the pre-kindergarten program to be supported with an Accountability Block Grant;
- A concise description of the core components of the proposed pre-kindergarten program; and
- A plan that includes goals, program activities and evaluation methods.

#### **Pre-kindergarten Framework**

Extensive research on pre-kindergarten programs demonstrates that quality pre-kindergarten not only prepares children for school, but also has a lasting positive effect on student achievement well beyond kindergarten. The challenge for many communities, however, is two-fold: 1) to ensure all children, particularly those who are considered “at-risk,” have access to such programs; and 2) to ensure that the programs are of “high quality.” To help Pennsylvania communities meet this challenge, the Commonwealth’s Accountability Block Grant may be allocated by districts to establish, maintain or expand pre-kindergarten programs.

The following information provides a framework for effective pre-kindergarten programs:

- *Age of Child.* Pre-kindergarten programs should serve 3 and 4-year-old students for up to two years prior to the kindergarten entrance age for the district.
- *Length of Day.* Effective pre-kindergarten programs consist of at least 5 hours of instructional time per day; 2.5 hours of instructional time is the minimum. Instructional time can include meals and snack time as long as a certified teacher is supervising students and using the time for student learning experiences. Student experiences at the library and in art, music or physical education also constitute “instructional time” if provided by area specialists. Specialists do not need early childhood education certification.
- *Days Offered.* Pre-kindergarten should be offered, at the least, on the same days as elementary school classes.

- *Standards-based and Effective Practices.* Pre-kindergarten programs should reflect current scientific research and understandings in all related areas of early development to address the individual needs of a diverse population of children.
- The use of Early Learning Standards should guide classroom practice and be used to maximize children's growth and development across the key areas of learning addressed within the Standards: approaches to learning, creative arts, language and literacy, logical mathematics; personal and social, physical health, science and social studies. Copies of the Early Learning Standards can be downloaded from: [http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early\\_childhood/lib/early\\_childhood/Early\\_LearningAStandards\\_August\\_05.pdf](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early_childhood/lib/early_childhood/Early_LearningAStandards_August_05.pdf)
- The learning environment plays a pivotal role in pre-kindergarten children's successful opportunities to acquire knowledge through meaningful play, active exploration and thoughtfully planned activities. Learning environments should be well-designed and equipped with materials that stimulate and engage children while supporting teachers' strategies for classroom management and intentional instruction. Pre-kindergarten classrooms should utilize a classroom assessment tool to review their environments and teacher-child interaction. For a list of classroom observation instruments, see page 19 of Pennsylvania's report, "Early Childhood Assessment for Children, Birth Through Age 8." [http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early\\_childhood/lib/early\\_childhood/Early\\_ChildhoodAssessment\\_For\\_Children\\_From\\_Birth\\_to\\_Age\\_85.pdf](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early_childhood/lib/early_childhood/Early_ChildhoodAssessment_For_Children_From_Birth_to_Age_85.pdf). Pennsylvania child care sites are using the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) to self assess the quality of the pre-kindergarten classroom environment. For more information on the ECERS, go to [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org).
- Early Learning programs for pre-kindergarten children should reflect the importance of family-community partnerships and cultural diversity. The Early Learning Standards section, "Program Partnerships" provides a framework for effective partnership building.
- Keystone Stars, Pennsylvania's quality improvement initiative for child care and Head Start Supplemental Assistance grantees, provides a comprehensive set of program standards that can be used as a guide for program development and evaluation. Practitioners move through a set of increasingly more complex standards from the first level, "Start with Stars" to the last level of Star 4. This level is equivalent to NAEYC accreditation.

Additional national Standards that may be helpful resources include:

- The Head Start Performance Standards for Programs ([www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/performance/index.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/performance/index.htm))

- The Head Start Child Outcomes Framework located on the PDE web site ([http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early\\_childhood/cwp/view.asp?a=179&Q=101699&early\\_childhoodNav=\[6275\]&early\\_childhoodNav=](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early_childhood/cwp/view.asp?a=179&Q=101699&early_childhoodNav=[6275]&early_childhoodNav=))
  - The National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation Standards (NAEYC), which can be previewed and, for a fee, ordered by going to [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org), and clicking on Accreditation, General Information, Accreditation Criteria
  - The New Standards Project ([www.ncee.org/store/products/detail.jsp?setProtocol=true&id=2](http://www.ncee.org/store/products/detail.jsp?setProtocol=true&id=2)).
- *Class Size and Teacher/Student Ratios.* The optimum teacher/student ratio is 1 teacher and 1 aide for every 17 students. At a maximum, the pre-kindergarten teacher/student ratio is 1 teacher and 1 aide for every 20 students.
- *Teacher Qualification.* Teachers in school-based pre-kindergarten programs must be certified in early childhood education, i.e. pre-kindergarten through third grade. Community-based pre-kindergarten programs should seek to phase-in this requirement over a limited time period, but are not currently required to hire teachers with certifications in early childhood education.
- *Professional Development.* Pre-kindergarten teachers should be provided ongoing professional development opportunities that are grounded in research and reflect promising practices aligned with the Early Learning Standards and are specific to the needs of the teachers and children participating in the program. The professional development experiences should, at a minimum, meet the requirements outlined in Act 48. Please check the PDE’s website under “Teaching in PA,” “Act 48, Continuing Professional Development” for details. Community partners who host pre-kindergarten programs should meet the level of professional development required by Act 48 within three years. PDE encourages districts to include the pre-kindergarten staff of community partners in their professional development activities.

Professional development that is specific to pre-kindergarten and addresses the joint needs and interests of the community providers as well as the school district should be developed according to the district’s professional development plans and offered to community partners and providers. Opening these opportunities to the community creates connections among programs and supports consistent delivery of pre-kindergarten services to all pre-school children in the district.

PDE offers summer professional development that incorporates the use of the Early Learning standards to further pre-kindergarten children’s learning and development. More information about these summer sessions can be viewed at:

[http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early\\_childhood/cwp/view.asp?Q=114915&A=179](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early_childhood/cwp/view.asp?Q=114915&A=179).

- *Curriculum, Assessment and Program Evaluation.* Effective early childhood practices include a system of linked curriculum, lesson planning and ongoing assessment that is:

- ✓ Valid and reliable
- ✓ Comprehensive
- ✓ Developmentally appropriate
- ✓ Linguistically responsive

PDE recommends that pre-kindergarten programs adopt the assessment principles on curriculum and assessment that are outlined in Pennsylvania's report, "Early Childhood Assessment for Children, Birth Through Age Eight". Early learning centers that utilize a connected system of curriculum and assessment provide teachers with a model that supports optimal learning through the intentional structure of individualized, developmentally appropriate classroom activities. The quality pre-kindergarten program should complete child-level assessments a minimum of three times over the course of the school year.

To guide programs in the selection of curriculum and assessment materials, "Early Childhood Assessment for Children, Birth Through Age Eight" also outlines specific measures that align with the Early Learning Standards. To access this information, go to: [http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early\\_childhood/cwp/view.asp?a=179&Q=101699&early\\_childhoodNav=|3950|&early\\_childhoodNav.](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early_childhood/cwp/view.asp?a=179&Q=101699&early_childhoodNav=|3950|&early_childhoodNav.)

Program-level evaluation and assessment is another component of a quality pre-kindergarten program. In addition to the use of the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Score (ECERS), pre-kindergarten classrooms should develop a self-assessment that evaluates program goals and objectives and program delivery in relation to identified community needs.

For additional information on curriculum and assessment, NAEYC has a published position statement of Curriculum, Assessment and Evaluation that can be viewed at: <http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/pdf/pscape.pdf>.

- *Comprehensive Services.* Effective pre-kindergarten programs facilitate connections between students and families and social and health services, and address the food and nutrition needs of children while they are attending pre-kindergarten. The Head Start standards provide a model of comprehensive services for districts and community partners, and it is recommended that districts review the Head Start standards in these areas.
- *Transportation Services.* Proven pre-kindergarten practices include ensuring that transportation is available. It is, however, advisable to avoid excessive expenditures for transportation to ensure that the quality of the program itself is not diminished. For this reason, a modest portion of grant funds allotted for pre-kindergarten programs may be used for transportation costs.

- *Coordination with Child Care.* Pre-kindergarten programs should coordinate with local childcare programs to ensure that families have access to quality before- and after-school child care. Additionally, quality childcare providers can offer pre-kindergarten programs at their site and can serve as implementation partners for the pre-kindergarten program, as discussed below.
- *Inclusion of Community Providers.* PDE encourages school districts to identify existing, community-based high quality pre-kindergarten programs, such as Head Start, early intervention, licensed child care sites or private academic nursery schools, in order to collaboratively establish new pre-kindergarten programs.

Experience from across the nation suggests that community providers would deliver at least 30-40% of the pre-kindergarten services on a statewide basis. Districts should use at least 10-20% of their pre-kindergarten funds to facilitate these partnerships.

PDE can provide specific advice about how to help school districts identify quality community partners to deliver pre-kindergarten services, and suggest various district and community provider models. Indicators of high-quality early childhood services include:

- ✓ Head Start Programs: Fully compliant with the Triennial Prism Review Process and completion of the Annual Program Self-Assessment with appropriate quality improvement.
  - ✓ Child Care Services: Participation in Keystone STARS or accreditation through NAEYC. Please call Sue Mitchell at PDE to understand how to obtain this additional information.
- *Transition into Public School.* School districts that work with community-based pre-kindergarten programs to ensure successful transitions to public school maximize students' early experiences and support positive school attitudes and successful learning opportunities. Pennsylvania's Early Learning Standards provide the framework that can be used to support consistent expectations as well as the development of consistent curriculum/assessment materials across program settings.

Districts and community-based practitioners who join together to develop transition activities such as pen pals, school visits, jointly-created lists of student expectations, etc help students move into the formalized school setting more successfully. For more information on transition activities and strategies, see: **Successful Kindergarten Transition: Your Guide to Connecting Children, Families, & Schools** by Robert Pianta and Marcia Kraft-Sayre.

For additional information on the effective implementation of quality pre-kindergarten or to learn more about Pennsylvania's work in early learning, contact Sue Mitchell: [susmitchel@state.pa.us](mailto:susmitchel@state.pa.us).

