

## **SIG APPLICATION'S SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION**

### **Whiteriver Unified School District**

**June 25, 2010**

#### **A. Analysis of School Needs (Please answer the following questions)**

- How many teachers are at Alchesay High School?
  - There are 34 teachers at Alchesay High School
  
- Is the TIP Report within the data notebooks?
  - A copy of the TIPS report is attached as part of this document (attachment A) for Canyon Day Junior High School
  
- You use multiple sources of data. What trends do you see from the available data. Please give more detail regarding the various subgroups
  - The following trends were identified: Strand 1, Number Sense and Operations – across grade levels remains an area of concern; without a firm grasp of concepts within Number Sense and Operations, student achievement remains low; Strand 2 Discrete mathematics – also remains problematic across grade levels. After drilling down the data in the AIMS Reading, Strand 1, concept 4 – vocabulary is a problem; and in Strand 3, Expository Text – remains problematic across grade levels
  - Subgroups – ELL, Sped, Low SES, American Indian – the learner competencies indicated above cut across all subgroup levels
  
- Were site visits conducted? What about classroom walkthrough observation data?
  - The classroom walkthrough observation data indicates that teachers do not consistently apply best practices; there is a need for induction and mentoring training such as teacher mentoring, embedded staff development and specific targeted instructional strategies in math and literacy
  - Utilizing principal observations, walkthrough data compiled by district officials and a systematic review of classrooms completed by Arizona School Transformation Group, the following indicators were present: student engagement, classroom management, pyramid of interventions and ability to use data, analysis and application. A similar set of needs was evidenced in the middle and high schools with a specific need for middle and high school literacy programs (See Attachment B, School Transformation Group).

#### **B-1 Evaluation of LEA Capacity (Please answer the following questions)**

##### **Standard 1 – Leadership Systems**

- Put in “hiring of new principal at Canyon Day School. Attach job descriptions for positions and put in data
  - New principals were hired for Alchesay High School and Canyon Day Junior High Schools. Job descriptions were developed for the principals

and are located in the data binders under Tab ' Job Descriptions. You can see in the job descriptions, that there is a strong emphasis on data collection, analysis and work with teachers to analyze the data.

- How will you use student data such as AIMS or progress monitoring to drive decision making?
  - The following statement has been added to page 41 of the original SIG application: Every school in the district, including Tier I and Tier III, will be required to establish an accessible, central location for a Data Wall pictorially representing AIMS data and formative assessment results gathered through DIBELS, Galileo, A+ and Study Island.
- Is there a teacher representative on the Teacher Evaluation System Team?
  - A teacher and several responsible young adult students have been added to the evaluation team.
- What sources of data are you using to evaluate teachers: lesson plans; observations; etc. Is there a rigorous teacher evaluation system aligned to action steps?
  - The Turnaround Director is currently integrating the AZ Teacher Professional Standards, the Continuum of Teacher Development with a newly developed rigorous teacher evaluation system that will include quantifiable data from lesson plans, teacher observations, classroom observations, student input, and specific descriptors of language and mathematics instruction.

## **Standard 2 – Curriculum Decisions**

- Please provide additional detail on the monitoring implementation of curriculum. Where does it say the curriculum is specifically aligned to the Arizona Standards?
  - The LEA Curriculum (math – reading/writing – social studies – science) of Whiteriver Unified School District (LEA) is aligned to the AZ State Standards completed by a committee of teachers and administrators and the LEA consistently attests to that alignment in documents submitted by ADE. You will notice in the job descriptions of the turnaround Director and turnaround Principals that it is their responsibility to ensure that the district curriculum is being taught.
- How will you use the student data to monitor the effective instruction? What data are you looking at within the classroom to evaluate instruction? What is the process?
  - We have established a systematic Data Wall procedure where each teacher examines the individual performance of their students on AIMS data and the formative data mentioned earlier. As part of that procedure, the principal meets with the teachers weekly to examine data and modify instruction accordingly.

- Are teachers provided opportunities to talk and share about new learning in the classrooms?
  - All teachers will meet weekly with their building Turnaround Principal to assess student progress, modify instruction where necessary and review student progress. In addition, there will be weekly release days for planned professional development and the Turnaround Director is requiring Turnaround Principals to plan collaborative time within the instructional day for teachers to meet, share, collaborate and reflect on student progress.

### **Standard 3 - Assessment**

- We need more information on how teachers talk together weekly regarding the use of student data to drive, inform and differentiate instruction
  - Mentioned above: Weekly data analysis meetings focus on formative assessment results and what modifications need to be made to meet intervention and/or enrichment needs of students. All schools in the district have shifted to data-driven decision-making. All schools and teachers are on a continuum of development and accompanying additional training and mentoring are scheduled for them.

### **Standard 4 – Culture, Climate and Communication**

- We need representation of stakeholders for true decision making (parents, community members and students)
  - The district level PAC is required by federal statute to include student representatives from the high school and middle schools. The PACs at the building level are encouraged to include student representatives as well as community leaders.
- What about extending the gifted program district wide?
  - Gifted services include: Academic Decathlon; AP classes; advanced classes; Odyssey of the Mind; Spelling Bee; etc.

