

PLAN Mentor School Request for Bids (RFB)

Questions and Answers

*** Updated 8/15/2024 ***

General

1. **Q.** Given the limited funding, what is the incentive for Mentor Schools to participate in this PLAN Pilot?
 - A. The PLAN Mentor School opportunity is appropriate for schools and BOCES programs interested in supporting PLAN Pilot Schools in making the transition to implementing a system of performance-based learning and assessment (PBLA) at the middle school and/or high school level. Benefits of participating as a PLAN Mentor School include joining statewide communities of practice supported by expert professional learning providers; engaging with schools and educators across the state to share expertise and best practices; and contributing to research that will influence state policy decisions, as we explore the potential for New York's statewide assessment strategy to be reimaged in a way that purposefully fosters high-quality instructional opportunities, provides authentic measures of deeper learning, and better prepares students for college and the workplace.
2. **Q.** When does the work for the PLAN pilot begin? Next school year? Summer?
 - A. The PLAN Pilot is currently in its Installation Phase. Selected Pilot Schools have connected with their Technical Assistance Centers (TACs) to begin onboarding and prepare for initial implementation to begin in the Fall 2024. [See program timeline graphic at this link.](#)

IMPORTANT CHANGE: Contracts for Mentor Schools resulting from this RFB will be for a term beginning on or about **September 3, 2024** and ending June 30, 2027. Note that this start date is later than what was originally announced, to allow a realistic timeline for review of bids. (See "Term of Contract" on the [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#), or page 6 of the [PDF of the RFB](#)).
3. **Q.** Can one entity submit a single application that would include multiple Mentor Schools?
 - A. No. The proposed Mentor School must be a single school or BOCES program. A single entity (such as a BOCES, district, not-for-profit, or partner school) can be referenced in multiple applications as part of a partnership, but a different individual school or BOCES program needs to be the lead (a.k.a. the proposed Mentor School) for each application.

Eligibility

4. **Q.** I applied to be a PLAN Pilot School but was not selected. Should I consider applying to become a PLAN Mentor School?

A. Yes, if you believe your school is already proficient in PBLA, you may consider applying to become a PLAN Mentor School. (The remainder of this answer, below, provides background to explain why some schools with strong applications were not selected to be Pilot Schools.)

NYSED received many high-quality applications from schools and programs across the state interested in becoming a PLAN Pilot School. To study what conditions and supports are needed by a diverse range of schools from all areas of New York State in order to implement performance-driven approaches to teaching and learning, some key selection considerations included sampling for diverse features of the schools, diverse interests in PBLA, and diverse stages of readiness/proficiency in PBLA. As explained in this [overview](#) of the application process background and considerations, if we had only selected the “most ready” schools, the results of the study would be missing necessary information for supporting a diverse range of schools in implementing PBLA. Pilot Schools needed to be purposefully sampled from different regions of the state, of different sizes, with different student demographics, etc., and with varied interests in the differing [PBLA Focus Areas](#) being studied. Additional information on the considerations for the selection of PLAN Pilot Schools can be found on our [website](#), under “Background and Considerations for Pilot School Selection.”

5. **Q.** Would a PBL program within a school (so it is not an entire PBL school) qualify for applying to be a mentor school?

A. As described under “Eligibility” on the [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#) (or page 2 of the [PDF](#) of the RFB), eligible schools must be systematically implementing an evidence-based approach or model of performance-based learning and assessment (PBLA) that is available to all students enrolled in the school (or, in the case of a BOCES, all students enrolled in the program). The bidder would need to provide evidence in the technical proposal narrative that supports both the requirement that the PBLA approach or model they are implementing exemplifies the distinctive features of successful implementation of a system of PBLA (see “Features of Successful PBLA Implementation” on the [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#)), as well as the requirement that it is *available* to all students enrolled in the school or BOCES program (even if not all students are participating in the PBLA program).

6. **Q.** Based on the following description, would our school qualify for this program under Focus Area A? We only have a few administrators who write grants on top of their full-time jobs, so I want to allocate their time wisely.

We are starting academies at our high school where students choose a pathway (i.e., education, finance, culinary, digital communications, technology, etc.), and while they take their normal course load, all of their high school electives will be geared toward that pathway. Juniors will do job shadowing and seniors will do an internship in the field. When they are in 8th grade, we take them through a number of surveys and questionnaires to see what they like and what path they may want to choose. We also do a field trip to the internship locations, so they can see first-hand how it works and if they want to go in that direction.