## **Planning and Implementation**

Districts should work with school leaders, teachers, parents, early childhood experts and community partners (e.g. parents, civic leaders, early childhood community providers) to develop a pre-kindergarten program that meets the needs of local children. They should consider the types of services children and families need, such as before- and after-school care; summer programming; transportation; referrals to health and social services; healthy meals and snacks; English acquisition education for students and translation services for families who do not speak English. An effective pre-kindergarten program will take these needs into account in designing the program and linking it to appropriate supports.

Additionally, districts should also consider:

- *The Needs of the Most At-Risk Students.* If there are a limited number of slots for students, pre-kindergarten learning opportunities should first be offered to students at the highest risk of future academic failure. Local Head Start programs often have information available about pre-school age children who are at-risk.
- *Programs Combined Across District.* In order to leverage resources and efforts, school districts may partner in order to offer pre-kindergarten programs across district boundaries.
- *Reporting Enrollment:* Every student who is experiencing pre-kindergarten in a school district environment should be counted when reporting enrollment to PDE. Those students who are in school district Head Start programs, child care classrooms or pre-kindergarten (but not K-4) should be included in the enrollment reports, but NOT on reimbursement reports. Coordination should also occur with partners to ensure that all children are counted in state pre-kindergarten reports, but not counted twice.

## **Budget Guidance for Pre-Kindergarten Programs**

Pre-kindergarten quality programming relies on the inclusion of comprehensive services. In addition to instruction, materials, equipment and professional development, school districts may include support services that address young children's unique learning needs in their program costs.

National research documents that partnerships with community providers assure the quality delivery of these comprehensive pre-kindergarten services. *Districts should use approximately 10-20 percent of their pre-kindergarten funds to facilitate these partnerships.*



The following are the numerical coded categories of allowable costs:

**1000 – Instruction**

Instruction includes all those activities that deal directly with the interaction between teachers and students. This could include salaries, contracted services, equipment and supplies and maintenance costs that are directly attributable to instruction. Expenditures to renovate space to make age-appropriate classrooms for pre-kindergarten children may be included here, including purchase or rental of modular classrooms.

**2100 – Pupil Personnel Services**

Activities that assess and improve the well-being of students are addressed in this cost function and may include counseling and psychological services, student assessment, activities around student attendance, speech pathology and audiology services, and social work.

**2400 – Health Support Services**

This cost function is related to physical and mental health services that are not direct instruction and includes activities that provide students with appropriate medical, dental and nurse services.

**2700 – Student Transportation**

Proven pre-kindergarten practice is to ensure that transportation is available. It is, however, advisable to avoid excessive expenditures for transportation to ensure that the quality of the program itself is not diminished. A modest portion of grant funds may be allocated for transportation costs.

**3100 – Food Services**

Quality pre-kindergarten programs should address young children's food and nutritional needs and include the provision of healthy meals and snacks according to the length of the program day. USDA-approved breakfast, lunch or snack items are acceptable program costs and should be included under this cost function. Food preparation and delivery may also be charged to this function.

**3300 – Community Services**

Activities that provide community services to students, such as childcare, are included in this function. Services that facilitate connections between students and families and child care and social services may be included here.

### **Support for Program and Budget Development**

PDE welcomes requests from districts for support in planning and implementing pre-kindergarten programs. **All requests and/or questions regarding the implementation or expansion of pre-kindergarten programs, early childhood effective practices, or the Accountability Block Grant application for pre-kindergarten programs may be directed to:**

**Sue Mitchell**  
**Early Childhood Advisor**  
**Pennsylvania Department of Education**  
**333 Market Street**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333**  
**Phone: (717) 787-7489**  
**FAX: (717) 783-8230**  
**E-mail: [susmitchel@state.pa.us](mailto:susmitchel@state.pa.us)**

Readers with experience and expertise in high quality pre-kindergarten programs will review the Accountability Block Grant application for pre-kindergarten programs and recommendations may be provided to districts regarding their proposed plans.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Accountability Block Grant**

#### *Quality Full-day Kindergarten Programs*

#### **Introduction**

The Accountability Block Grant supports districts in establishing, maintaining or expanding quality full-day kindergarten programs that are aligned with current academic standards. Such programs must have five hours of instructional time per day and be open for the full school year. To apply for Accountability Block Grant funding for full-day kindergarten, districts must be prepared to provide PDE the following information:

- Data on the district, the students to be served and the full-day kindergarten program to be supported with an Accountability Block Grant;
- A concise description of the core components of the proposed full-day kindergarten program; and
- A plan that includes goals, program activities and evaluation methods.

#### **Full-day Kindergarten Framework**

Extensive research indicates that full-day kindergarten positively impacts student learning. Yet, it also warns that full-day kindergarten's potential for increased student success is mitigated when districts simply alter the timeframe from half day to full day without transforming the expectations for students' social, emotional and academic learning as well as the expectations for classroom practices. Research on early child development has provided greater insight into how children learn and their ability to acquire skills and learn at high levels during these critical years. More often than not, kindergarten and primary school expectations and practices fall short of what research and data from effective full-day kindergarten programs show children to be capable of achieving. In effect, implementing a full-day kindergarten program demonstrates a shift in thinking of kindergarten as an "introduction to formal schooling" to regarding kindergarten as the "social, emotional and academic foundation for future learning and success in school."

Successful full-day kindergarten programs have crucial elements that must be included in order for districts to maximize learning opportunities for students. The following information provides a framework to help districts leverage the opportunity that full-day kindergarten presents for improving student achievement:

- *Quality teaching and support for teaching.* Districts should commit to hiring or appointing only certified and highly qualified teachers to teaching positions for full-day kindergarten, i.e. those teachers certified in early childhood, pre-K to third grade. Full-day kindergarten increases the effect of quality teaching for students, but cannot compensate for poor teaching.

Full-day kindergarten teachers should be provided with ongoing professional development opportunities that are grounded in research and are specific to the needs of the teachers and children participating in the program. The professional development experiences should, at a minimum, meet the requirements outlined in Act 48. Please check the Pennsylvania Department of Education's website under "Teaching in PA," "Act 48, Continuing Professional Development" for details.

To assist districts with their implementation of full-day kindergarten, the Pennsylvania Department of Education offers summer professional development that focuses on full-day kindergarten. To view Summer 2006 offerings, go to

[http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early\\_childhood/cwp/view.asp?Q=114915&A=179](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early_childhood/cwp/view.asp?Q=114915&A=179)

The Department of Education is currently working with Pennsylvania's Intermediate Units to develop year-round professional development opportunities that focus on full day kindergarten. Future plans will be posted on this webpage.

- *Class Size and Student/Teacher Ratio.* In order to ensure that programs are of high quality, districts should maintain a teacher/student ratio of 1:17. Teacher/student ratios should remain under 1:20 and be 1:25 at a maximum.
- *Standards-based, Effective Practices.* Full-day kindergarten programs should be evidence-based, reflecting both the extensive research on full-day kindergarten and promising practices in the field, in order to maximize the opportunity for learning presented during a child's early years. Effective full-day kindergarten programs should utilize Pennsylvania's new Kindergarten Standards that are available from:  
[http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early\\_childhood/lib/early\\_childhood/DECEMBER\\_2005\\_KINDERGARTEN\\_STANDARDS.pdf](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early_childhood/lib/early_childhood/DECEMBER_2005_KINDERGARTEN_STANDARDS.pdf).

These comprehensive standards provide information across key curricular areas including arts and humanities, personal and social, health and physical education, science, social studies, reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics and partnerships. Programs should note the linkage to both the pre-kindergarten standards and the third grade standards as Pennsylvania strives to create a connected set of standards from birth through grade 12.

- Kindergarten teachers' and administrators' collaborative work with community pre-kindergarten practitioners will ensure children's successful entry into a formalized kindergarten setting. Teachers of both grade levels should work together to connect their students' curriculum and assessment strategies while linking them to both sets of Learning Standards, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten.
- Additional standards that may be helpful in planning a full-day kindergarten program include:

✓ The National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation Standards (NAEYC), which can be previewed and, for a fee, ordered by going to [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org), and clicking on “Accreditation, General Information, Accreditation Criteria”; and

✓ The New Standards Project  
([www.ncee.org/store/products/detail.jsp?setProtocol=true&id=2](http://www.ncee.org/store/products/detail.jsp?setProtocol=true&id=2)).

To ensure students meet the above-mentioned standards, effective full-day kindergarten programs:

- ✓ Are deliberate and purposeful in their teachers’ use of standards to guide classroom lessons.
- ✓ Utilize a comprehensive curriculum that has a rigorous literacy and curriculum at its core.
- ✓ Exhibit teachers’ instructional practices that are explicit in their instructional language and include a variety of configurations (e.g. whole group, small group, partner, and individual activities).
- ✓ Actively engage kindergartners in meaningful learning.
- ✓ Support and expect high quality work from all students.
- ✓ Are differentiated to meet the needs of all learners.
- ✓ Include deliberate efforts to expand kindergartners’ vocabulary and expressive language.
- ✓ Have clear expectations for children’s behavior that respect the age and development of the kindergartener.
- ✓ Provide many opportunities for kindergarteners to acquire and practice important learning behaviors (e.g. listening; participating; task persistence; self-regulation; making choices; exhibiting self-control; being organized; motivating self to do one’s best; working with others; respecting the rights, feelings and property of others, etc.).
- ✓ Are composed of classroom environments that:
  - Are attractive and stimulating to foster and stimulate the kindergartner’s curiosity, initiative and inquiry.
  - Are literacy rich and incorporate literacy and numeracy learning throughout the day.
  - Are organized and structured to support all areas of development through a range of instructional techniques and strategies.
  - Foster many opportunities throughout the day for children and adults to talk, listen and respond to one another for a variety of purposes.

In effect, full-day kindergarten programs should provide students with a rich learning experience that helps to ensure their future success in school.

➤ *Curriculum, Assessment and Program Evaluation.*

Effective early childhood practices include a system of linked curriculum, lesson planning and ongoing assessment that is:

- ✓ Valid and reliable.
- ✓ Comprehensive.
- ✓ Developmentally appropriate.
- ✓ Linguistically responsive.

