

## Letter of Intent Feedback

April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015

Dear Heather ,

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-3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Tukwila’s letter:

## LOI Strengths

- Very thoughtful letter of intent, very clearly connects the dots between data, reflection, and strategies.
- Excellent focus on ELL and improving instruction for those students and building resources that are reflective of students in the classroom. During the DoE program officer visit in February, she specifically pointed this out as being critical. Additionally, you have even called out which subgroups within ELL have the highest needs in your district and how you will address those needs, for example via Play and Learn groups.
- New Play and Learn groups will serve specific communities in their native language.
- Strong connection to the Kaurez framework, including planning for the data collection methods that will help with evaluation and continuous improvement.
- Building from what has been learned from the previous rounds.
- Working with partners who are relevant for the kids and families to be served.

## Opportunities to strengthen full proposal

- Could be more explicit about who might be missing from the early learning advisory team and some concrete ways how you are building that team.



## **RACE to the TOP**

- What additional culturally-specific strategies might the district consider to ensure the Pre-K to Kindergarten transition activities will benefit students and families who have been historically marginalized?
- Not much reference to WaKIDS or other family engagement work, could call this out better.
- Could use more intentional data collected on racial/ethnic/language representation/attendance at the CCR professional development sessions. Are you reaching those who reflect Tukwila's population?
- Could call out that elevating the coordinator position to a director position is a signal to all TSD staff that early learning is a priority.
- Could use Play & Learn facilitators as a source of data.
- The idea and support of an online PD library could be shared with other districts.

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 Tukwila School District's proposal.

Sincerely,

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