**P-TECH Questions**
**June 5, 2013**


**Eligible Applicants/Partnerships:**

1. Must the application include a Focus District? Is this required or preferred? Please confirm that a consortium of districts which does NOT include a focus school would NOT be eligible to apply?

   *A. **To clarify our response during the webinar,*** the inclusion of a Focus District is preferred, not required. Applications that do not contain a Focus District as partner ***will*** be eligible. However, they will not receive the 10 priority points.

2. We are looking at using our AS degree in Engineering Science to build our grant around. Has there been clarification as to the use of A.S. degree vs. A.A.S. degree?

   A. Yes. The A.S. degree can be an acceptable degree if it meets the hiring requirements for the targeted position(s) according to the business partners.

3. We are currently a PK-8 school district, would we be eligible to apply for this grant or would we need to collaborate with a 9-12 school in order to apply?

   A. This program is intended to serve students in grade 9, so a PK-8 district would not be eligible to apply.

4. Are proprietary (private, for-profit) colleges eligible to receive a grant if they cooperate with a high school?

   A. Only nonprofit colleges are eligible to partner with an applicant school district to receive grants under this program.

5. Will you consider having more than one Grade 9-14 school in an economic region? The RFP states that one grant will be awarded per region. If you have regions with diverse industry base with more than one grant being submitted and receiving the same point value, will you consider awarding more than one grant to the region?

   A. The intent is to award one grant per region. As noted in the RFP, however, funds will be awarded to the highest scoring partnership that meets the minimum scoring thresholds in each region. Should any unallocated statewide funds remain, the partnership with the next highest score in the state will receive an award.

6. Does the Business Partner have to fall inside the defined region? In other words, can a school, BOCES, and higher education educational institutions all in the same region partner with an employer in a neighboring region?

A. No, the business partner does not have to fall inside the defined region. A school and higher education partner in one region can partner with an employer/business partner in a neighboring region. The Business Partner does not have to be in the same region, but the business partner must serve that region.

7. Can one or a group of high schools be the K-12 partner rather than a school district?

A. The school district must be the fiscal agent and K-12 partner for the grant. However, the program can operate out of one or a group of high schools within the district. It does not need to be a district-wide program.

8) Does the grant request have to originate from the high school or can it come from the college that will team up with the high school(s).

A. A school district must serve as lead applicant/fiscal agent and must submit and sign the application. However, the partnership members may cooperate on developing and drafting the application, and one of the other partners may serve as the lead implementation entity.

9) Can you have multiple business partners and colleges or just one?

A. There can be multiple business partners and colleges.

10) Can Private, Non-Profit Research Institutions with no Undergraduate degrees receive funding?

A. Private, non-profit research institutions with no undergraduate degrees can participate in the program, but an Associates-degree granting institution must be a member of the partnership, since the Associates degree is a key component of the program.

11) Are the students enrolled in the program limited to only the lead applicant K-12 school students or can students from other districts participate though BOCES if BOCES is also a partner?

A. No, it is not limited to students from the lead fiscal agent district. Students from other districts can participate through a partner BOCES, although the application or MOU should detail how the student places will be allocated between students from school district participants and the BOCES, as well has how disadvantaged students will be recruited for the program.

12) If a school district is the lead applicant may a BOCES be the lead implementation entity?

A. Yes. The local school district must serve as lead applicant/fiscal agent and must submit and sign the application. However, the partnership members may cooperate on developing and drafting the application, and one of the other partners may serve as the lead implementation entity.

13) Can a local economic development entity be a business partner?

A. Yes, as long as the business partner(s) can meet all requirements, including making participating students first in line for private-sector jobs after successful program completion.

14) Can two high schools from different districts but in the same region collaborate together in applying for the grant and sharing the budget as long as one school is designated as the lead financial district?

A. Yes.

15) Can a BOCES serve as applicant/fiscal agent on behalf of a consortium of school districts?

A No. A local school district must be the fiscal agent. However the BOCES can serve as the lead implementation partner. The local school district must serve as lead applicant/fiscal agent and must submit and sign the application. However, the partnership members may cooperate on developing and drafting the application, and one of the other partners may serve as the lead implementation entity.

16) Private colleges cannot be a partner?