PDE recommends that kindergarten programs adopt the principles on curriculum and assessment that are outlined in Pennsylvania's report, "Early Childhood Assessment for Children, Birth through Age Eight." Kindergarten classrooms that utilize a connected system for curriculum and assessment provide teachers with a model that supports optimal learning through the intentional structure of individualized, developmentally appropriate classroom activities. The quality full day kindergarten program should complete child-level assessments a minimum of three times over the course of the school year.

To guide programs in the selection of curriculum and assessment materials, "Early Childhood Assessment for Children Birth, Through Age Eight" also outlines specific measures that align with the Kindergarten Standards. To access this information, go to:

([http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early\\_childhood/cwp/view.asp?a=179&Q=101699&early\\_childhoodNav=|3950|&early\\_childhoodNav](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/early_childhood/cwp/view.asp?a=179&Q=101699&early_childhoodNav=|3950|&early_childhoodNav)).

Program-level evaluation and assessment is another component of a quality full-day kindergarten program. In addition to the use of a classroom rating scale, full-day kindergarten classrooms should develop self-assessment strategies that evaluate program goals and objectives and program delivery in relation to identified student and familial needs.

For additional information on curriculum and assessment, NAEYC has a published position statement on Curriculum, Assessment and Evaluation that can be viewed at:

<http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/pdf/pscape.pdf>

➤ *Transition into Public School*

School districts that work with community-based pre-kindergarten programs to ensure successful transitions into public school maximize students' early experiences and support positive school attitudes and successful learning opportunities. Pennsylvania's Early Learning and Kindergarten Standards provides the framework that can be used to support consistent expectations as well as the use of consistent curriculum/assessment materials across program settings and grade levels.

Districts and community-based practitioners who join together to develop transition activities such as pen pals, school visits, jointly-created lists of student expectations, etc. help students move into the formalized school setting more easily. For more information on transition activities and strategies, see: **Successful Kindergarten Transition: Your Guide to Connecting Children, Families, & Schools** by Robert Pianta and Marcia Kraft-Sayre.

➤ *Transportation*

Some school districts that are currently operating full-day kindergarten identify transportation as a barrier to effective implementation for all students. It is recommended that districts consider the use of Accountability Block Grant funds to offset the high cost of transportation of kindergarten students.

➤ *Working with Parents*

Research shows that many districts that offer full-day kindergarten develop richer and more rewarding relationships with parents. Additional time for communication, additional volunteer and classroom opportunities and fewer students overall support increased parent-teacher partnerships. Including parents in children's assessment and development of learning goals further promotes collaborative relationships and supports students' learning and development.

### **Program Planning and Implementation**

Districts should work with school leaders, teachers, parents, and community partners such as civic leaders, early childhood experts and early childhood programs, to develop a full-day kindergarten program that meets the needs of local children. The school-community collaboration should identify the most crucial pieces of this effort for their specific community, including identifying and serving the students who are most "at risk" of not succeeding in school; and analyzing classroom space and configurations to identify potential necessary changes.

When districts move from half-day to full-day kindergarten, some parents express reluctance to enroll students because of the length of the school day. In response, many districts have been successful in creating a choice for parents as they transition into full-day kindergarten classrooms. Experience shows that parents who originally opt for half day quickly see the benefits of the full-day experience and enroll their children in the full-day option soon after the school year begins.

Districts may also want to refer to the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory ([www.nwrel.org](http://www.nwrel.org)), which provides information of full-day kindergarten, including an overview of the research, characteristics of high quality full-day kindergarten and tips for success.

## **Budget Guidance for Full-Day Kindergarten Programs**

The crucial elements of a successful full-day kindergarten program--quality teaching and support, class size and student-teacher ratio, standards-based effective practice, and assessment and program evaluation--may be included in the following categories as allowable program costs:

### **1000 – Instruction**

Instruction includes all those activities that deal directly with the interaction between teachers and students. This could include salaries, contracted services, equipment and supplies, and maintenance costs that are directly attributable to instruction. Expenditures to renovate space to make age-appropriate full-day kindergarten classrooms may be included in this category, including purchase or rental of modular classrooms.

### **1692 – Tutor Training**

Costs that are directly involved with training volunteer tutors, materials used by tutors, equipment and facility rental necessary to conduct tutor training as well as ongoing evaluation of tutors, are included in this cost function.

### **2100 –Pupil Personnel Services**

Activities that assess and improve the well-being of students are addressed in this cost function and may include counseling and psychological services, student assessment, activities around student attendance, speech pathology and audiology services, and social work.

### **2400 – Health Support Services**

This cost function is related to physical and mental health services that are not direct instruction and includes activities that provide students with appropriate medical, dental and nurse services.

### **2700 – Student Transportation**

Proven kindergarten best practice is to ensure that transportation is available. Even if the program is targeted to certain students and is not offered district-wide, districts should count students in full-day kindergarten programs for purposes of their regular transportation reimbursement from the Department of Education. If necessary, districts may use a limited portion of their Accountability Block Grant funds for the remaining costs that would otherwise be paid for with local funds.

### **3300 – Community Services**

Activities that provide community services to students, such as childcare, are included in this function. This can include services that are not directly related to the instructional program and where children's attendance is not included in LEA attendance figures. Services that facilitate connections between students and families and social services and childcare may be included here.



### **Support for Program and Budget Development**

PDE welcomes requests from districts for support in planning and implementing their full-day kindergarten programs. **All requests and/or questions regarding full-day kindergarten, effective kindergarten practices, or the Accountability Block Grant application for full-day kindergarten may be directed to:**

**Sue Mitchell**  
**Early Childhood Advisor**  
**Pennsylvania Department of Education**  
**333 Market Street**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333**  
**Phone: (717) 787-7489**  
**FAX: (717) 783-8230**  
**E-mail: [susmitchel@state.pa.us](mailto:susmitchel@state.pa.us)**

Readers with extensive experience and expertise in full-day kindergarten will review the Accountability Block Grant application for full-day kindergarten and recommendations may be provided to districts regarding their proposed plans.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Accountability Block Grant**

#### *K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Class Size Reduction*

#### **Introduction**

The Accountability Block Grant supports districts in reducing class size to 1 teacher for every 17 students, or two teachers for every 35 students, in kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. To apply for Accountability Block Grant funding for K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade class-size reduction, districts must be prepared to provide PDE the following information:

- Data on the district, the students to be served and the K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade class-size reduction program to be supported with an Accountability Block Grant;
- A concise description of the core components of the proposed class-size reduction initiative; and
- A plan that includes goals, program activities and evaluation methods.

Districts must provide assurance to PDE that they will not meet the requirements of class-size reduction by making a reduction in, and subsequent increase to, current teacher complement.

#### **K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Class-Size Reduction Framework**

Research shows that reducing K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade class-size effectively improves student achievement at those grade levels. The research also emphasizes, however, that the context in which class-size reduction occurs is critical to its success. The following information provides a framework to help districts leverage the opportunity that K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade reduced class size presents for improving student performance:

- *Quality Teaching and Support for Teaching.* Districts should commit to hiring or appointing only certified and highly qualified teachers to K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade positions associated with reducing class size through the Accountability Block Grant. Smaller class size exponentially increases the effect of quality teaching for students in grades K-3, but cannot compensate for poor teaching.

Teachers should also be involved in ongoing, quality professional development that facilitates their growth as professionals and supports their continuous development of skills and knowledge that meet the learning needs of students. Kindergarten through third grade teachers who are working in reduced class-size environments should be provided ongoing professional development opportunities that are grounded in research and are specific to the needs of the teachers and children participating. The professional development experiences should, at a minimum, meet the requirements outlined in Act 48. Please check the PDE's website under "Teaching in PA," "Act 48 of 2000, Continuing Professional Development," 24 p.s.§1205.1 et seq.," for details.

To assist districts with their implementation of early childhood initiatives, the Pennsylvania Department of Education offers summer professional development. To learn more about these offerings, contact Sue Mitchell at PDE.

- *Sufficient Classroom Space.* According to research, sufficient classroom space is a key factor to the success of reducing class size. Districts should closely analyze the capacity within their elementary schools to plan for additional classrooms or space that may be necessitated by reducing class size. However, districts should note that adding classes is only one option for reducing class size and will not necessarily meet the needs of students and teachers. The Pennsylvania Department of Education encourages districts to be innovative and creative in how they reduce class size. For instance, some districts are choosing a ratio of 2 teachers to 35 students in one classroom by using a team teaching structure that facilitates grouping and regrouping students in a variety of ways to meet students' learning needs. Other districts are choosing to stagger teacher schedules or reduce class size only for their literacy and math blocks.
- *High quality, focused curriculum that is aligned with PA Standards and Assessments.* Districts should ensure that their K-3<sup>rd</sup> grades:
  - Focus on student learning in math and literacy;
  - Implement a math and literacy curricula that is aligned with standards and is documented to be effective in developing students' skills and knowledge; and
  - Have the necessary learning materials and resources to support learning at those grade levels.

*Program Assessment and Evaluation.* Districts should implement a specific system for evaluating their class-size reduction initiative and its effect on student learning. Students participating in the reduced class-size initiative should have individual assessments three times during the year. Information on the program effectiveness can be used by districts to make programmatic adjustments and refinements in the future, as well as provide important data to the community.

PDE will be collecting information in the mid-year and year-end reports on the academic outcomes for the students in classes no larger than 1:17 or 2:35. The district's assessment and evaluation plan will need to determine how to obtain the data necessary to show how well these particular students have progressed using whatever assessment and evaluation measures the district decides to employ.

### **Planning and Implementation**

The Pennsylvania Department of Education encourages districts to work closely with school leaders, teachers, facilities experts and community partners (e.g. businesses) to identify the challenges to reducing K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade class size and to leverage resources to meet those challenges. The team should analyze the educational needs of their K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade students and the logistical needs of the schools and community.

Districts that are implementing reduced class-size initiatives under these provisions are advised to have contingency plans that allow them to maintain the required 1:17 or 2:35 ratios at all times throughout the year.

