BACKGROUND INFORMATION: THE PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

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).

ESE, The Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), the Massachusetts Readiness Centers and their identified Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), and the Departments of Public Health/Early Intervention (EI) and Early Education and Care (EEC) will partner with six LEAs in Massachusetts and expand the Commonwealth’s statewide professional development system.

TPP will create a model site in each of the six regions* across the Commonwealth that will support the implementation and ongoing monitoring of best practices, with a focus on district-wide structures for developing an integrated continuum of academic and non-academic supports. By expanding Massachusetts’ system of professional development and developing model sites, ESE will support the development of tiered systems of supports that will improve outcomes for all students.

*Berkshires+, Central, Greater Boston, Northeast, Pioneer Valley, Southeast

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

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

(1) developing and delivering evidence-based professional development in content areas that include Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Secondary Transition, Family Engagement, Social Emotional Needs of Children and Families in the Mixed Delivery System, District-level Structures and Supports, and Academic Content Areas; and

(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 achieve TPP’s overarching goal of expanding the Commonwealth’s professional development system, this grant program will sponsor six LEAs to become TPP model sites. Over the five-year grant period, awarded LEAs will:

- Identify district- and school-based leadership teams to oversee the implementation of TPP activities
- Engage in district- and school-based needs assessments to ensure that the TPP professional development being provided is aligned to the needs of educators
Partner with:
- ESE, MRC, FCSN, institutions of higher education, and content area experts to create and deliver culturally sensitive, evidence-based professional development, coaching and mentoring, to increase the knowledge and skills of educators, families, and adult service agency personnel; and
- EEC and DPH/EI to increase the knowledge and skill base of allied health professionals, early intervention specialists, Head Start teachers, and early education and care and out of school time educators, resulting in increased capacity to address the social-emotional needs of children and families in the mixed delivery system

- 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 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 the use of student growth data;
- 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
- Develop an action plan that will 1) ensure the sustainability of evidence-based practices at model sites over time, and 2) outline the process for the scaling up of model site practices in other schools across the district, as well as other districts/schools across the region

**GRANT ACTIVITIES**

**Professional Development**

As noted above, grant activities will include (1) collaboration with TPP partners and content area experts to create and 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 the results of district- and school-level needs assessments, professional development activities may include:
- Online and face-to-face courses;
- Intensive technical assistance
- Summer institutes;
- Leadership academies;
- Conferences;
- Coaching and mentoring;
- Train the trainer activities;
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs); and/or
- Instructional Rounds

**Leadership Teams**

This grant program requires district-level commitment, as well as commitments from at least one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school in the applying LEA(s). LEAs will identify a district-level leadership 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 Director
Principals of ALL participating schools (minimum of 3)
Early Childhood Coordinator or Preschool Coordinator
District-wide Professional Development Coordinator

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, LEAs may focus on one, two, or all of the schools identified to take part in TPP. LEAs must identify a school-based leadership 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 leadership team(s) must include:

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

Key Dates
- **UPDATED:** Q&A Webinar - Tuesday, May 7th, 2 pm
  - Webinar site: https://commonwealthofmass.centurylinkccc.com/centurylinkweb/otss
    - Participant Passcode: 727210 #
  - Dial-in Number (Toll Free) for Audio: 1-877-820-7831
    - Participant Passcode: 727210
- Grant Application due: Monday, June 3rd by 5:00 pm
- Interviews for finalists: Monday, June 10th – Friday, June 14th
- Summer training/Leadership Team retreat: dates to be determined

PLEASE COMPLETE THE APPLICATION QUESTIONS IN PART IV.