A. Private not-for-profit colleges can be partners. For-profit institutions are not eligible.

17) Can the first year of the NYS Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools be designated to planning, development, and design?

A. Yes, that is the intent.

18) Is there a place or role for community partners? If so, can they be included as part of the grant application?

A. Yes. They can be included as part of the application. Partnerships must have all three required partners on the application as well.

19) Can an application include high schools from more than one region?

A. Yes.

20) Can a school district partner work with a BOCES when the school district is currently not able to access services from a BOCES.

A. Yes. The MOU would have to reflect this arrangement.

21) Can a college be part of multiple grant applications?

A. Yes. Colleges should note that each application would have to stand on its own and would be evaluated separately.

**Other Application Issues:**

1)  Please clarify and delineate specific roles for the lead fiscal agent and the lead implementation entity.

    A.  The *lead fiscal agent* receives and administers funds for the program and will be responsible for reporting fiscal data, such as annual expenditure amounts, to the State Education Department.

    The *lead implementation entity*, which does not have to be the school district, is the entity which will take responsibility for the day to day operation of the program, coordination of activities, and performance reporting and which serves as the primary programmatic contact between the partnership and the State Education Department.

2)  Could a sunsetting Smart Scholars program be considered for funding?

    A.  Yes.

3)  Is the grant language written based on the current model of the NYC P-TECH program in Brooklyn?

    A.  Applicants should focus on the language of the current application.

4)  What number of Focus districts must be included to obtain the maximum 10 points?

    A.  One.

5)  Page 9 of the RFP references an application worksheet titled Program/Plan of Study but that worksheet doesn't appear to be part of the RFP packet. Could you let us know where to find it?

    A.  This reference was erroneous.  Please disregard it.  Partnerships that receive awards will develop the Program/Plan of Study in the first year of the program.  It is not necessary to develop the full curriculum at this time.

6) Is the abstract part of the 10-page narrative limit? Is the abstract limited to one page?

    A.  No, the abstract is not part of the 10-page limit.  Yes, the length of the abstract must be one page or less.

7)  Can a BOCES submit a grant application on behalf of the consortium (BOCES would be the LEA)?  We would like to submit a grant for the region and understand that one district would be the fiscal agent.

    A.  A school district must serve as the lead fiscal agent.  However the partners may cooperate in developing the application and one of the non-school district partners may serve as lead implementation entity.

8) Is a letter of interest/intent requested?  In the RFP there was no mention of a letter of intent or interest.  However in a separate mailing to superintendents there was a request to provide such a letter but no date or address was given?

A letter is requested, but not required.  It may be sent to the following address:

> NYS Education Department
> Attn:  NYS P-TECH GRANT
> Grants Management
> 89 Washington Avenue
> Room 464 EBA
> Albany, NY 12234

9) I have a question about the 2013-20 NYS Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools grant.   Does the grant request have to originate from the high school or can it come from the college that will team up with the high school(s)?

   A. The school district must be the lead fiscal entity.  However, all members of the partnership can cooperate to develop the application and the program.  As described in the application, any one of the members can be deemed lead implementation entity.

10) The Program Announcement referenced that a letter of interest be signed by the CEO on behalf of the participating business.  For the proposal submission, can a ranking NY executive sign on behalf of the business partner?

   A. Yes, an executive that has the authority to commit the business partner to the obligations of the partnership may sign on behalf of the participating business.

11)  Can a BOCES submit a grant application on behalf of the consortium (BOCES would be the LEA)?   We would like to submit a grant for the region and understand that one district would be the fiscal agent.

   A. The local school district must serve as lead applicant/fiscal agent and must submit and sign the application.  BOCES cannot serve as the lead applicant/fiscal agent.  However, the partnership members may cooperate on developing and drafting the application, and one of the other partners may serve as the lead implementation entity.

12) Can one or a group of high schools be the K-12 partner rather than a school district?

   A. A school district must be the lead applicant, but a group of school districts may form a partnership for the P-TECH program.

13) If there are not enough applications received to make awards in all 10 regions, would NYSED consider extending the grant submission deadline or re-issuing the RFP?

    A. That is not contemplated at this time.

14) Would a grant application be enhanced if the grant incorporates priorities or helps to give job training/employment identified by the Regional Economic Development Council in which the school district is located?