The Department also plans to investigate the effects of the ABG K-3 Class Size Reduction program on those students who are in classrooms where the teacher-pupil ratio is higher than 1 to 17, but for whom the ratio would be much higher except for the use of the Accountability Block Grant to reduce the ratio to 1:17 (or less) in one or more other classrooms in the district. You will be asked to supply similar information for this category of students, i.e. those who may be indirectly benefiting from the ABG Class Size Reduction Program because they are in classrooms with a lower than usual student-teacher ratio (although they do not meet the program's standard ratio of 1:17). Please read all instructions in this section carefully to separately consider and address students benefiting directly and indirectly from this ABG program.

### **Budget Guidance for Reduced Class Size Programs**

Reduced class size for K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade has been proven to positively impact student achievement. Four areas of consideration--quality teaching and support, sufficient classroom space, high quality curricula, program assessment, and evaluation--provide the framework for effective class-size reduction. The following budget lines may be included in the following categories as allowable program costs, but the expected focus is on instruction:

#### **1000 – Instruction**

Instruction includes all those activities that deal directly with the interaction between teachers and students. This could include salaries, contracted services, equipment and supplies and maintenance costs that are directly attributable to instruction. Expenditures to renovate space to make age-appropriate classrooms may be included in this category, including purchase or rental of modular classrooms.

#### **1692 – Tutor Training**

Costs that are directly involved with training volunteer tutors, materials used by tutors, equipment and facility rental necessary to conduct tutor training as well as ongoing evaluation of tutors, are included in this cost function.

#### **2100 – Pupil Personnel Services**

Activities that assess and improve the well-being of students are addressed in this cost function and may include counseling and psychological services, student assessment, activities around student attendance, speech pathology and audiology services, and social work.

#### **2400 – Health Support Services**

This cost function is related to physical and mental health services that are not direct instruction and includes activities that provide students with appropriate medical, dental and nurse services.

#### **3300 – Community Services**

Activities that provide community services to students, such as childcare, are included in this function. This can include childcare services that are not directly related to the instructional program and where children's attendance is not included in LEA attendance figures. Services that facilitate connections between students and families and social services may be included here.

### **Support for Program and Budget Development**

PDE welcomes requests from districts for support in reducing K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade class sizes. **All requests and/or questions regarding reducing class size, effective practices in class-size reduction, or the Accountability Block Grant application for K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade class-size reduction may be directed to:**

**Jane Daschbach**  
**Bureau of Teaching and Learning Support**  
**Phone: (717) 787-7815**  
**FAX: (717) 783-8230**  
**E-mail: [jdaschbach@state.pa.us](mailto:jdaschbach@state.pa.us)**

**or Sue Mitchell**  
**Office of Policy**  
**Phone: (717) 787-7489**  
**FAX: (717) 783-8230**  
**E-mail: [susmitchel@state.pa.us](mailto:susmitchel@state.pa.us)**

**Pennsylvania Department of Education**  
**333 Market Street**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333**

Districts may also want to refer to WestEd ([www.wested.org](http://www.wested.org)), which provides information on class-size reduction, including an overview of the research and innovative ideas that may help districts facilitate their efforts.

Readers who have extensive experience and expertise in reducing class size and in K-3 student learning will review the Accountability Block Grant application for K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade class-size reduction. Recommendations may be provided to districts regarding their proposed plans.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Accountability Block Grant**

#### *Social and Health Services*

#### **Introduction**

The Accountability Block Grant supports districts in establishing, maintaining or expanding programs that promote the availability, coordination, integration and utilization of student services. Funding available in this category provides an important opportunity to link schools, homes and communities in meeting the needs of children and families by addressing issues that may serve to limit student academic achievement. Areas of student services may include social and health services, wellness policy implementation efforts and behavioral health supports.

To apply for Accountability Block Grant funding for social and health services, districts must carefully consider and clearly identify the specific academic gains and positive behavioral changes students will demonstrate as a result of participation in the proposed activities. Applicants must also detail the evidence-based research that documents the causal connection between the proposed social and health services and the academic gains and positive changes cited. Additional required information includes:

- Data on the district, the students to be served and the social and health program(s) to be supported with an Accountability Block Grant;
- The strategies that will be used to provide early identification and targeted social and health services assistance for students most at risk of academic failure;
- A concise description of the core components of the proposed social and health services initiative; and
- A plan that includes goals, program activities and evaluation methods.

#### **Social and Health Services Framework**

During the last ten years, examples of effective school and community services partnerships have emerged. These partnerships have improved student and family access to social and health services, while reducing the duplication of efforts across schools and organizations. Sometimes described as “community schools,” these partnerships involve schools, providers, families and community members who:

- Work collaboratively to coordinate and integrate current social and health services;
- Develop new social and health services identified as necessary;
- Leverage resources and efforts around social and health services for students; and
- Mobilize others to remove the barriers that impede student learning (e.g. health, mental health and/or economic).

Through the Accountability Block Grant, the Commonwealth commits to supporting districts and their local communities in removing the social and health barriers to high student achievement. Districts should seek to align the use of these funds with the requirements now in place for student

services and strategic planning (Chapter 12). Districts are asked to be aware of the distinction among developmental, diagnostic and consultation services as described in that legislation. Districts should also align their ABG program efforts with the food and nutrition wellness policy requirements, as appropriate. The following provides examples of initiatives that may be supported through this funding:

- Promoting children's wellness by establishing school-based health clinics so that students have ready access to behavioral and health services before, during and after school;
- Creating family and student support groups;
- Implementing aggressive truancy prevention/reduction programming;
- Providing on-going, in-depth mental health services at the school through community counseling organizations;
- Extending the school day with a focus on engaging students in social and health issues;
- Developing Elementary Student Assistance Programs;
- Conducting cross-organizational professional development on social and health services issues for school counselors, nurses and therapists along with community providers;
- Employing a coordinator whose responsibility is to create school partnerships with social and health providers; and
- Hiring home and school visitors to connect schools, students, parents and community providers around issues affecting students.

Districts and social and health providers should implement a specific system for evaluating their initiatives funded through the Accountability Block Grant, particularly focusing on the outcomes for students. Information on program effectiveness can be used by the partners to make future programmatic adjustments and refinements, as well as provide important data to the community.

Schools may not use Accountability Block Grant funds to underwrite the cost of existing basic social and health services positions that the district has previously funded as well as health insurance coverage. Examples of basic social and health services positions include, but are not limited to: school nurse, home school visitor, and truant officer. Applicants are permitted to upgrade existing services to adopt a more innovative, aggressive approach to improving student health and/or socialization that will impact academic achievement.

### **Planning and Implementation**

To plan for the Accountability Block Grant for social and health services, the districts should work with school leaders, teachers, parents and community providers, such as social service organizations, health organizations and community organizations, to:

- Establish academic achievement (as measured by the Pennsylvania Standards and Assessments) as the unifying principle and driving force on the quality of life of a community and its members;
- Identify the health and social needs and assets of students, families, schools and communities by using various types of data;
- Plan strategically on ways to meet the needs and prioritize efforts;

- Review, analyze and adopt evidence-based programming that has strong research or other scientific proof that its implementation will likely result in the proposed academic and behavioral outcomes;
- Integrate and streamline existing resources and programs to guarantee maximum benefits for participants;
- Secure additional services, programming and resources to meet identified needs;
- Hold regular meetings to share information and ideas and review progress in meeting identified needs; and
- Increase community awareness and involvement in identified issues.

Participants of a successful school, family and community services partnership should have input into the priorities and direction of the initiative and ensure that the collaborative efforts are a priority for their own organization.

### **Documentation of Academic Achievement**

The focus of all of the Accountability Block Grant programs is student achievement; for social and health services it is also important to show positive behavioral changes students demonstrate, such as improved attendance and reduced classroom violence. On the mid-year and end-year reports, districts will be required to provide documentation on both of the following measures:

- Direct data that shows academic improvement as measured by increases in GPA, teacher ratings of students (for younger students), and improved PSSA and other standardized test scores; and
- Correlational data that supports increased academic performance, including improved school attendance, reduced suspensions and detentions and teacher reports on improved student behavior and classroom climate.

### **Support For Program Development**

PDE welcomes requests from districts for support in planning and implementing social and health initiatives. All requests and/or questions regarding this work, effective practices in school and provider partnerships, or the Accountability Block Grant application for social and health services may be directed to:

**Mary I. Ramírez**  
**Pennsylvania Department of Education**  
**333 Market Street**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333**  
**Phone: (717) 783-3755**  
**FAX: (717) 783-6617**  
**E-mail: [maramirez@state.pa.us](mailto:maramirez@state.pa.us)**

The following websites provide information and examples of programs that promote the availability, coordination, integration and utilization of social and health services. They include a bibliography of research; a list of national, regional and local organizations that are doing this type of work; and examples of effective practice.



- US Department of Education ([www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov))
- US Department of Health and Human Services ([www.dhhs.gov](http://www.dhhs.gov))
- Pennsylvania Department of Education ([www.pde.state.pa.us](http://www.pde.state.pa.us))
- Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare ([www.dpw.state.pa.us](http://www.dpw.state.pa.us))
- Pennsylvania Department of Health ([www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us))
- Coalition for Community Schools ([www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org))

Readers with experience and expertise in high quality school and family partnerships with social and health services will review the Accountability Block Grant application for social and health services. Recommendations may be provided to districts regarding their proposed plans.

## Appendix 5

### **Accountability Block Grant**

#### *Tutoring Assistance*

### **Introduction**

Tutoring is an effective intervention for students who are below proficient, and PDE is committed to developing and implementing powerful tutoring programs. Currently, there are four separate but cohesive funding initiatives that support tutoring assistance: the Accountability Block Grant, Educational Assistance Program, Classroom Plus, and Supplemental Educational Services under the No Child Left Behind Act.

To apply for Accountability Block Grant funding for tutoring assistance, districts must be prepared to provide PDE the following information:

- Measures to align this tutoring initiative with other tutoring opportunities in the district;
- Data on the district, the students to be served and the tutoring program to be supported with an Accountability Block Grant;
- A concise description of the core components of the proposed tutoring program including the eligibility, progress and evaluation assessments and the evidenced-based models to be used for each grade served; and
- A plan that includes measurable goals, program activities and evaluation methods.

