

Letter of Intent Feedback

April 22nd, 2015

Dear Cashel,

Thank you so much for submitting a letter of intent (LOI) to the Race to the Top-District (RTT-D) Project 3B Investment Fund.

First, the thoughtfulness and quality of your LOI was very apparent. We know you put a lot of time and energy into this process, and it showed. Thank you! Second, we are very encouraged to hear of the work your district is embarking upon in this final round of P3B funding. We were excited to see the strength of the proposal ideas on behalf of creating strong PreK-3rd grade systems focused on building leadership capacity and improving the instructional core, supported with data.

We know your LOI was intended to communicate your initial ideas for this proposal, and not all of the components of the proposal might be in place at this time. This feedback is intended to address some initial questions in hopes of strengthening your proposal and includes thoughts and strategies from our RTT P3B team, PSESD's Race and Equity team, the Road Map Birth to 3rd Grade Workgroup, and the Road Map ELL Workgroup.

To start, the following is general feedback about what we learned through our review of all RTT-D LOIs for Project 3B:

Lessons Learned

- P3B has supported district and school leaders' attendance at early learning institutes in previous rounds. Many LOIs indicate additional leaders would be attending an institute through Round 3. What learning has occurred and how is the district sharing lessons based on past sessions? What have been the results in terms of leadership capacity being built?
- More reflections are needed on lessons learned and how those lessons influence decisions being made about P-3 systems.

Regional Focus

- More focus of participation in regional efforts and collaborations such as:
 - Highlighting K registration as a regional effort and collaboration
 - Partnerships with other districts
 - Bringing forward the work being done with WaKIDS
 - Districts participating in JumpStart and Play and Learn have an opportunity to share best and promising practices. These efforts can vary widely and could benefit from the sharing of what is working. This can also benefit K transitions for the populations that are highly mobile in the road map region.
 - Participation **by district decision makers** in P3 Leads meetings and the Harvard Institute

Equity and Engagement

- Incorporate a strong outreach strategy for immigrant and refugee parents, which specifically targets families of children who have not had access or exposure to traditional early learning settings and who may be in Family Friend and Neighbor (FFN) or informal care settings.

Consider the partnerships available with community-based organizations who work closely with immigrant and refugee populations served in each district

- The word “Equity” was not explicitly stated in the majority of the LOIs. Highlighting how your proposal focuses on equity in addition to addressing language and ethnicity will be helpful when the focus is on closing the opportunity gap.
- Specifically call out strategies for engaging immigrant and refugee families in place of general language such as “throughout the community.”
- Incorporate specific and ongoing opportunities for immigrant and refugee parents and families to participate in shared-governance structures for district level as well as building level decision-making, and ensure the cultural and language value they bring is seen as asset-based.
- Attendance itself isn’t specifically called out or focused on very heavily. Chronic absenteeism is very high in the region yet research is strong that supports this as a key factor in student success. There is a great opportunity with how much has been invested in Full Day Kindergarten and ways districts can engage in an effort such as this that centers on family engagement.
- No LOIs mentioned support for bilingual/dual language development. Research shows the importance of the strong development of a student’s first language and that there is disruption in the learning of both languages if PK-K students are not in a setting where they are learning both.

Sustainability

- In cases where P3B Rounds 1 and 2 have supported a district P-3 leadership position, how does the district demonstrate increased financial commitment of this position in Round 3 and beyond?
- What are the system-level data tools that will continue to live on after the grant is gone that will continue to give us more information and support a data informed approach?
- How will projects intentionally leverage other RTT projects?

We wanted to share additional specific feedback about Seattle’s letter:

LOI Strengths

- Adding the math PD component for early instruction and in Play & Learn Groups, in response to TSG data showing a math gap, is a strength of this LOI. How will this strategy leverage the P-5 Gates Math Grant and RTT Project 4 (Digital STEM Tools)?
- The use of data to inform strategies is well-thought-out. In the proposal, please share your conclusions about what the data has shown to date (i.e., Caregiver Surveys, Facilitator Site Visit Reflection Worksheet, early enrollment data, wait time and attendance numbers, data on how parents find out about early enrollment events, Jump Start attendance data, TSG data).
- Continued collaboration with Highline is a strength. How are the two districts sharing their lessons learned through their collaboration in Rounds 1 and 2 with the other districts in the region?
- Offering culturally-relevant Play & Learn Groups and facilitators.
- Specifically called out math instruction as a math gap.
- Called out groups that are likely to join P&L and that these are the groups they are targeting.

Opportunities to strengthen full proposal

- Not a lot of focus on the role of families.
- Could be more specific on what you are hoping to accomplish with Play & Learn.



RACE to the TOP

- Could share the plan with the Department of Equity and Race Relations to receive assistance in incorporating culturally relevant strategies to enhance support to students of color.
- Could see some deeper reflection on lessons learned and what you are learning about your system; this could build on the data reporting done in February.
- Need more information on choosing the 13 highest poverty schools – why are you targeting all students across the board? Who within schools are you serving? What is your data showing you that the highest needs are?
- Understand more about what the budget is being spent on (PD? UW P-3 Institute? P&L is not that expensive and since you are not in the more costly initial startup phase, we aren't certain what is driving costs up...)
- Could call out and better explain the tool to track school success and levels of parent involvement. Could other districts could take advantage of this tool?
- Need to call out the collaboration efforts within the region, especially partnerships and shared learning experiences with Highline, Tukwila and Kent.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions about this feedback. Please visit <http://roadmapracetothetop.org/project-3b-investment-fund-for-prek-3rd-grade-strategies-and-systems/> for updated information as well as updated versions of the RFP.

We look forward to working with you in the development of Seattle Public School's proposal.

Sincerely,

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