- A.** We cannot provide a simple yes or no answer to this question. When deciding whether to apply, consider both whether your PBLA model is aligned with the Focus Area and whether your school is proficient enough in PBLA approach to be a Mentor School:
- **Focus Area Alignment**—Review the accordion entitled “Focus Areas” on the [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#) to see whether your school’s current approach includes all or most of the instructional and assessment features listed for Focus A.
 - **Proficiency**—As explained in the accordion entitled “Eligibility” on the [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#), NYSED is seeking to engage Mentor Schools that are currently implementing an evidence-based PBLA approach at an exemplary level. As noted in the answer to [Q4](#), above, if you believe your school is already proficient in PBLA, you may consider applying to become a PLAN Mentor School. The answer to [Q5](#), above, explains that bidders will be asked to describe how their school is currently implementing the practices described under “Features of Successful PBLA Implementation” on the [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#)).

PBLA Support Leader

- 7. Q.** What is the intended role of the PLAN Support Leader?
- A.** The PLAN or PBLA Support Leader will serve as a point of contact and coordination with each network’s Pilot Schools and PLAN Technical Assistance Center (TAC), as well as with the University of the State of New York—Regents Research Fund (USNY-RRF) and NYSED and their research and evaluation partners.
- 8. Q.** Can the PLAN Support Leader be more than one contact person so that those responsibilities can be shared to provide responses to the Pilot schools?
- A.** NYSED envisions a single PBLA Support Leader to serve as the primary point of contact and coordination; however, bidders may propose splitting the responsibilities of this role among no more than three people. If a bidder proposes splitting the responsibilities of this role across more than one individual, they should provide a strong rationale that demonstrates attention to the importance of coordination and ensuring support is delivered in a cohesive manner.
- 9. Q:** Can the PLAN Support Leader be a full-time teacher that receives a stipend for the additional work of being the contact person?
- A.** Yes. Whoever is identified for the role, bidders should describe their rationale in the technical proposal and budget narrative. Regarding a stipend, the instructions regarding “Allowable Costs” provide that bidders may propose to use funds awarded pursuant to this bid for compensation for the PBLA Support Leader. (For details, see “Allowable Costs” on the [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#), or page 6 of the [PDF](#) of the RFB.) The same list of allowable costs applies to matching or cost-share funds, if any.

Deliverables & Scope of Services

- 10. Q.** What do the “deliverables” look like? Are there specific deadlines and/or requirements?
- A.** See “Deliverables” on the [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#), or page 3 of the [PDF](#) of the RFB. The RFB does not dictate specific expectations for how each deliverable is achieved. Instead, in the technical proposal and budget narrative, bidders should describe how they propose to complete the five deliverables over the term of the contract, based on their expertise and capacity. Reviewers will be looking for the responses to each narrative prompt to be specific and comprehensive, and to contain complete, detailed, and clearly articulated information as to how deliverables in the RFB will be met. See [Q13](#), below, for an explanation of how the specifics proposed will be collaboratively fleshed out and adjusted throughout the contract term, to best meet the needs of the Pilot Schools and Networks and maximize the shared capacity of the Mentor Schools and Technical Assistance Centers.
- 11. Q:** What is the approximate yearly time expectation commitment for mentor schools? Is there a certain amount of time for peer coaching, mentoring, modeling, visitations, etc. or is the State asking for the applicants to outline and propose what they will do?
- A.** As explained more generally in the answer to [Q9](#), above, the RFB does not dictate an overall time commitment or a specific amount of time for any of the activities you listed. Mentor Schools must commit to supporting all PLAN Pilot Schools in their Pilot Network through the full implementation process, including providing ongoing mentoring and coaching supports, engaging in communities of practice at the Pilot Network level, helping to transfer knowledge, and providing on-the-ground support to the extent possible. In the technical proposal and budget narrative, bidders should describe their proposal for carrying out the activities of this RFB in furtherance of the project’s goals.
- 12. Q:** What responsibilities do Mentor School teachers have, exactly?
- A.** NYSED’s vision is that teachers and leaders from PLAN Pilot Schools will be able to engage in professional learning experiences with Mentor Schools and see first-hand the instructional shifts that they will need to make in their own schools and classrooms. As explained more generally in the answer to [Q9](#), above, bidders should describe their proposal for the role and responsibilities of teachers in carrying out the activities of this RFB in the technical proposal narrative.
- 13. Q.** I am wondering if the Q&A could address travel expectations to visit PLAN schools?
- A.** As explained more generally in the answer to [Q9](#), above, in the technical proposal and budget narrative, bidders should describe how they propose to carry out the activities of this RFB in furtherance of the project’s goals, and their rationale for whatever they propose, based on their own expertise and capacity. The RFB does not entail any specific expectations for travel to visit PLAN schools, but such travel/visits may be included in bidders’ proposals.
- 14. Q.** It says PLAN TACs will have the primary responsibility for providing technical assistance and professional learning to pilot schools. What is the expectation around the collaboration of the TACs and Mentor Schools?