    A. Applicants should refer to the scoring rubrics provided.

15) What does the expectation that students be 'first in line' for jobs from the partner industry/businesses mean? Does this require business partners to interview the students? Does it require them to hire the students?

    A. The program is designed to put students on a path to successful employment. We understand that students cannot be "guaranteed" jobs following graduation years in advance; therefore, business partners are expected to demonstrate how they will ensure that students will be first in line for available jobs. The application should describe the business partner's commitment with respect to the 'first in line' component of the program. This will be evaluated as part of the scoring rubric (see page 19 of application).

16) Page 8 of the RFP states that programming must target "primarily" at-risk and other under-served students. Does NYSED have a percentage in mind of students served, who should be from those categories?

    A. No, there is no particular percentage. The application will be evaluated based on the proposals submitted.

17) Page 16 of the RFP notes that NYSED will be checking annual data to ensure that "adequate levels" of students have been retained. Does NYSED have a percentage in mind, of students that should be retained from year to year?

    A. No, there is no particular percentage. The application will be evaluated based on the proposals submitted.

18) The application states that "applicants can determine the annual allocations of awarded funds throughout the period of the grant as they deem appropriate." Does this mean that applicants can decide how a total award of $2.8 million will be spent over a seven-year period? Is there an annual allocation that applicants must plan to spend each year?

    A. We note that the $2.8 million to which you refer is an approximate amount. The actual grant awarded will depend on the local program budget. Yes, applicants can decide how their award amounts will be spent over the seven year period. There is no minimum annual spending amount. Grants will be evaluated on the cost-effectiveness of the proposed program.

19) Page 4 of the RFP states that all school district applicants "must demonstrate that they have fully implemented new standards and procedures for conducting annual professional performance reviews…" How do you want districts to demonstrate this? (Are you requiring any sort of documentation?)

A. Districts may submit documentation, including a letter signed by the superintendent and board of education president certifying that the district has an approved APPR plan and that such plan is being implemented.

**Fiscal Issues:**

1) Who covers the cost of college tuition?  Is the post-secondary partner expected to absorb the full cost of college courses towards the AAS degree?

A. College tuition costs are an eligible budget item under the grant application.  As part of the partnerships, higher education partners are expected to offer tuition at rates that cover the actual marginal cost of providing services (which may be lower than the 'list price' for tuition.)  The higher education partner is not expected to cover the entire cost of tuition.  This will be evaluated as part of the cost-effectiveness of the program.

2) Is the grant intended to cover the entire cost of the program?  What is the required financial contribution from the school district/BOCES?

A. The grant is designed to cover marginal additional costs of offering the NYS P-TECH program, above and beyond the standard operating costs that would be associated with educating participating students in a traditional high school.   Specific financial contributions from partners are not mandatory.

3) Will participating students be able to apply for TAP?

A. Current statute does not permit this.

4) Can the proposal build upon an existing CTE or early college high school program?

A. Yes, although the RFP states that the proposal may not supplant other funding currently provided.

5) You have already answered that TAP cannot be used by high school students at this time. Do you have any information on the status of this opportunity for high school students within the state, since this has been on the table?

A. We have no information on that at this time.

6) Can participating students access Pell Grant funds to support their participation? Is that allowable?

A. No.

7) I see the grant excludes expenses for "give-away" items such as pens and t-shirts. Does it allow for advertising expenses for newspaper, radio, television, brochures, etc.?

A. No.

8) Can funding be used for scholarships so that the A.A.S. degree can be earned at no cost? Do the students have to have total tuition paid by district and or partners?

A. College tuition is an allowable use of the grant funds. The Associates degree must be available at no cost to the students.

9) Can the grant cover transportation for students to be brought to and from the college campus?

A. Yes.

10) Is there a cap on annual budget allocations over the 7 year period?

A. Your budget is not capped for any particular year, but we have indicated the approximate total available grant amounts in the application. Those amounts, plus the local contributions from the partnership members, will tend to limit the amount that can be supported under the budget.

11) Can grant money be carried over from year?

A. Yes. Expenses will likely vary from year to year, so carrying over funds is permitted.

12) Although the grant is targeted to grades 9-14, there is mention of identifying students as early as grade 6 for intensive services. Can grant funds be used to provide services to grades 6-8?

