NYS P-TECH RFP Question and Answer

Eligible Applicants, Partners and Priorities

1. Is this round of grants only for new P-Tech programs?

    a. Yes.

2. It appears that this RFP is for expansion or creation of new P-Tech program centers. Would it make sense to put in an application for funding a new biotech program that was successful in other states that would be an enhancement to the P-Tech program across the entire state?

    a. You are correct that this RFP is for new P-TECH projects. Funding is not available through this RFP to enhance existing P-TECH projects.

3. Do all partners have to sign the same MOU, even if they have different roles? For efficiency of getting the MOU signed by all the partners (particularly since the MOU won't be finalized until late in the grant-writing process so as to allow maximum time for planning discussions among partners), is it okay if we separate the signature lines so there is one per page, so we don't need to circulate just one copy of the MOU to be signed? And/or is it okay if we have each partner sign different copies of the same MOU?

    a. All partners have to sign the same MOU (i.e., with the same content), reflecting the overall commitment as well as the specific responsibilities and roles of each partner. It is acceptable if each partner signs different copies of the same MOU, as long as all copies are included with the application.

4. Can you please confirm that the applying organization does not need to also be the implementation lead? On page 7, item A, it states the implementation lead – "must be recognized in the MOU by all partners as the lead agency" – which seems to disagree with verbiage elsewhere in the RFP, which states the lead agency and implementation lead can be different organizations (such as in #1 on page 5).

    a. The term "lead agency" on p. 7 refers to the implementation lead. The applicant/fiscal agent (school district or BOCES) does not need to also be the implementation lead. However, all partners must recognize whichever partner is chosen as the implementation lead.

5. Do all districts interested in sending students to the proposed P-TECH need to sign the MOU? If they don't, can we still count their graduation rate toward the 82% average graduation rate of the consortium?

    a. All districts interested in sending students MUST sign the MOU. If they do not, their graduation rate CANNOT be included in the average graduation rate of the consortium.

6. If a district is a member of a partnership, is the signature of a high school principal required in addition to the superintendent's signature or is the superintendent's signature sufficient?

    a. As stated on p. 6, the MOU must be signed by at least <u>one</u> participating high school principal. Only one principal signature is required per application. If multiple districts are participating, principal signatures are not required for every participating district.

7. Please explain #18 on page 21 – what do you mean by "sending school districts"? Does that mean they are the applicant? Or does that refer to any district that could send students to the proposed P-TECH program?

    a. Sending school districts are those districts who are the applicant and those districts who may be sending students to participate in a consortium program.

8. Can a BOCES, currently serving as a partner in a Cohort 1 project, apply as the lead agency for a new project?

    a. Yes.

9. Would a half-day CTE program at a BOCES be considered as an eligible PTECH model?

    a. No.

10. I am wondering if our charter school would be eligible to apply for a P-Tech program and potentially add this to our school. I see that "New York State Public School Districts" are eligible, and as a public charter school we are essentially a school district of one school.

    a. Per Page 6 of the RFP: *Public charter schools and non-public schools are ineligible to apply for these funds or participate in this program, either individually or as members of consortia.*

Target Population: Below 82% Graduation Rate

11. If we don't have a Focus or Priority school among the districts in our application, is that okay? In past P-TECH RFPs, Focus and Priority schools have been essentially required, but in this RFP we see they aren't mentioned until page 49. How much is the focus on Focus or Priority schools? Or is the priority in this year's funding only on partnerships of districts with an average graduation rate of 82% or less?

    a. As stated on pp. 21, 25, and 42, this RFP gives priority to proposals from sending school districts with a cohort high school graduation rate below 82%. The reference to Focus and Priority schools/districts on p. 49 was an error and should be disregarded.

12. Related to our last question, your Target Population narrative questions on page 49 don't align with the scoring rubric on page 35, specifically: the narrative questions ask about focus/priority districts, and the scoring rubric talks about the 82% average graduation requirement, but neither criteria shows in both places. Which criteria is the priority?

    a. The criteria in the scoring rubric are correct. The reference to Focus and Priority schools/districts on p. 49 was an error and should be disregarded.

13. In the case of a consortium application, is the 82% August graduation threshold for "priority consideration" based on a simple average rate of the districts involved – or- is the average rate weighted to adjust for the size of participating schools? i.e. would a larger school with a lower graduation rate have a more pronounced impact on the final average rate for the group or would all schools be averaged equally.

    a. The 82% August graduation threshold for priority consideration is based on a simple average rate of the districts participating in the project. For example, if sending district A has a graduation rate of 90% and sending district B has a graduation rate of 70%, the average rate would be 80%, regardless of the relative sizes of districts A and B. The calculation CANNOT include the graduation rates for any component districts which are not participating in the project or have not signed the MOU.