### **Tutoring Framework**

Extensive research has shown that tutoring can be a powerful intervention for students who are struggling to achieve academic standards and for districts in closing the achievement gap. The intent of a high-quality tutoring program is to prevent students from falling behind in their progress toward academic goals, from failing courses and from dropping out of school. An effective tutoring program provides students with extra time for learning and extended opportunities for quality instruction that is aligned with, but does not simply repeat, classroom instruction. The “Tutoring in Pennsylvania Initiative” provides a framework for effective tutoring assistance:

- Individually tailored to districts; personalized for students;
- Frequent sessions with an emphasis on regular attendance. A minimum of 45 hours of instruction per content area for the school year or summer program;
- Alignment with classroom instruction:
  - Aligned with PA Standards and Assessment anchors.
  - Use of evidenced-based models. A list of PDE approved reading and math models are on the Educational Assistance Program (EAP) website at: [www.pde.state.pa.us/svcs\\_students/cwp/view.asp?a=2968&q=99074](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/svcs_students/cwp/view.asp?a=2968&q=99074)
  - Incorporates strategies for learning.
  - Ongoing feedback to the student.
- Rigorous selection and intensive, ongoing training of tutors;
- Intensive monitoring and evaluation of student progress:

- Assessments to measure progress during the course of the tutoring.
- District-wide assessments for evaluation purposes.
- Clear and specific performance targets
  - For progress against academic standards
  - For release from the tutoring program
- Regular feedback on progress
  - Students – Teachers – Parents
  - Ongoing feedback to and from student
- Building a culture for tutoring:
  - Connected authentically with community partners.

Additional information on the design and structure of effective tutoring programs can be found in the Educational Assistance Tutoring Guidance on the EAP website cited above.

*Assessment and Evaluation.* Districts should implement a specific system for evaluating the success of their tutoring program and its effect on student learning. Students participating in the tutoring initiative should have individual assessments on an ongoing basis throughout the tutoring program. **These guidelines highly recommend that districts use a local assessment that is aligned with state standards to fulfill the requirements of measuring student progress. The Department has approved the assessment tools for this purpose. More information about assessment tools can be found at:**

**[www.pde.state.pa.us/svcs\\_students/lib/svcs\\_students/Assessment\\_Matrix\\_for\\_Tutoring.doc](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/svcs_students/lib/svcs_students/Assessment_Matrix_for_Tutoring.doc)**

Districts can use program effectiveness data to make programmatic adjustments and refinements as well as provide important data to the community.

### **Planning and Implementation**

PDE encourages districts to work with school leaders, teachers, parents and community organizations to plan tutoring programs. Districts and their partners should consider the specific academic needs of students at different grade levels and/or schools; the programs and initiatives already in place; the gaps in services and coordination; and the duplication of efforts. This work should focus on aligning and leveraging resources and efforts so that the learning needs of struggling students are met.

### **Support For Program Development**

PDE welcomes requests from districts for support in planning and implementing tutoring assistance programs. **All requests and/or questions regarding tutoring assistance, effective tutoring practices, or the tutoring application may be directed to:**

**John Nau  
Bureau of Special Education  
Pennsylvania Department of Education  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333  
Phone: (717) 349-9990**

**FAX: (717) 783-9283**

**E-mail: [jnau@state.pa.us](mailto:jnau@state.pa.us)**

The Accountability Block Grant application for tutoring assistance will be reviewed by readers who have extensive experience and expertise in successful tutoring programs. Recommendations may be provided to districts regarding their proposed plans.

## **Appendix 6**

### **Accountability Block Grant**

#### *Academic Performance of Student Subgroups*

#### **Introduction**

The Accountability Block Grant supports districts in implementing evidence-based strategies and/or evidence-based programs to improve the academic performance of student subgroups identified under the No Child Left Behind Act. To apply for Accountability Block Grant funding for this area, districts should provide the Pennsylvania Department of Education the following information:

- Data on the district and the students in the subgroup to be supported with an Accountability Block Grant;
- Detailed description of the evidence-based strategies/program, including research and/or documented evidence of practice and results, that will be implemented to address the learning needs of the identified students to be served;
- Detailed plan to increase subgroup performance that includes goals, specific action steps, professional development needs, and evaluation methods;
- Specific language on how the research-based strategies and/or programs will be integrated into the day, extended day, and tutorial programs;
- Specific language on how the district or school will partner with parents, contracted service providers, and community agencies in the implementation of the evidence-based strategies/programs;
- Detailed description on the readiness steps that have occurred or will occur to ensure that administrators, teachers, support staff, students, and parents are prepared to ensure the successful partnerships and implementation fidelity of the evidence-based strategies/programs;
- Professional development plan for teachers, para-educators, related service personnel, and administrators in implementing evidence-based strategies/programs for the identified student subgroup; and
- A concise description of the districts' core strategies to improve the academic performance of subgroups.

#### **Framework for Improving the Academic Performance of Student Subgroups**

Student achievement data overwhelmingly points to the need for evidence-based programs that help students who are economically disadvantaged, racial/ethnic minorities, Limited English Proficient (LEP) and/or have disabilities to meet state academic standards. To help schools meet this need, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is providing districts with the opportunity to allocate Accountability Block Grant funds specifically for evidence-based programs focused on student subgroup achievement or practices with emerging evidence of their impact on student subgroup achievement. The following provides a comprehensive framework for how districts can maximize this investment:

- *Focus on Teaching and Learning.* Using student assessment data, districts should select curricula or programs proven through research and/or evidence to improve the academic performance of student subgroups. In order to successfully implement new curriculum and programs, teachers should be supported through ongoing, cohesive professional development focused on:

- Implementing a standards-based curriculum with a focus on the assessment anchors;
- Implementing research-based effective instructional strategies;
- Analyzing lessons and resulting student work;
- Planning future lessons and instructional strategies based on student data; and
- Implementing early intervening, evidence-based practices.

Districts can choose to focus on one or more student subgroups, depending on their Adequate Yearly Progress data and identified student needs. The programs, materials and strategies selected, however, should have specific data and evidence that show how they have improved learning for the subgroup(s).

- *Focus on Leadership.* Districts should work with their school leadership team and external providers to develop leaders' knowledge and skill in:
- Facilitating staff analysis of student work;
  - Identifying the needs and assets of student subgroups;
  - Focusing on assessment anchors in delivering the standards-based curriculum;
  - Identifying research-based strategies, curricula and programs that meet those needs and leverage student subgroup assets;
  - Establishing procedures for early intervening evidence-based practices; and
  - Working with parents and community partners to develop collective efforts focused on the achievement rate of student subgroups.
- *Artful Use of Infrastructure.* Districts should begin to reallocate resources and refine efforts to specifically address the academic needs of student subgroups. This could include reorganizing classroom schedules to increase learning time in core math and/or reading for all students; establishing flexible grouping for math and reading instruction for students; providing after-school opportunities that are connected to the core reading and/or math programs; extending the school year with a focus on the evidence-based core reading and/or math program; and/or establishing partnerships with parents and community organizations for increased evidence-based learning opportunities for students. PDE recommends that districts use the Accountability Block Grant to address each of the above components in order to develop a comprehensive plan for improving the performance of an identified subgroup. Because the above components are most effective when implemented together, PDE discourages districts from choosing to implement only one strategy in isolation. We believe that the effort to improve subgroup performance and the financial support of the Accountability Block Grant is maximized when all components are addressed.

- *Assessment and Evaluation.* Districts should implement a specific system of monitoring student progress, including benchmarking, for evaluating the progress of selected student subgroups and the effectiveness of the strategies supported through the Accountability Block Grant. Information on student progress and program effectiveness should be used by the district to make future programmatic adjustments and refinements. This could include reorganizing.

### **Planning and Implementation**

Districts should work with the school leadership team and staff to closely analyze multiple assessments of student performance, including progress monitoring and PSSA data, to identify the learning needs of student subgroups as individuals, by grade levels, by school and as an entire group. A district's plan should stem from this analysis and detail the specific evidence-based strategy (or strategies) they will implement to improve student subgroup achievement.

### **Support For Program Development**

PDE welcomes requests from districts for support in planning and implementing strategies that increase the academic performance of student subgroups. **All requests and/or questions regarding student subgroups, effective practices, or the Accountability Block Grant application for academic performance of student subgroups may be directed to:**

**Sally Chamberlain**  
**Division Chief**  
**District and School Improvement**  
**Bureau of Assessment and Accountability**  
**Pennsylvania Department of Education**  
**333 Market Street**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333**  
**Phone: (717) 705-2343**  
**E-mail: [schamberla@state.pa.us](mailto:schamberla@state.pa.us)**

Although the Department is not endorsing specific programs or materials, the following is a list of suggested resources that can provide further information for this area. This list is not intended to be comprehensive.

#### *Literacy:*

- Center for Improving Reading Competence Using Intensive Treatments ([www.wcer.wisc.edu/cce/reading.html](http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/cce/reading.html))
- Doing What Works: Evidence Based Reading Information ([www.ed.gov/inits/backtoschool/teachers/part7.html](http://www.ed.gov/inits/backtoschool/teachers/part7.html))
- National Reading Panel ([www.nationalreadingpanel.org](http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org))
- International Reading Early Reading Achievement (CIERA Association) ([www.ira.org](http://www.ira.org))
- Center for the Improvement ([www.ciera.org](http://www.ciera.org))

*Mathematics:*

- Examples of research-based Math programs: learning materials approved by the National Science Foundation ([www.nsf.gov](http://www.nsf.gov))
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics ([www.nctm.org](http://www.nctm.org))
- Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Math and Science Education ([www.enc.org](http://www.enc.org))

*ESL:*

- National Clearinghouse on English Language Acquisition ([www.ncela.gwu.org](http://www.ncela.gwu.org))
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages ([www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org))

*Special Education:*

- Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network ([www.pattan.k12.pa.us](http://www.pattan.k12.pa.us))

*Additional Resources:*

- Minority Student Achievement Network ([www.msanetwork.org](http://www.msanetwork.org))
- North Central Regional Educational Laboratory ([www.ncrel.org](http://www.ncrel.org))
- United States Department of Education ([www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov))

The Accountability Block Grant applications for improving the academic performance of student subgroups will be reviewed by readers with expertise and experience in improving learning for students who are identified as economically disadvantaged, LEP, racial/ethnic minority and/or having disabilities. Recommendations may be provided to districts regarding their proposed plans.