A. No. Grant funds should be used to provide services to students in grades 9-14.

13) Worker's compensation and disability benefits documentation are not required? (The checklist on page 32 says they are "encouraged.")

A. Workers' Compensation & Disability Benefits documentation is not required when the application is submitted but is required for all awarded programs. Submission of these documents is encouraged with the application to help ensure prompt finalization of the actual grant award.

14) Page 12 of the RFP outlines the M/WBE participation goals. When would M/WBE restrictions apply?

A. The MWBE goals are met in one of three ways: fully compliant, partial waiver request or full waiver request. In other than full compliance Good Faith Effort must be documented as outlined on pages 12 and 13 of the RFP. The MWBE coordinator, Joan Ramsey, is

available to assist applicants in meeting the MWBE goals. She may be reached at jramsey@mail.nysed.gov.

15) Which of the budget categories are affected by the MWBE requirement? That is, salaries, benefits, travel, busing, curriculum development, etc.

  A.  Requested grant funds, not including salaries and benefits, are included in the calculation of the MWBE participation percentage. Categories included in the participation goal are any and all services, materials or supplies purchased from New York State certified minority and women-owned firms.

16) Is the goal for a program to become self-sustaining through member contributions or is there funding anticipated after the 7 year time frame has expired?

  A.  While additional funding may become available at some point in the future, availability of these funds cannot be guaranteed.  As a result, partnerships should seek to develop programs that are sustainable based upon local resources after the 7 year time frame has expired.

17) Can this grant fund meals to students who may need to come to school before 8:00 am for extra periods or as a part of any extended school day?

  A. No.

18)  Can a district pay for clothes to comply with a dress code associated with the P-Tech program?

  A. No.

19) Can a district retroactively fund programs put in place after the grant is approved?  (a summer program for middle school students)

  A.  No.

20) Can the grant fund summer school?

  A.  Yes, the grant will fund summer school, but only for students in grades 9-14.

21) Does the State have a preference for students accruing credits through College in the High School programs (HS teachers vetted to teach college courses) versus "real" college classes (taught by college faculty)? There is a significant difference in cost for each.

  A.  No preference, as long as the credit awarded for such courses fully counts as credit earned towards the applicable degree by the college/university.

22) Is sustainability of the program expected beyond the 7-year period?

  A.  Yes.

23) Other than TAP – are there other forms of financial aid that participating students are NOT eligible for?

A. The partnership should develop its own sustainability plan for the program.

24) Will you place any cap on the amount of tuition per course, and fees that can be charged by the post-secondary institution? $200 plus tuition and fees per course per student will rapidly absorb all funding from the grant.

A. No, there is no cap on the amount of tuition per course. Applications will be evaluated based on the cost-effectiveness of the approved program.

25) In what case would the A-133 be required for the P-TECH application?

A. Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133 states that entities that expend $500,000 or more in a year in Federal funds are required to have an A-133 audit. It is highly likely that any awards under this program will be subject to A-133 requirements. A-133 audits do not need to be submitted as part of P-TECH application.

26) You indicated that there is an expectation that there be an intake of new students each year. However, if the funding is for 7 years, how are the remaining years paid for? That is, if we take in a 9$^{th}$ grader in the 3$^{rd}$ year of the grant, how are the remaining 2 years of education going to be covered?

A. See the answer to #16 in 'Fiscal Issues' section.

27) Also, can you repeat the answer regarding the cohorts? What will happen to those students who are enrolled in the program as 9th graders during the 3rd year of funding? Does the partnership need to show sustained funding from other sources for those students who are still enrolled after the grant period ends in 2020?

A. See the answer to #16 in 'Fiscal Issues' section.

**Best Practices in Program Design:**

1)  Will there be a 'resource bank' where existing Early College High School programs that have been successful can share what they have learned.

    A.  One of the hopes of this program is that we share best practices.  That is one of the motivations for performance monitoring.

2)  Would the retention rates of Upward Bound make a good target for P-TECH?

    A.  Your application should explain why you use any specific project goals or benchmarks that you have selected.

3)  How long has the existing P-TECH program been operational?  What percentage of students that have started the program has, either, obtained an associate's degree or are on track to obtain their associates degree within 4 years?

