BACKGROUND INFORMATION: THE PARTNERSHIP PROJECT (TPP)

In October 2012, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) was awarded a five-year State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) entitled The Partnership Project (TPP).

The overarching goal of TPP is to expand the Commonwealth’s professional development system by:


2. creating model sites that demonstrate the systemic implementation of evidence-based practices within a tiered system of support to:
   a. provide opportunities for educators to apply their newly acquired skills and knowledge with fidelity to classrooms, schools and districts; and
   b. provide opportunities for district and school level administrators, educators and families from across the Commonwealth to observe the implementation of these practices.

In order to meet this overarching goal, ESE is partnering with the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), and the Departments of Public Health/Early Intervention (EI) and Early Education and Care (EEC) to develop regional model sites across the Commonwealth to support the implementation and ongoing monitoring of best practices, with a focus on developing an integrated continuum of academic and non-academic supports.

ESE is currently supporting five LEAs from the Berkshires+, Pioneer Valley, Central, Greater Boston, and Southeast regions. This FY15 MTSS Partnership Grant will sponsor one additional level 3 or 4 district from the Northeast region to become a model site.

GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The MTSS Partnership Grant, Fund Code 246

Over the four-year grant period, the newly awarded LEA from the Northeast region will:

- Identify district- and school-based implementation teams to oversee TPP grant activities
- Engage in district- and school-based needs assessments
- Partner with the Center for State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP) to ensure that the district has the systems and structures in place to support and sustain the implementation of evidence-based practices within a tiered system of support
- Participate in evidence-based professional development, coaching and mentoring, provided by TPP partners and content area experts, to increase the knowledge and skills of educators, families, and adult service agency personnel in the areas of, at minimum, UDL, PBIS, Academic Tiered Systems of Support, and Family Engagement
• Implement evidence-based practices, focusing on district-wide systems, structures, and supports, to improve outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities and their families, as regional model sites

• Work with an external evaluator, the American Institutes for Research (AIR), to gauge the effectiveness of TPP activities in meeting the individual and collective needs of participants and in improving outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities, using quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods, including on-site observations

• Provide opportunities for district- and school-level administrators, educators and families from across the Commonwealth to observe the implementation of new evidence-based professional development and other TPP activities as regional model sites

**GRANT ACTIVITIES**

**Professional Development**

As noted above, grant activities will include (1) collaboration with TPP partners and content area experts to deliver evidence-based professional development activities; (2) the implementation and demonstration of evidence-based practices; and (3) participation in the evaluation of new face-to-face and online training and technical assistance, products, web-based tools, services, and activities in improving outcomes for all Massachusetts students.

Based on results of district- and school-level needs assessments, professional development activities may include:

- Professional development academies;
- Online and face-to-face courses;
- Intensive technical assistance;
- Summer institutes;
- Leadership academies;
- Conferences;
- Coaching and mentoring;
- Train the trainer activities; and/or
- TPP Networking Meetings;

The professional development offered through this grant will include the following:

- The **Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN)** will offer support to TPP districts in the enhancement of family engagement. In addition to offering online graduate level courses, the FCSN will provide customized coaching and technical assistance to each district based on their identified needs. Each TPP district will also be assigned a member of the FCSN staff to serve as a family partner liaison.

- The **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)** will support TPP districts in the systemic implementation of best practices in secondary transition as demonstrated through MRC’s Transition Works Demonstration Grant. MRC will also facilitate stronger collaboration between the districts and their local MRC Area Offices and Independent Living Centers.

- The **Department of Public Health/Early Intervention (DPH/EI)** will offer professional development to support educators in TPP districts’ pre-schools and/or early learning centers, with a focus on the use of social/emotional screening tools, particularly for pre-school aged students. This professional development will include an online training module, *Using Social-Emotional Screening: Tools to Build Understanding of the Child and Foster a Connection with the Family*, as well as coaching and on-site support.

- The **Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)** will offer personalized professional development to TPP educators in the area of social/emotional development in young children (ages 3-8) through coursework and job-embedded coaching. Topics will include 1) brain development, 2) the influence of
families, teachers and the community on development and learning outcomes, as well as truancy and suspension, and 3) strategies to support the social/emotional development of all learners in the classroom.

- The Department of Elementary and Secondary of Education (ESE) will contract with content area experts to provide multi-year professional development academies in the areas of UDL, PBIS, and Academic Tiered Systems of Support. These three professional development academies will each include face-to-face sessions and on-site support for teams of educators and administrators across grade levels and content areas.

- The Center for State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP) will provide monthly on-site technical assistance to TPP districts for establishing an effective and affordable infrastructure for the implementation of evidence-based practices. Professional development will include coaching and teaching about implementation, scaling, and system change, as well as tools and resources for conducting this work, including formative and summative evaluation tools for action planning, monitoring and outcome assessment

Grant Leadership Team

This MTSS Partnership Grant requires district-level commitment, as well as commitments from at least one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school in applying LEAs. LEAs must identify a district-level team that will oversee the implementation of TPP activities. At minimum, the team must include:

- Superintendent (or district-level designee with decision making authority)
- Curriculum and Instruction Director (or district personnel serving this role)
- Special Education Administrator
- Principals of all participating schools (minimum of 3)
- Early Childhood Coordinator or Preschool Coordinator
- District-wide Professional Development Coordinator (or district personnel serving this role)

Priority will be given to districts that include a Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) member or other parent leader on their district level team.

In the first year of this grant program, the awarded LEA may focus on one, two, or all of the schools identified to take part in TPP. The LEA must identify a school-based team for each school participating in Year 1 of TPP. Additional school-based leadership teams will need to be convened as the remaining identified schools engage in TPP activities in grant Years 2 or 3. The school-based team(s) must include:

- Principal
- Teacher Leaders (e.g. academic coaches, mentors)
- Special educator(s)
- General educator(s)
- Parent(s)
- Transition specialist or educator who serves in this role (for secondary school teams only)
- Pre-school educator (when appropriate)

Key Dates

- Q&A Webinar: Wednesday, September 10th, 2014 at 2:30pm
  Webinar site: [https://commonwealthofmass.centurylinkccc.com](https://commonwealthofmass.centurylinkccc.com)
  Participant Passcode: 727210 #
  Dial-in Number (Toll Free): 1-877-872-7831
- Grant Application due: Wednesday, October 1st, 2014 by 5:00 pm
- Interviews for finalists: Tuesday, October 14 – Thursday, October 16
- Fall Networking Meeting – TBD
- Spring Networking Meeting – TBD
PLEASE COMPLETE THE APPLICATION QUESTIONS IN PART IV