## **Appendix 7**

### **Accountability Block Grant**

#### *Science and Applied-Knowledge Skills*

#### **Introduction**

The Accountability Block Grant supports districts in establishing, expanding or maintaining programs to assist in the building of strong student science and information technology literacy and skills. Districts must be prepared to provide the following information to apply for Accountability Block Grant funding in this area:

- District demographic information about the students that will be served;
- Research based evidence that the plan will improve the quality of instruction;
- A concise description of the core components of the district's proposed science and applied-knowledge program;
- An overall plan that includes goals, program activities, short and long-term evaluation methods with measurable assessments;
- Evidence of adequate professional development and instructional support; and
- Budget detail information with unit costs for software licenses and hardware purchases.

#### **Framework for Building Strong Student Science and Applied Knowledge Skills (e.g. information technology, computers)**

Education research and student achievement data overwhelmingly point to the need for establishing and improving programs that build students' science and information technology literacy and skills. However, the reality for many schools and communities is that high-quality science and technology programs are often prohibitively expensive. Because of the costs associated with upgrading and expanding science and technology programs, they are often the first to be cut or the last to be funded. And, yet, the state and national economic and community needs for future science and technology experts have never been clearer.

Through the Accountability Block Grant, the Commonwealth commits to supporting local communities and schools in their ability to improve students' science and applied-knowledge skills. **The Accountability Block Grant legislation defines “applied-knowledge” as “information technology, computer equipment, education software and related advanced technologies necessary to increase students’ access to worldwide information and their expertise in this regard.”** Districts may use the Accountability Block Grant to support science and technology classes, as well as science and applied-knowledge initiatives and programs that cut across the curricula and subject areas.

The following provides a framework for this initiative:

- *Aligned, Cohesive Curriculum.* The science and technology programs should be grounded in curricula that are cohesive and aligned with state standards. Learning materials should be supported by research that indicates their affect on engaging students and improving learning. Additionally, technology resources should be integrated across subject areas and in all classrooms as a tool that maximizes instructional productivity and helps students to achieve academic standards.
- *Quality Teaching and Support for Teaching.* Access to quality resources increases the potential for student achievement, but cannot compensate for poor teaching. Districts should ensure that science teachers are highly qualified and commit to supporting their professional growth through ongoing, quality professional development. We also know that too many times technology tools remain unused or underutilized when teachers are not familiar with them or do not know how to integrate the tools into their subject areas and daily lessons. Ongoing, quality professional development is, therefore, crucial in helping all teachers, not just science and technology teachers, to implement technology and maximize its potential for improving student learning.
- *Strong Partnerships.* District partnerships with universities and businesses can be key to improving students' science and applied-knowledge skills. In addition to providing valuable guidance in developing a rigorous curriculum and selecting high quality learning materials and resources, universities and businesses can assist in creating and facilitating various types of student learning experiences in the sciences and technology fields.
- *Parent Engagement.* Technology can be an effective tool for communicating with parents and engaging them in the district and in student learning. Districts should consider the needs of parents, their current access to technology and the types of tools necessary to facilitate the parent-school connection focused on student achievement.
- *Assessment and Program Evaluation.* Each district should have a specific system for evaluating its science and applied-knowledge initiative and its affect on student learning. These results should be measurable and reportable within the term of the program. Information on program effectiveness can be used by districts to make programmatic adjustments and refinements in the future, as well as provide important data to their partners and PDE.

### **Planning and Implementation**

Districts should work with school leaders; science, technology, math and other subject area teachers; science, math and technology experts; and community partners, such as universities and/or science- or technology-based businesses, to identify the specific science and technology programs and improvements needed in their schools. This planning provides valuable feedback from universities and businesses regarding the current school curriculum, builds relationships for

future partnerships in these areas and begins to align the districts' work with the expectations and work of local universities and businesses. This process will also help to ensure that the science and technology learning opportunities are not piecemeal but are coherent and meet the learning needs of students.

The PDE priorities provided below will assist the districts with focusing and implementing the Science & Applied-Knowledge Skills Program:

- 1) Building the capacity to use technology to improve academic achievement and teacher effectiveness;
- 2) Design strategies to increase students and teachers access to technology;
- 3) Build the capacity to identify and promote curricula and teaching strategies that integrate technology and enhance information technology literacy;
- 4) Encourage the development and use of innovative strategies for the delivery of specialized or rigorous courses and curricula through the use of technology;
- 5) Use technology in the most efficient and effective way to help teachers provide individualized instruction for students;
- 6) Coordinate technology-related activities and funding to maximize resources; and
- 7) Provide relevant professional development and on-going support.

### **Support For Program Development**

PDE welcomes requests from districts for support in establishing, expanding or maintaining programs to assist in the building of strong science and applied-knowledge skills (including technology). **All requests and/or questions regarding science and applied-knowledge programs, effective practices in this area, or the Accountability Block Grant application for science and applied-knowledge programs may be directed to:**

Nancy Cheris  
Office of Information and Educational Technology  
Pennsylvania Department of Education  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333  
Phone: (717) 214-8214  
FAX: (717) 783-5420  
E-mail: [ncheris@state.pa.us](mailto:ncheris@state.pa.us)

## **Appendix 8**

### **Accountability Block Grant**

#### *Professional Education*

#### **Introduction**

The Accountability Block Grant supports districts in providing professional education for teachers and school leaders. To apply for Accountability Block Grant funding for professional education, districts must be prepared to provide PDE the following information:

- Identify the student learning needs that the professional development will address, by:
  - a. Citing the specific student achievement data or other school/community data, and
  - b. Describing the need for professional development that is shown by the data.
- Indicate which groups of educators will participate in the activity:
- Describe the proposed professional development activity, including the knowledge and skills that educators will gain:
- Indicate which Professional Development Content Standard(s) they meet:
- Describe the follow-up activities that will ensure successful implementation:
- Provide the name of the professional development provider and whether the provider has been approved by the Department of Education.
- If the provider has not received PDE approval, specify the method that will be used for evaluating the effectiveness of the professional development activity in addressing the student learning needs identified above.

#### **Professional Education Framework**

Education research overwhelmingly points to high-quality professional education as a crucial component for improving teaching and learning. Research often indicates that professional development is a common characteristic across programs deemed effective in improving student learning (e.g., full-day kindergarten, tutoring, extended learning, etc). Yet, too often, districts do not have the financial wherewithal or internal expertise to provide high-quality, continuous professional development to teachers and leaders.

To meet this need, the Commonwealth commits through the Accountability Block Grant to support districts' professional education that improves instruction and student achievement. In particular, the professional education should focus on the core subject areas of math, literacy and science and on the alignment of standards, assessment, curriculum and instruction in those areas. The legislation has identified the following areas of professional education that may be supported with the Accountability Block Grant:

- Training in mathematics, science and literacy-specific curricula and instructional strategies;
- Training in school-wide improvement planning;

- Analysis of student achievement data and student work to identify implications for curriculum design and classroom practice;
- Observing and studying exemplary school and classroom practices;
- Implementing school-wide programs and classroom management strategies designed to improve student conduct;
- Using technology to boost student achievement;
- Conducting transition planning and curriculum alignment across schools and grade levels; or
- Implementing secondary strategies to increase student engagement and personalize learning.

The following information provides a framework for successful professional development:

- *Focus on Student Achievement.* The content of professional education should directly stem from specific student learning needs in the core academic areas of literacy, math and science. Districts should identify these learning needs using multiple assessments, including the PSSA, other standardized tests, and student work resulting from teacher-created lessons. According to the PSSA and NAEP data, low-performing Pennsylvania districts should focus professional development on instructional strategies that meet the critical needs of the low-performing adolescent students in grades 7-12 in math and literacy. Teachers should be trained in:

- Analyzing student data;
- Deconstructing lessons and their resulting student work; and
- Creating lessons that help students learn specific skills that assessments identify as weak or lacking.

Diagnostic assessments of teacher content can be used to identify the content gaps for individual educators system-wide. These diagnostics will help to drive content area training as well as design individual professional learning plans. To support this professional development, administrators and teacher leaders (i.e. coaches) should be trained in facilitating data analysis and looking at student work with teacher teams; implementing policy and organizational changes based on those needs; and leveraging resources and learning supports.

- *Situated in Practice.* Professional development experiences should be situated in educators' daily realities so that they can easily transfer their learning into practice (either classroom practice for teachers or school leadership practice for administrators). Effective professional development systems include on-going aligned, cohesive experiences that reinforce professional learning, such as:
  - *Institutes:* Provide extended time for educators to work with external technical providers and/or district specialists in a specific area to develop new skill sets and deepen instructional and content knowledge base.

Usually, institutes will focus on a particular content area such as math, science or literacy.

- *Coaching and Modeling*: Provides one-on-one or small group support and guidance for educators in implementing professional learning.
- *Study Groups*: Provide opportunities for educators to read and discuss recent education research and literature as it relates to their own professional learning and practice. Provides a theoretical foundation for Institutes, coaching, modeling, walk-throughs and translation of learning into practice.
- *Walk-throughs*: Provide opportunities to observe school and classroom practice and obtain feedback from a variety of observers such as mentors for inductees, other teachers, principals and/or central administrators. Walk-throughs help to reinforce the translation of training into practice.

The above structure can be used for principal leadership development, teacher/coach leadership development, and/or teacher professional development.

- *Creates a Culture of Continuous Learning*. Effective professional development creates an intellectual community of teachers, teacher leaders/coaches, principals and central administrators who grapple with the key challenges to high student achievement. It promotes inquiry, deliberation, problem solving and intense dialogue focused entirely on teacher practice (i.e. lesson plans, lessons) and the result for student learning. It follows effective practice in adult learning and becomes part of what educators in the school “do.”
- *Builds an Infrastructure for Internal Capacity and Growth*. Once a strong professional education system is institutionalized, it effectively focuses the work of all district educators on instruction. In effect, the system distributes instructional leadership across many roles, including classroom teachers; specialists; teacher coaches; assistant principals; principals; central office leaders; etc. The professional development incorporates tenets of high quality leadership so that districts begin to grow leadership at all levels and prepare their own staff for future leadership positions. The professional development delivery system allows for:
  - Learning opportunities that focus solely on the work of a particular position (i.e. principal study groups); and
  - Learning opportunities that bring together educators in various roles (teacher, teacher leader/coach, principal) to facilitate shared learning and distributed leadership.
- *Is Assessed and Evaluated*. Districts should have a system to document and assess the effect of professional education on teacher practice, administrator practice and student achievement. This evaluation is necessary to ensure that a district’s investment in professional education is sound and that their particular efforts are effective. Indicators could include student assessment data, student work, action

research and teacher reflections or case studies. Districts should use this ongoing assessment to inform their professional education model.

