



SENIOR DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION – P-16
Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education
Office of Higher Education

August 3, 2009

To: Presidents/Chief Executive Officers of Institutions of Higher Education
District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public Schools
Superintendents of State-Operated and State-Supported Schools
Directors of Charter Schools
New York State United Teachers
New York Council of School Superintendents (NYSCOSS)
New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA)
School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS)
Big 5 Conference
Other Partners

From: Johanna Duncan-Poitier

Subject: Grant for Smart Scholars Early College High Schools

I am pleased to announce an important new funding opportunity available through the New York State Education Department* to support the transformation of traditional high school and college models in New York State. Six million dollars (\$6,000,000) is available to establish a network of early college high schools throughout New York State. This Smart Scholars Early College High School (ECHS) Program seeks to support students who traditionally attend college at disproportionately low rates, succeed in high school and college.

This program targets grants to partnerships consisting of institutions of higher education and public schools (especially those serving students in high need/very high need schools), charter schools, and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). The goal is to systemically create early college high school partnerships through which students will have an opportunity to take an accelerated program of study to complete a high school diploma while earning college credits. This exciting initiative will yield a significant return on investment because of its potential benefits including:

- increasing high school and college graduation rates;
- creating more opportunities for well-paying jobs;
- reducing student tuition costs due to compressed time to complete a college degree; and ultimately
- lessening State costs.

* Grants will be awarded through the Regents Research Fund: The University of the State of New York

The ECHS program is aligned with the Board of Regents over-arching goal to close the performance gap for all students in P-16 and improve college readiness.

Eligibility

The following types of institutions are eligible to submit a response to a Request for Proposal (RFP) to create an ECHS program:

- all public high schools (especially high need/very high need schools), charter schools, BOCES; and
- all New York State colleges and universities.

Community-based organizations are encouraged to engage in support of the ECHS partnerships, but they cannot be an applicant. The participating community-based organization must have 501(c) 3 status.

While priority will be given to proposals with a systemic approach to establishing new early college high schools, existing early college high schools are eligible to respond to the RFP. However, if funds are made available to an existing program, the investment must result in a new or expanded level of service that includes developing demonstration sites with a design for sustained longevity; creating and communicating best practices; or increasing the number of students served.

Funding

We anticipate \$12,000,000 will be available over a four-year period for the ECHS initiative in two distinct \$6,000,000 increments, through individual Requests for Proposal. A typical award may range from \$300,000 to \$500,000, contingent on the number of successful applicants. About 23 Smart Scholars Early College High School partnerships will be established for two cohorts of partnerships. Each funded partnership is required to work with a State-identified intermediary organization, with demonstrated experience in ECHS development and coordination, which will provide technical assistance to the partnerships as well as administrative services to the University of the State of New York.

Timeline

The first RFP includes the \$6,000,000 in funding and corresponds to the first cohort of early college high school students. Approximately 11 contracts will result from this RFP, with an expected start date of December 1, 2009 for a planning phase, and will enroll the first cohort of students in September 2010. The RFP is located at <http://emsc.nysed.gov/smartscholars.html>.

The second RFP is contingent on an appropriation from the Legislature in the 2010-2011 New York State budget. If funded, the second cohort of approximately 12 partnerships (12 contracts), will begin its planning phase in September of 2010 and will enroll the second cohort of students in September 2011.

Important Dates to Remember

- Bidders Conference by Webinar is scheduled for August 13, 2009
- Proposals must be postmarked by October 1, 2009
- Applicants will be informed by November 1, 2009

First Round:

- Partnership Cohort 1 Start Dates:
 - Planning Period: December 1, 2009
 - Student Entry: September 1, 2010

Second Round:

- Partnership Cohort 2 Start Dates:
 - Planning Period: September 1, 2010
 - Student Entry: September 1, 2011(A separate RFP will be issued for the Partnership Cohort 2).

Bidders Conference by Webinar

The Bidders Conference will be conducted as a Webinar and is scheduled for Thursday, August 13, 2009, from 10:00 AM until 12:00 PM. Each computer terminal represents a separate registration so we encourage teams to participate in the Webinar using a single computer terminal. To reserve a spot please send an e-mail to: SMARTSCHOLARSRFP@mail.nysed.gov. Subject: "Bidders Webinar Reservation." After we receive your reservation request, we will provide you with the technical information needed to participate in the Webinar. The Webinar will be recorded and posted on our web site for future access.

Next Steps

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Gloria Bartowski at (518) 474-1551 or via E-mail to gbartows@mail.nysed.gov. Answers will be posted to <http://emsc.nysed.gov/smartscholars.html>.

This program offers us an exciting opportunity to put into practice the promise of a truly connected P-16 system of education that benefits students and the P-12 and higher education communities. I hope you will consider participating.

cc: Joseph P. Frey