    A. Two years.  Since it is early in the program, it is unlikely that any students have completed the requirements for the college degree.  Further questions about that program should be directed to that program.

4)  If students drop out of the program, can they be replaced by other students?

    A.  Because of the specialized nature of the program, it is unlikely that students who enter midway through the program would be able to meet the requirements in a timely manner, so it replacing students is not recommended.

5)  What is the definition of a "disadvantaged" student?

    A.  The application document specifies the intended student participants as students who:

        - Have been identified as academically at-risk for not successfully completing high school or not enrolling in or succeeding in college; or
        - Belong to populations that have historically not had access to or success in higher education.

6) Is the program intended to require the construction/creation of a new school, or the transformation of an entire school? Or is a school within a school an acceptable model. If yes, are there criteria (e.g. minimum staffing, program offerings, etc.) to qualify as a "school within a school"?

    A. The program is not intended to require the construction of a new school. Applicants may transform an entire school or they may form a school within a school . The program described must meet all the requirements of the P-TECH program, as well as the requirements for both the Regents diploma and the A.A.S. degree. Specific details of the program will be evaluated as part of the application review.

7) Is the program intended to serve a defined cohort of students? Is there a minimum number of students/grade?

    A. Yes. Each year a new cohort is admitted and defined. (Accountability measures assume it) However, there is no minimum number of students to be served in each cohort. The number of students intended to be served will be considered as part of the program design component.

8) Is there a minimum number of students/grade?

    A. There is no minimum number of students to be served in each cohort. The number of students intended to be served will be considered as part of the program design component. However, each year a new cohort is admitted and defined. (Accountability measures, such as retention metrics, assume a fixed cohort size.)

9) Does High School Project Lead the Way curriculum qualify as an evidence-based curriculum according to your grant requirements if it aligns with the needs of the Business Partner(s)?

    A. Partnerships are encouraged to focus on developing a program that meets the requirements described in the grant application, including meeting the requirements for the Regents diploma, the Associate's degree and employment in a high-demand field STEM field.

10) We are a smaller rural district with approximately 65 students per grade level. We have 10 to 15 students per grade level that I would see as benefitting tremendously from a qualifying program. Would our size limit our chance to be granted an award?

    A. We will focus on the details of the proposed program in evaluating the program. Smaller districts are encouraged to consider collaborations with other districts to develop programs.

11) If the program can be structured for a student to receive a high school degree and the A.A.S. in a five-year term, is that still an acceptable format? Does the program have to run the entire 6-years?

A. Yes, the partnership can develop a program that runs for five years, not six, as long as it meets the goals of the P-TECH initiative.

12) Would you consider development of health curriculum/modules part of STEM since Science/Math and technology are all part of health?

A. Yes. Health careers are considered part of STEM.

13) Is the grant intended to fund just the one "6-year" cohort or is it to be structured to identify a new cohort class each year of the 6-year grant life?

A. Our intention is that there would be an intake of new students in each year.

14) Can you direct me to a list (of focus districts) please?

A. When they are released, the most recent list of focus districts will be accessible through links on the following page: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/documents/OverallAccountabilityMemo042513 Final.pdf

15) If a high tech business is not local to the school, can the grant support room, board and transportation for an extended summer or other intermittent internship possibility versus a more traditional weekly internship?

A. Yes

16) We are considering using the 9$^{th}$ grade year for college and STEM exploration activities and curricula with all 9$^{th}$ graders, using it as an opportunity to identify our target audience and to have outreach to a larger group of students. This would mean not forming the P-Tech cohort until 10$^{th}$ grade. Is this permissible under the grant?

A. No

17) The RFP has a strong focus on 'performance monitoring' as the approach to the completion of required reports. Will inclusion of 'program evaluation' which can provide other information to the partners to help improve the program than performance monitoring does and will help develop capacity and sustainability hurt an application?

A. Program evaluation would be unlikely to hurt an application. We want applicants to have goals and demonstrate that they are meeting the targets.

18) Can a program also offer certificate program along with or addition to an AAS program?

A. Students must be able to earn an Associate's degree as part of the P-TECH program. This is a minimum criterion. However, the program can also award a certificate in addition to the Associates degree.