Increasing student achievement and achieving the Pennsylvania Academic Standards with a focus on the literacy, mathematics & science assessment anchors will require professional education for all educators that changes practice, addresses organizational goals, and provides sufficient support over time to master new skills. Therefore, professional education plans should strike a balance between content, pedagogy and other skills needed, and should include evidence that they meet the following professional education criteria. Each professional education experience:

- 1) Is related to attainment of the Pennsylvania academic standards and high quality instruction;
- 2) Is planned in response to a need of the school entity and its professional employees, which has been identified for a target audience;
- 3) Has clear, concise written content and skill-based competencies;
- 4) Includes content and instructional methods that are appropriate for the intended competencies to be mastered;
- 5) Is planned and conducted by personnel who have an academic degree or other education experience appropriate to the subject matter being taught;
- 6) Is research-based, data-driven and contributes to measurable increases in student achievement;
- 7) Contributes to building learning communities and continuous improvement;
- 8) Requires that participants demonstrate attainment of the competencies; and
- 9) Is evaluated by the participants.

### **Planning and Implementation**

Districts are encouraged to work with technical providers with vast experience in teacher and leadership development and content expertise to plan and implement their professional development system and work. Districts should also be open to feedback from principals and teachers and include their representatives who have a track record of student achievement and identified expertise in a given area.

## **Support for Program Development**

PDE welcomes requests from districts for support in planning and implementing professional education. **All requests and/or questions regarding professional education, effective practices, or the Accountability Block Grant application for professional education may be directed to:**

**Dolorez Cobb-Jones**  
**Bureau of Teaching and Learning Support**  
**Pennsylvania Department of Education**  
**333 Market Street**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333**  
**Phone: (717) 783-4307**  
**FAX: (717) 772-3621**  
**E-mail: [dcobb-jone@state.pa.us](mailto:dcobb-jone@state.pa.us)**

Districts may also want to refer to the following websites, which provide information on teacher and leadership development:

- National Staff Development Council (<http://www.nsdc.org>)
- Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development (<http://www.ascd.org>)
- Education Trust (<http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust>)
- North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (<http://www.ncrel.org/>)
- North West Regional Educational Laboratory (<http://www.nwrel.org/>)
- PDE Web Site (<http://www.pde.state.pa.us/>)

Readers with experience and expertise in quality professional education that improves teaching and learning will review the Accountability Block Grant applications for professional education. Recommendations may be provided to districts regarding their proposed plans.



## Appendix 9

### Accountability Block Grant

#### *Literacy and Math Coaching*

#### **Introduction**

The Accountability Block Grant supports districts in implementing literacy and math coaching programs to improve math and reading instruction. To apply for Accountability Block Grant funding for literacy and math coaching, districts must be prepared to provide PDE the following information:

- Data on the district, the students to benefit from enhanced instructional practice of teachers, and the literacy and math coaching program to be supported with the Accountability Block Grant;
- A description of the district's literacy and math coaching program that reflects the intent of this grant. **The intent of the grant is to place coaches in schools to work alongside teachers, helping them evaluate their effectiveness and implement evidence-based instructional strategies under the expert guidance of a coach. It is not the job of the coach to work with students. The coach's role is one of job-embedded professional development support for teachers. The only exception is when the coach is teaching a class to model best practices while a teacher observes. The description should clearly explain the typical activity performed by the coaches as they work with teachers to improve instructional practice.**
- A plan that includes goals, program activities and evaluation methods that demonstrate changes in instructional practices resulting from coaching initiative, practices which will eventually impact student achievement.

#### **Literacy and Math Coaching Framework**

Teacher quality is the key element in schools where students are making progress. Coaching has the potential to help districts build instructional capacity that, in turn, improves student achievement. While the function of coaches and coaching can look different in different school systems, coaching programs should reflect these basic tenets:

- *Coaching is a Full-Time Job.* Coaching is an exciting and challenging role for teachers, one that requires a great deal of time in classrooms, training, professional development sessions, and leadership meetings. Based on lessons learned from effective practice and extensive research, a coach should be committed full time to the coaching role. When coaching is part of an educator's role, a number of other things can interfere with time devoted to working with staff individually or in-group professional development. To remain consistent with the goals and purposes of the grant, all coaches should be employed full time in this capacity.
- *Effective Teaching.* Coaches should be selected based on evidence that they have improved their students' academic progress. Indicators of such evidence may

include PSSA scores, district assessments, and classroom assessments. Most often, successful literacy and math coaches are recognized, formally or informally, by their colleagues and administrators as experienced educators with a track record for positively affecting student performance.

- *Content Knowledge, Instructional Expertise and Leadership Abilities.* Districts should select coaches who exhibit deep knowledge of curriculum, expertise in instruction, skill in data-based analysis, understanding of adult learning and ability to lead and mentor teacher colleagues.
- *Culture of Continuous Learning.* Effective coaches develop intellectual communities of teachers who grapple with the key challenges to high student achievement. Through strategies such as teacher study groups and one-on-one work, they facilitate inquiry, deliberation, problem solving and intense dialogue focused entirely on teacher practice (i.e., lesson plans, lessons) and the resulting student learning. An effective coach models the analysis of his/her own practice and how it affects student performance.
- *Relationship with Principal and Teachers.* Effective coaching hinges on the ability to foster communication and working relationships with both teachers and their principal(s). They are able to navigate the sometimes inherent tension between administration and faculty and perform the role of a broker with teachers and administrators. They provide coaching, guidance and critical feedback but do not perform the role of evaluator. Principals and coaches collaborate on decisions regarding instruction, and principals willingly foster coaches' relationships with staff.
- *Intensive, Cohesive Professional Development.* Although the length of time for professional development for coaches may vary, with some models committing a half day per week, others a full day bi-weekly, and even others a full day per week, the intensity should be determined by the common goal of improving students' progress. The professional development for coaches should train them in:
  - Providing teachers with tools and strategies for aligning standards, assessments, curriculum and instruction particularly in the core content areas.
  - Using data to monitor student achievement in all sub-groups and school-wide.
  - Using the Assessment Anchors, Pennsylvania's Academic Standards and other tools to inform and drive effective practices and set high expectations for student learning.
  - Facilitating an intensely intellectual and strategic approach to teaching through a variety of professional development opportunities: i.e., teacher conversations, workshops involving student performance data; analysis of lesson plans and the resulting student work; and review of research and literature.

- Bringing to staff strategies for designing teaching and learning conditions that address the specific learning needs of students.
  - Developing “good consumer” skills for selecting relevant textbooks and other instructional materials and programs.
- *Assessment and Evaluation.* Districts should implement a system to document and assess **the effect of the coaching program on teacher practice and student achievement** to ensure that their investment in coaching is sound and that their particular model is effective. Indicators should include demonstrated changes in instructional practices, student assessment data, and student work. It could include action research, teacher reflections or case studies. Districts should use these evaluation methods to inform and refine the coaching model.

### **Planning and Implementation**

Districts are encouraged to work with technical providers with experience in coaching models and practices. Districts also should be open to feedback from principals and teachers and include representatives who have a track record of improving student achievement and identified expertise in a given area. They should identify coaching models used by other school systems and effective practices in this area to inform their work.

### **Support for Program Development**

PDE welcomes requests from districts for support in planning and implementing literacy and math coaching programs. **All requests and/or questions regarding coaching, effective coaching practices, or the Accountability Block Grant application for literacy and math coaching may be directed to:**

**Dr. Geraldine L. Miller**  
**Bureau of Teaching and Learning Support**  
**Pennsylvania Department of Education**  
**333 Market Street**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333**  
**Phone: (717) 783-6746**  
**FAX: (717) 772-3621**  
**E-mail: [gerimiller@state.pa.us](mailto:gerimiller@state.pa.us)**

The Accountability Block Grant application for literacy and math coaching will be reviewed by readers with experience and expertise in coaching. Recommendations may be provided to districts regarding their proposed plans.

## **Appendix 10**

### **Accountability Block Grant**

#### *Incentives for Certificated Teachers*

#### **Introduction**

The Accountability Block Grant supports districts in providing financial or other incentives to highly qualified tenured teachers to work in the most academically challenged schools in a district or to recruit certificated math, science, language arts and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers to work in the most academically challenged schools in a district. This grant may also support incentives for mentoring or professional development activities of teachers with a record of increasing student achievement when working with teachers in struggling schools. To apply for Accountability Block Grant funding in this program area, districts must be prepared to provide PDE the following information:

- Data on the district, the students to be served and the incentives to be implemented with an Accountability Block Grant;
- A concise description of the districts' needs for teachers in specific subject areas and/or schools and the plan to attract them; and
- A plan that includes goals, program activities and evaluation methods.

#### **Framework for Incentives to Attract Certificated Teachers**

For over 20 years, many school districts, particularly urban and rural school systems, have faced major challenges in recruiting certificated teachers for positions in mathematics, the sciences, language arts and ESL. The issues underlying the challenges are numerous--competition from higher paying fields for graduates with these skills, candidate relocation and/or residency needs, competition for applicants among districts, etc. Too often, limited success in meeting these challenges has resulted in many math, science, language arts and ESL classes being taught by teachers without certification or experienced in those subject areas.

Additionally, education research has found that our most needy schools and "at risk" students are often taught by non-certified teachers and/or the least experienced teachers within a given district. This prevalent teacher assignment scenario compounds the teacher supply and recruitment challenges, exacerbating chronically low student achievement scores, high teaching staff turnover, and the low morale, motivation and school climate issues faced by both teachers and students alike at these institutions.