- A. PLAN TACs are charged with collaborating with Mentor Schools to coordinate and facilitate the provision of learning opportunities to educators in their Pilot Network, such as school inter-visitations, modeling PBLA practices, peer coaching and mentoring, and collaboratively addressing problems of practice. (See pp. 16-17 of [RFP #23-018](#) for PLAN Professional Learning Providers.) NYSED's expectation is that selected Mentor Schools will build a collaborative relationship with the PLAN TACs and other Mentor Schools. The TACs will consult and coordinate with Mentor Schools to ensure that the supports provided to schools and educators by each of you are responsive to the specific needs of the assigned schools and networks, non-duplicative, mutually reinforcing, and appropriately timed (see [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#), or page 2 of the [PDF](#) of the RFB). In the technical proposal narrative, bidders should describe how they propose to meet this expectation.

Expectations for Mentor School's District/Board

15. Q: What accommodations are districts expected to provide for Mentor School teachers participating in the PLAN pilot?
- A. NYSED expects the districts or boards of selected Mentor Schools to provide a supportive environment to carry out the activities described in the RFB in furtherance of the goals of the project. Mandatory commitments for districts/boards are described in the required [District/Board Commitment Form](#). Bidders should describe any additional proposed accommodations that the district/board envisions providing in the technical proposal narrative.
16. Q: Is it an expectation that districts provide time for Mentor School teachers to complete the work required for the PLAN pilot?
- A. See answer to [Q14](#).

Funding

17. Q: Is the grant award a total of \$37,500 or is it \$37,500 for each of the years in the 3-year commitment (2024-2027)?
- A. Winning bidders will receive a total of \$37,500 for the full 3-year commitment. See "Payments" on the [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#), or page 6 of the [PDF](#) of the RFB.
18. Q: I am wondering if there is additional money available for travel expenses to visit PLAN schools?
- A. Bidders may use funds awarded pursuant to this bid for travel expenses to carry out the essential work of the project. (See "Allowable Costs" on the [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#), or page 6 of the [PDF](#) of the RFB).
- As described under "Payments" on the [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#) (or page 6 of the [PDF](#) of the RFB), USNY-RRF and NYSED continue to seek additional funding sources to support the PLAN program, including the needs of Mentor Schools. Such funds could be provided to the Mentor Schools to supplant matching funds and cost-share for allowable costs that are included in the Cost Proposals submitted pursuant to this bid (see "Allowable Costs" on

the [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#), or page 6 of the [PDF](#) of the RFB). Accordingly, bidders are encouraged to include in their Cost Proposal the value of any match, cost-share, and in-kind resources they propose to use to carry out their obligations under this contract—whether provided by the school, the district/board, or other partners.

19. Q: Please explain or provide examples of possible match/cost-share/in-kind contributions. Would this be current teacher salaries, costs associated with the school hosting pilot schools (meeting space cost and materials cost), etc.?

A. Match, cost-share, and in-kind resources refer to those contributions to carrying out the activities under this RFB that are not covered by the funds awarded pursuant to this bid, whether provided by the school, the district/board, or other partners.

Only items listed under “Allowable Costs” should be included in bidders’ budgets (see “Allowable Costs” on the [Applying to Become a PLAN Mentor School webpage](#), or page 6 of the [PDF](#) of the RFB). That list includes costs associated with hosting pilot schools for meetings related to the PLAN program, such as meeting space costs and materials, and it includes stipends for teachers as well as substitute teacher coverage, but it does not include “current teacher salaries” (see the full “Allowable Costs” list for details).