14. Can you please confirm – to determine if our participating districts meet the priority of a graduation rate below 82%, should we be looking at the 2017 graduation rates? We are using the link included in the RFP on page 21, searching for the correct district name, clicking on 2016-17, then high school graduation rate. Those steps take us to a page with 2016 and 2017 graduation

data, and we're assuming we should use the 2017 data on the right-hand side of the page; but can you please confirm?

a. You should use the 2017 data, but you need to filter it to reveal the August graduation rate. Step-by-step instructions:

i. Go to data.nysed.gov in Chrome. (The site does not function well in Explorer.)
ii. Find the desired school district, either by typing the name in the search window or by following the menus.
iii. Click 2016-17
iv. Click High School Graduation Rate
v. Look for the light blue bar. Click "+ Filter this data"
vi. Check "2013 4-year August Cohort"
vii. Click "Filter." When the page refreshes, the heading at the top of the page will now say "BETHLEHEM CSD GRADUATION RATE DATA 4 YEAR OUTCOME AS OF AUGUST"
viii. The 2017 grad rate for all students will be the first bubble on the right-hand half of the page.

Target Population: Eligible Participants

15. When using the definition "under-represented in post-secondary education for enrollment" (page 62) or "traditionally underserved in post-secondary settings" (page 3), which students is SED referring to? Does SED include in that category (for instance): students with disabilities, English Language Learners, or particular minority groups? Can we name our district's under-represented groups, as long as we can point to data or other justification that points to those students being "under-represented"?

a. "Under-represented" and "underserved" in higher education refers to populations that are disproportionately lower in number relative to their number in the general population, and "traditionally" means that this is a ten year or longer trend. For the purposes of this RFP the following students are considered historically underrepresented: African American/black, Hispanic/Latino(a), American Indian or Alaskan native; first generation college-goers; English language learners; or students with disabilities. Districts may not create their own definitions of underserved.

16. Does the targeted population SED has established (i.e. those at-risk, under-represented) need to be 100% of all P-TECH students served? Or as long as we target those students, is it okay to also accept other students not in those categories?

a. All students participating in the NYS P-TECH Program must have at least one risk factor in order to be recruited into the program. This means the

student can be academically at-risk and/or economically at-risk and/or a member of an under-represented/underserved population.

17. Can students engaged in this round of funding be co-mingled with any students from other (previously funded) PTECH projects?

    a. No. Students in any newly funded projects must be part of a distinctly separate program from students in previously funded NYS P-TECH projects.

Evaluator

18. Our evaluator pointed out that last year a grant was given $20,000 for evaluation of their proposal. This year it states that the evaluation can't be more than $2,000.00. No one can do it for that. I suspect it is a typo. Can you please clarify for us?

    a. The maximum amount of grant funds that may be used for the outside evaluator described on page 1 is $2,000 per year. The required evaluator's role is to independently determine that the minimum performance criteria outlined on the Responsibilities of Partners sections found on pages 7 and 62 of the RFP are met.

19. The RFP states that the cost of the outside evaluator may not exceed $2000. Is that amount correct?

    a. Yes, the maximum amount of grant funds that may be used for the outside evaluator described on page 1 is $2,000 per year. The required evaluator's role is to independently determine that the minimum performance criteria outlined on the Responsibilities of Partners sections found on pages 7 and 62 of the RFP are met.

20. The latest P-Tech RFP includes a requirement for annual external program evaluation but caps the cost for an external evaluator at $2,000. Is this accurate?

    a. Yes, the maximum amount of grant funds that may be used for the outside evaluator described on page 1 is $2,000 per year. The required evaluator's role is to independently determine that the minimum performance criteria outlined on the Responsibilities of Partners sections found on pages 7 and 62 of the RFP are met.

21. Please define parameters of your expectations for the duties of the external evaluator, given the $2000 per year limit on evaluator compensation.

    a. The required evaluator's role is to independently determine that the minimum performance criteria outlined on the Responsibilities of Partners sections found on pages 7 and 62 of the RFP are met.

22. Is the state conducting a statewide evaluation of the P-TECH initiative? If yes, will the state be hiring an external evaluator for this initiative?

    a. The state is not currently conducting a statewide evaluation of the P-TECH initiative.

In-demand Industries

23. Can we still qualify for the $100,000 bonus if we target a specific industry not listed on pages 12-13 of the RFP, but that we can show is equally "in-demand" in our region as those industries listed?

    a. No. Applicants must target the specific industries listed on pages 12-13 in order to qualify for the $100,000 bonus.

       An in-demand industry partner is defined by the New York State Department of Labor. The specific industries for an in-demand partner are as follows:

       i. Web Developers
       ii. Civil Engineering Technicians
       iii. Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health
       iv. Diagnostic Medical Sonographers
       v. Nuclear Medicine Technologists
       vi. Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists

       Please note, degree requirements must be able to be completed within a four-semester sequence, which does not include mandatory summer or intersession periods. Degree programs which may not meet this requirement include but are not limited to: Nursing, Radiologic Technology, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapy Assistant, Massage Therapy, and Dental Hygiene.

24. On page 19 of the RFP, #2 asks for specific documentation to show employment outlook for the industry targeted. But, we don't see a corresponding narrative question related to this information, nor is it part of the scoring rubric. Do you expect us to address this documentation somehow in our narrative? Or would we

be expected to provide this documentation during the grant planning period (after grants are awarded)?

a. This information will be evaluated in the “Higher Education and Business/Employer Partnerships” (10 Points) section.