### **Standard 5 – Resource Management**

- What about stipends to teachers working in a high needs school?
  - The LEA already employs various incentives for teachers, however, we are excited about the concept offered to us by the Review Team for creating additional incentives for teachers working in high needs schools. Therefore, we are proposing an additional budget item of \$350,000 to offer up to \$2,000, plus benefits, as an incentive for teachers to work in the high needs schools

**B-2 Analysis of Commitment (Please answer the following questions)  
Design and implementation of interventions aligned with requirements of selected model**

- Please provide additional information on the transformational model requirement to “promote the continuous use of student data in order to inform and differentiate instruction.” Show example of things such as continuous data chat meetings throughout the year, teachers sharing with one another at staff meetings regarding the use of data to drive instruction incorporating the sharing of data with students such as L to J.
  - In previous sections of this supplement, we have indicated the following plans: data walls at every school; data teams at every school; weekly meetings with teachers to review data; team leaders conduct data talks daily; data coordinators present at each site; principal-led data analysis PD; continued implementation of L to J data driven decision-making

**Screening, selecting and assuring quality of external providers**

- What are the consultant services for RTI? Why is the job audit only for classified staff? Were stakeholders involved in choosing various external providers being used in the district?
  - Job Audit: All personnel, not just classified staff, will have a systematic audit of their job responsibilities provided through an internal or external provider. This includes students.
  - Stakeholder Choices: Stakeholders from schools and the LEA were part of the selection process for external providers, including students
  - Selection of External Providers: Choices limited to nationally recognized providers and programs: New Teacher Center, Santa Cruz; RTI, University of Texas – Austin; John-Hopkins; AZ School Transformation Group; L To J Consulting
- What are job descriptions for all external providers and what are measurable expectations? What happens if an external provider doesn't work out? How will you evaluate them and how do you know if they are successful?
  - The job descriptions for external providers are developed mutually as part of Strategy 3 described on Page 65 of the original SIG application outlines. (Action Step 3) where we specify the criteria off-site providers will be evaluated on. Evaluations will include teacher evaluation surveys, student performance data, observations of how well specified criteria have been met. The consultant agreement can be terminated at any time for failure to meet the stated criteria.
- Do you have adequate funding to attract quality people?
  - Yes, especially with the additional \$350,000 as an incentive for teachers to work in high needs schools. We appreciate the suggestion.

## **Policy; and Practices**

- What about increasing salaries?
  - The LEA is currently pursuing a twenty percent increase in its salary base (\$25,000 to \$30,000) to attract highly qualified teachers to work in high risk environments. The change would affect over 1/3 of the teachers in the district.

## **C Root Causes (Please answer the following questions)**

- What practices might be contributing to a lack of student progress?
  - The following factors have been identified by the LEA: high teacher turn-over; no consistent application of best practices; poor classroom management; inappropriate instructional materials.
- How will student achievement improve by implementing the chosen model? Address access to more effective instruction, increased learning time and expanded learning opportunities.
- Student achievement will improve by implementing the following components of the chosen model: greater M & O resources applied to the classroom (during a budget reduction mode); increased instructional time at the elementary, middle and high schools; developing a mentoring system; developing a rigorous teacher evaluation system; extended learning time through Discovery Camps; greater emphasis on focused classroom observations by principals

## **E. LEA's Accountability (Please answer the following questions)**

- How will the school improvement director monitor the over-all plan for the district?
  - The turnaround Director already has a plan of action for each turnaround Principal and each Tier I/Tier III school where principals will need to develop a month-by-month checklist indicating their progress on each of the strategies and action steps.
- What will you do if an intervention program is not working? What happens if a teacher is not meeting specific goals?
  - Since the intervention plan will be monitored on a daily, weekly and monthly basis, intervention will occur when data indicates that a modification is necessary. With respect to teachers not meeting specific goals, the protocol for teacher evaluation will include immediate intervention and if that intervention is not successful, termination will occur.

## **F. Analysis of Budget (Please answer the following questions)**

- Show a gradual release on the matrix page to show a full three year plan.
  - A gradual release plan is shown on the final submitted matrix of the budget

**G. Sustainability (Please answer the following questions)**

- Please give a narrative relating to the sustainability within the district. How does the LEA plan to incorporate services at the end of the funding period?
  - Whiteriver Unified School District has always understood that the SIG dollars involve seed money to try various strategies, programs and vendors to improve student achievement. It is our plan that we will evaluate each of these efforts as related to their effectiveness at improving student achievement. Those that fail to meet the standard of improved student achievement will be abandoned. Those that show promise and/or results for improving student achievement will be integrated into the district's overall M & O Title program efforts. In addition, all of the training that is incorporated in our SIG grant is designed around a Train-the-Trainers model, which means that once trained, we will have our own internal capacity to continue those initiatives that have demonstrated improved student achievement results. The district has already demonstrated this type of commitment in an extremely tight budget situation where reductions were necessary. No classroom instructional areas were touched. In fact, dollars from support areas were redirected to the classroom in advance of receiving any Sig dollars. The district would challenge the review team to examine any other PLA school/district that has made a similar transfer of resources from non-instructional areas to instructional areas, all while reducing their overall M & O budget. In our view, this proves commitment to sustainability in this district.