With the Accountability Block Grant, the Commonwealth seeks to provide districts with the financial support to address these challenges through innovative and effective strategies for attracting either highly-qualified tenured teachers or fully certified new teachers, to work in their most academically challenged schools. These teachers may also be recruited to assist students indirectly through mentoring relationships with existing faculty or leading professional development activities. Our goal is to ensure that every PA classroom has a certified teacher and that all PA students experience quality teaching in all subject areas.

A district that opts to use ABG allocation to encourage highly qualified teachers to work in their struggling schools should create a plan that is comprehensive and provides true incentives for teachers to seek the new placement. For instance, a district's plan could include a structured program that provides teachers with a "transfer bonus" for agreeing to the placement. Additional incentives could include reductions in housing allowances, school loan repayments, payments into 403B retirement plans, or bonuses for achieving National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification.

A district that chooses to provide financial incentives to aid in the recruitment of certificated math, science, language arts and English as a Second Language teachers to work in the most academically challenged schools in a district, could include the following strategies in their comprehensive plan:

- *Innovative Recruitment Strategies.* Innovative recruitment strategies could include marketing and developing networks with universities known for certificating teachers in their area of need (particularly universities with which a district may not have had a former connection); advertising and networking in job markets with a significant number of teacher applicants; and/or upgrading marketing tools and advertising approaches that "sell" the district and its schools.
- *Financial Incentives for New Teachers.* Similar to the incentives offered to highly qualified tenured teachers, incentives for recruiting certificated teachers could include "signing" and completion bonuses; repayment of school loans; reductions in mortgages; housing allowances and/or payment for tests related to certification. Districts could include a schedule that ties financial incentives to remaining at a particular school for an agreed upon number of years.
- *Partnerships.* Both universities and businesses can be key in helping a district recruit certificated teachers for struggling schools, particularly in ensuring that the effort becomes sustainable.
- *Possible Options.* Districts may wish to develop an incentive program for highly qualified, high-performing teachers to be mentors for newly hired teachers in low performing schools. Another way to tap into the highly qualified and high-performing teachers is to provide an incentive to be a leader in professional development activities for staff of low performing, struggling schools.

Although evidence suggests that providing teachers with financial incentives will help districts to recruit and retain high-quality certificated teachers for their most academically challenged schools, they are not a substitute for addressing all the components that support the maintenance and growth quality teaching. PDE recommends that districts implement the above strategies in the context of their strategic plan and address the issues surrounding teaching conditions: quality school leadership; access to professional learning opportunities for teachers; artful use of infrastructure (e.g. strategic scheduling, collaboration on daily lessons); availability of research-based learning materials and programs; and community and parent engagement around students' health and social needs.

## **Planning and Implementation**

Districts should use AYP targets and other data to identify the most academically challenged schools in their district and the specific learning needs of students in those schools. Using this information, districts should work closely with teachers, principals, universities and teacher associations to collaboratively identify, agree upon and implement financial incentives to highly qualified tenured teachers and financial incentives for innovative strategies to aid in the recruitment of certified teachers. Some of the above-mentioned strategies, or other strategies districts may consider, may require policy and contractual changes and/or amendments.

## **Support for Program Development**

PDE welcomes requests from districts for support in implementing this initiative. **All requests and/or questions regarding incentive programs, effective practices in using incentives to recruit internal and external teachers, or the Accountability Block Grant application for this area may be directed to:**

**Sarah Pearce**  
**School Services Office**  
**Pennsylvania Department of Education**  
**333 Market Street**  
**Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333**  
**Phone: (717) 783-6610**  
**FAX: (717) 783-6802**  
**E-mail: [spearce@state.pa.us](mailto:spearce@state.pa.us)**

Districts may also want to refer to the National Teacher Recruitment Clearinghouse ([www.recruitingteachers.org](http://www.recruitingteachers.org)) for further information.

The Accountability Block Grant application for incentives for certificated teachers will be reviewed by readers with experience and expertise in the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers, particularly for struggling schools. Recommendations may be provided to districts regarding their proposed plans.

## **Appendix 11**

### **Accountability Block Grant**

#### *Research-Based Improvement Strategies (District-Specific)*

The Accountability Block Grant allows districts to implement improvement strategies that their Board of School Directors deems to be essential to achieving or maintaining academic performance targets.

Research and evidence-based strategies are supported by randomized controlled third-party trials, and are studies that randomly assign individuals to an intervention group or to a control group, in order to measure the effects of the intervention. Districts choosing Option #11 must provide documents, which include the peer-reviewed evidence of the research-based or evidence-based strategy. Peer review means that a third party (or parties) researched the program or initiative.

**Please consider the following questions before proceeding:**

- Is your proposed strategy supported by evidence/research-based work?
- Does your proposed research-based strategy provide outside, control-based experimental studies to support its delivery of increased student performance?

**Important:** If the answer to either of these questions is “no,” it is highly recommended that you consider one of the other ten programs under the Accountability block Grant for your district.

**NOTE:** If you were already approved in 2005-06 for your district research-based strategy, and you wish to continue in 2006-07, you will also need to respond to these questions. In addition, if you were previously approved in 2005-06, you may choose to provide to the Department *alternative evidence* of success through data on student achievement. These data should include: the strategies and activities that the district used to implement this program; performance-based measures that were used to evaluate the program (e.g., student results); and any other evidence that supports the success the district believed that it attained during the 2005-06 year. If these data show strong support for your program, we will consider your application, and you will be notified.

The following questions will help provide a framework of your proposed research-based strategy so that the Department can make determinations on whether to approve or disapprove your 2006-07 proposed Accountability Block Grant application:

### **Addressing Concerns**

- 1) What data did you review to identify specific student achievement needs that will be addressed with your intervention?**
- 2) How does the intervention align with the specific needs identified in the data?**
- 3) What steps have you taken to determine the factors that may be influencing the needs you have identified?**

## **Evidence of Effectiveness**

- 1) What research can you cite that demonstrates the effectiveness of this intervention on the identified need?**
- 2) How does the research cited align with NCLB requirements for scientifically-based research?**
- 3) How well does the research cited align with the demographics of the population you intend to serve with this intervention?**

## **Professional Development and Coaching**

- 1) How will you prepare staff to implement the intervention?**
- 2) What provisions have you planned for both initial and ongoing professional development?**
- 3) What data will you collect to insure the intervention is being correctly implemented?**

## **Program Specificity**

- 1) How will you deploy resources so that all personnel associated with this intervention adhere to its tenets?**
- 2) Who will be responsible for insuring implementation that assures a high degree of fidelity?**
- 3) What role will teachers, principals, support staff, parents, students and administrators have in implementing this intervention to maximize student results?**

Once the Department receives the districts' submitted eGrants applications online for this option, it will review the above information before making a determination. If the districts' research-based strategy is approved by the Department, you will be notified no later than **May 1**. Once the district has been contacted with the approval to proceed, there may be additional information or documentation requested at that time. The plan must detail how the proposed program or intervention: 1) meets the documented needs of students and communities; 2) proposes to increase students' academic achievement; and 3) is supported by research and/or proven, evidence-based practice.

The rubric below is provided to help the district understand the specific areas that will be measured by the Department, and how points will be awarded. Scores below 16 will not be considered for approval by the Secretary of Education.



## Intervention Selection Rubric

<b>Trait</b>	<b>5 Points</b>	<b>3 Points</b>	<b>1 Point</b>
<b>Addresses Concerns</b>	The intervention directly addresses the target and root causes and aligns with successful programs currently in place.	The intervention addresses the target and some of the root causes and aligns (with only minor modifications) with successful programs currently in place.	The intervention addresses the same content area as the area of concern but does not directly address targets and root causes.
<b>Evidence of Effectiveness</b>	The intervention has evidence of effectiveness in controlled studies.	The intervention, as a part of a larger program, has evidence of effectiveness in controlled studies.	The intervention is based on research, but no controlled studies.
<b>Professional Development And Coaching</b>	The PD included with the intervention provides initial training along with ongoing coaching and follow-up. <b>Please see definitions below.</b>	The PD provided with the intervention provides initial training with limited follow-up. <b>Please see definitions below.</b>	The PD provided with the intervention provides initial training. Define initial.
<b>Program Specificity</b>	Sufficient detailed support is provided so teachers can implement the program with a high level of fidelity.	Some detailed support is provided so teachers can implement the program with some fidelity.	Little detailed support is provided so implementation of the program with fidelity is unlikely.
<b>Other:</b>			

### Definitions:

**“Initial training”** refers to the introduction of information to relevant staff (based on their readiness);

**“On-going”** refers to sustaining the professional development activities from differentiated starting points discerned from the “initial training” towards the end goals of that particular professional development.

**“Limited follow-up”** means that the opportunities are less individualized, and provided only periodically.

Applicants must also address each section of the following areas through the eGrant system.

1. *Brief Overview.* Provide a brief overview of the planned intervention strategy.
2. *Needs Assessment.* Provide an assessment, including the needs and assets/strengths, of the district’s students and community. This section should include demographics of the community; student achievement data; and details of the current educational opportunities and services available to students. The section should also provide specific data that establishes the need for the particular program/intervention that the district seeks to implement with an Accountability Block Grant, as well as a description of the ability of the district to implement the program/intervention successfully.
3. *Program Plan and Evidence/Research-based Information.* Describe the strategies and activities that the district seeks to implement with an Accountability Block Grant. Provide:
  - a. A rationale for the intervention/program based on the needs assessment; and
  - b. The research and evidence that indicates its potential for success in this particular district and the students to be served. Provide specific research citations to support this section or specific and traceable results from other school systems.
4. *Measurable Goals and Objectives.* Provide measurable goals and objectives for the proposed program. The goals and objectives should cover both program implementation and outcomes, particularly achievement results, for students.
5. *Management Plan.* Describe the system/structure for how the program/intervention will be implemented, include a timeline; description of communication strategies with various partners; and plan for continuous improvement. Make sure to include information on the following:
  - a. Role, responsibilities and time commitment of key district personnel and external partners in the project.
  - b. Comprehensive plan that measures the district’s progress against the program goals and objectives for implementation and student outcomes, particularly student achievement results.
6. *Results/Performance Data.* What specific results have been achieved with this ABG program if it has been previously implemented.