25. How does the $100,000 bonus work – in looking at the charts on pages 13-16, it appears awardees would receive an additional $100,000 in years 5-7; is that correct?

a. Yes, the additional $100,000 is available in the final three years of funding.

Activities, Training, and Services

26. Is the 90 hours of extended learning time recommended on a per year basis or over the course of the 6/7 years?

a. The 90 hours of extended learning time should be completed each year.

27. On page 7, item d, “must participate in annual trainings” – is that referring to the five days of training required over the grant period (to be provided as part of the partnership)? Or is this separate training (or the annual meeting) that will be offered by SED, as referred to in item 16 on page 21?

a. The annual trainings referenced on Page 7 refer to the trainings in Albany sponsored by the NYS Business Council.

28. Is the yearly training a one-day training (i.e., for budgeting purposes, not requiring overnight hotel accommodations)?

a. There are generally two, one-day trainings offered in the fall and the spring. Depending on travel distance, participants may require overnight accommodations.Grant funds can be used to cover travel/accommodation expenses related to these trainings.

29. On the bottom of page 7, the final bulleted paragraph, that begins with “By the end of this funding period….” Are you saying that if we apply for P-TECH, we must also offer other programming (separate from P-TECH) that also allows students to get college credits?

a. Yes. Recipients of this grant must offer programming that allows non-P-TECH students the opportunity to earn college credits. This programming cannot be funded using NYS P-TECH grant funds.

30. At the top of page 9, the first bullet mentions “multiple pathways.” Can you please clarify what this means? Are you referring to offering various levels of academic support for students? Or can students participate in P-TECH programming at different levels? Or is that students can complete their 90 hours of extended learning time in different ways/through different schedules?

    a. “Multiple pathways” means projects must provide various levels of academic support for students who are at varying academic levels of proficiency.

31. Is group mentoring of students acceptable? In the past we’ve found it difficult to get enough mentors from businesses to have one per student.

    a. Group mentoring is acceptable though one-to-one mentoring is preferable, particularly later in the programs as students focus more on internships and workplace learning.

Allowable Uses of Funds

32. On the bottom of page 16 – when the RFP discusses funding “for the grant to begin operations” can’t be used until after submission of a comprehensive NYS P-TECH plan, does that just mean we can’t use funds to begin teaching students before the plan is submitted – but that we can use funds during that planning period for staff and partners who are involved with writing the plan?

    a. Projects are not allowed to begin operating their PTECH school until after submission and approval of a comprehensive NYS P-TECH plan. However, PTECH awardees may begin planning period activities.

33. Are indirect costs for the applicant BOCES or district allowable?

    a. Yes, but those costs are restricted to the published indirect cost rates each year.

34. We see equipment for administrative use is not an allowable expense; would purchase of a laptop for a P-TECH administrator be okay?

    a. The purchase of a laptop for a P-TECH administrator would be allowable as long as that administrator’s work is 100% FTE for P-TECH. If the administrator’s responsibilities extend beyond the P-TECH program, then the cost of the laptop should be shared proportionately between P-TECH grant funds and the district to prevent supplanting.

General Items

35. On the application cover page, which map or definitions should we be using to determine our region?

    a. Regions are defined at this link: http://www.nysed.gov/college-university-evaluation/counties-organized-regents-higher-education-region

36. We're seeing several discrepancies between the 20 program requirements on pages 19-22, the narrative questions and the scoring rubric, as to topics and requirements. We are concerned about addressing the requirements from all three places in the narrative's 10 pages. What exactly will the narrative be scored on? Does SED have any recommendations on what to include in the narrative, to ensure we don't lose any points?

    a. The criteria in the scoring rubric are correct. Applications will be scored using the rubric found in the RFP. Once awards are made, SED will expect all projects to meet program requirements as described. The reference to Focus and Priority schools/districts on p. 49 was an error and should be disregarded.

37. Must charts and tables be in 12-point type?

    a. Charts and tables may be completed in a font size no smaller than 10-point type.

38. Can staff for this project be staff already engaged in other (previously funded) PTECH projects?

    a. Staff from previously funded NYS P-TECH projects may be utilized to provide instruction, etc. for newly funded projects, but the two projects and their students must remain separate. Per Page 6 of the RFP: Currently funded NYS P-TECH partnerships may apply to create a new NYS P-TECH project, separate from currently operating projects; however, they may not apply to expand their current projects.

39. Can as A.S. degree be considered in cases where an A.A.S. degree is not available from the local Higher Education partner.

    a. An AS degree is acceptable only if the industry partner affirms that students can immediately enter the workforce in the identified, targeted job(s) with the AS degree.

40. Page 25 of the RFP mentions districts that have won SIG (School Improvement Grant) or SIF (School Innovation Fund) funds; does this apply only to districts

currently actively implementing a turnaround strategy? In other words, if our district recently completed the use of SIG or SIF, do we still have to address this in our narrative?

a. If a school has completed their fund cycle for SIG or SIF, they do not have to address it in the proposal.

MWBE

41. Are you allowing interested WBEs to express interest and be made available for primes to access?

a. WBEs and MBEs may express interest by contacting MWBEgrants@nysed.gov.