19) Can a district groom the current 8th grade cohort to be eligible to join the initial cohort (next year's 8th grade) with appropriate scheduling in the planning year?

A. Preparing a group of students to undertake rigorous coursework beginning in the first year would be reasonable. However, districts should ensure that their outreach and selection process for the rigorous preparation targets and includes disadvantaged students. Districts should also keep in mind that grant funds are intended to be used for services provided in grades 9-14, so the program for 8th grade students would need to be supported through local resources.

20) Can a program fund a summer program for middle school students in an effort to give students the tools required for the rigor of a 9-14 plan?

A. No

21) Can a district begin a cohort in year one of the grant (adjust for changes that come up in planning year)?

A. Yes. If a district and its partners have done sufficient planning, this could be an option. In general, the first year is intended as a planning and training year for the new program.

22) Can a district phase in additional districts to increase the size of the cohort as years progress?

A. Yes, but funding will be based upon the original budget and enrollment plan submitted as part of the application. There is no guarantee of additional funding.

23) Can this grant fund translators to serve ESL students?

A. Yes.

24) Can a district require drug testing as a part of a respective safety program?

A. We recommend that districts review this with local counsel.

25) Can a district plan to add additional degree paths as it develops?

A. A district can add additional degree paths, in STEM fields, as the program develops. However, the grant application will be evaluated based upon the proposed program as agreed to by the partners.

26) Can a district impose a dress code as a requirement for participation in this program?

A. This is a local decision.

27) To be clear, Year 1 of the grant period is a planning/implementation year and this is the year that should be reflected in the FS-10 and Grant Funds Summary Sheet? Year 2 is the first year with students?

A. Yes.

28) Is there a total number of students NYSED would like to see served by this program when it begins in Year 2 of the grant period? When it is fully implemented in Year 7 of the grant period?

A. There is no specific number of students to be served, either in the first year or at full implementation. Programs will be evaluated based upon the cost-effectiveness of the approved program.

29) Is there a developed P-TECH curriculum? If not, is the partnership required to develop such a curriculum?

A. No, there is no developed P-TECH curriculum. Partnerships will develop their curricula, consistent with Regents requirements, the Associates degree program requirements and the specific skills identified by the business partner.

30) Is it required that students are enrolled only in grade 9 and then participate for at least 2 years while enrolled in college or can students be enrolled in any grades 9-12 and then for the remaining years in college. For example, if a student is enrolled in grade 11 can they be supported for 3 years in college?

A. It is the intent of the program that students will enter the P-TECH program in $9^{th}$ grade.

31) Can funds be used for pre service in 6th through 8?

A. No. This program is intended for students in grades 9-14.

32) Is the expectation that the first cohort of students to enter the program will be in ninth grade?

A. Yes

33) Do you foresee that the last 2 years of the six year cycle will take place on site within the school district?   Will college professors be on site teaching the courses for the completion of the AAS degree?   Currently we have high school faculty teaching courses for college credit.  How would this six year model look?

A. This is a matter of local policy.

34) Would it be permissible for students in the 9-12 school to take online classes at the secondary institution concurrently with their regular 9-12 studies?

A. This would be a local decision.

35)   Clarification, is it correct that the first year of implementation of the P-TECH program should only include students in the 9th grade?

A. Yes.

36) What does the expectation that students be 'first in line' for jobs from the partner industry/businesses mean? Does this require business partners to interview the students? Does it require them to hire the students?

A. This is a local decision. The application should describe the business partner's commitment with respect to the 'first in line' component of the program. This will be evaluated as part of the scoring rubric (see page 19 of application).

37) Is the traditional ECHS model part of the program (other than facility based which you have already answered)?

A. While there are similarities to ECHS, this is a new program. Please refer to the application and scoring rubric.

38) The grant requires the business to need highly skilled employees. Can you define or provide more information on highly skilled employees? Would middle level skills qualify?

A. This grant seeks to provide students with the opportunity to develop in-demand skills that require a combination of Associates degree level academic preparation, as well as experience and training in STEM fields and skills that employers require. Some might define these as middle level skills. It should be noted that the evaluation of the grant application will consider whether the 'narrative contains a description of work-based learning activities which are aligned with the curriculum goals and regional employment needs identified.' (see page 19 of application)