

RFP # GT-23: Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (STLE) 3
Questions and Answers

PLEASE NOTE: those STLE 3 applicants (individual applicants/consortium leads/consortium members) who were awarded an STLE 1 grant should submit an Assurance of Funding form with their STLE 3 application. Please include one signed original, as well as 4 copies. The form can be found here: <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/rfp/gt-23/home.html>.

- 1. Question:** One of our component districts received one of the first STLE grants, extending across 2 program years (10/31/12 - 6/30/14). Can or should this district use the results of this project as one of the two large-scale initiatives they are required to submit as evidence of a successful track record?

Answer: Yes, an STLE 1 grantee should use any available evidence from the first year of implementation of the STLE 1 grant as evidence of organizational capacity. As per the STLE 3 RFP, if the applicant has received any federal funds (including, but not limited to: Innovation Fund [i3], Promise Neighborhoods, School Improvement Grant [SIG]), the applicant must describe at least one of those initiatives in their application. The applicant must explain how they ensured appropriate fiscal stewardship of the grant and provide evidence of measurable increases in student achievement as a result of the initiatives funded. If the applicant had any funding period during the grant term when funds were moved from one year to another, for any reason whatsoever, this must also be explained.

- 2. Question:** Could a Novice Principal be someone whose position is split between teaching and principal duties?

Answer: Attachment V of the RFP details the NYSED-specified minimum criteria required for each of the career ladder rungs. Educators should be placed on the career ladder where districts determine that they meet the minimum criteria including the use of available APPR results. Teachers, who are considered teachers of record and will/have receive(d) teacher APPR results (please see Sections B2 and B3 of the [APPR Guidance document](#) on EngageNY for more information), should be placed on the teacher career ladder at the applicable level. Principals, who are considered principals of record and will/have receive(d) principal APPR results (please see Sections B4 and B5 of the [APPR Guidance document](#) for more information) should be placed on the principal career ladder at the applicable level. Per the STLE 3 RFP, "NYSED will not mandate or create the specific duties and responsibilities of the career ladder continuum; rather, NYSED will offer districts and public charter schools the opportunity to create, or build upon, career ladders for teachers and principals that provide opportunities for additional duties and compensation, in addition to supporting recruitment, retention and equitable distribution of the most effective educators." Applicants may choose to include additional criteria beyond the NYSED-specified minimum, if applicable to their proposal. A career ladder webinar for STLE 3 applicants focusing on the implementation of career ladder for teachers and principals (<http://www.engageny.org/resource/improving-practice>) has been posted on EngageNY.

- 3. Question:** Can a district provide career ladder positions to administrators who are not evaluated under the new APPR system (e.g. assistant principals, academic administrators)? Or must the career ladder positions be available only to administrators (e.g. sitting principals) who are evaluated under APPR?

Answer: A district can provide career ladder positions to administrators who are not evaluated under APPR; however, they cannot be funded through the STLE 3 grant. Applicants may have career ladder positions in their districts that are funded through other sources and should include this information in Attachment V. All applicants must include at least the following positions as part of the career ladder (these positions must already be in place or they must be proposed for implementation): 1) Novice (Novice Teacher and Novice Principal); 2) Professional (Professional Teacher and Professional Principal); and 3) Leader (Teacher Leader and Principal Leader). All Career Ladder positions that will receive financial compensation through the STLE 3 RFP must use State evaluation results for teachers and principals once there are enough years of APPR results available. All applicants may choose to include additional positions that may be funded through this grant and these positions may include, but are not limited to, any positions that consist of additional duties and compensation offered to educators based, at least in part, on their APPR results (and may include other district and/or public charter school selection criteria) and/or differentiated performance-based compensation based exclusively on educator ratings.

- 4. Question:** Can Assistant Principal be a rung of the Principal career ladder?

Answer: Please see the answer to question #3.

- 5a. Question:** What qualifies as compensation for teachers and principals on the career ladder?

- 5b. Question:** Is compensation strictly defined as salary or can it include release time, training hours, sub coverage, etc.?

Answer: NYSED will not mandate specific compensation requirements for teachers and/or principals. Each applicant may design compensation structures as are reasonable and necessary. Applicants should include in their application the rationale for their compensation plans. The career ladder must include at least an entry level position (Novice) and two levels beyond (Professional and Leader) with differentiated duties and responsibilities clearly defined. Compensation may be in the form of a direct financial payment to the educator or other forms of compensation as determined by the applicant. Please see Appendix C, Sustainability Support, for additional information regarding compensation structures.

- 6. Question:** What qualifies as incentives for teachers and principals who transfer to higher needs schools?

Answer: NYSED will not mandate specific incentive requirements for teachers and/or leaders. Each applicant may design incentive structures as is reasonable and necessary. However,

applicants should include in their applications the rationale for creating the recruitment or transfer award, an explanation of the design of the award, and how the award will attract and retain effective and highly effective educators into hard-to-staff and specialty subject areas, as well as high-need or low-performing schools. This should include relevant applicant information, relevant job descriptions, and an explanation of the award structure (e.g., the compensation and when/how it will be provided).

7a. Question: Can a BOCES, which is currently serving as the lead for a STLE 2 consortium, apply as the lead on behalf of a different group of school districts? Or must the applicant in that case be one of the districts which would then contract with BOCES to provide services to the consortium?

7b. Question: We are a BOCES who was awarded the Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness 2 Consortium Grant. One of our component districts is currently eligible for the Strengthening Teacher and Leader Effectiveness 3 application. We would be interested in having them apply and join our STLE 2 consortium to promote consistency in the programming that we are offering. Is there a way for the district to apply for STLE 3 and have them added to our STLE 2 consortium?

Answer: Individual school districts, individual charter schools, consortium leads, and consortium members awarded an STLE 2 grant are not eligible to apply for an STLE 3 award. As such, a BOCES that has been awarded an STLE 2 grant as a consortium lead may not apply for STLE 3 as a consortium lead of a different group of eligible STLE 3 component districts. However, an eligible district may apply as an individual or as a consortium lead/member and partner with a BOCES to provide services to the individual applicants or consortium members. Please note that the consortium lead must be an active participant in the consortium, providing a minimum of 20% of the grant activities, and cannot act solely as a flow-through for grant funds. Please submit with your application the Assurance of Funding form found here: <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttp/rfp/gt-23/home.html>.

8. Question: If we already have some career ladder positions in place, can we use STLE 3 funds to provide stipends for those positions?

Answer: The overarching purpose of the STLE 3 RFP is to encourage and support eligible applicants (districts, public charter schools, and consortiums) to develop, implement and/or, if applicable, enhance a career ladder as part of a comprehensive systems approach to recruitment, development, support, retention and equitable distribution of effective teachers and school leaders as part of their implementation of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) system required by Education Law §3012-c. As such, while already existing career ladder positions/activities may be included in the RFP, **funding from this grant cannot supplant or duplicate positions/activities already funded through other sources, including previous STLE grants.**

9. Question: Can we use STLE-3 funds to pay a coordinator to oversee the career ladder program?

Answer: Yes. The STLE 3 grant will fund initiatives under any one or more of the following three categories: 1) Career ladders that include career ladder positions for both teachers and principals and/or 2) Additional activities, if appropriate and necessary in order to develop and implement a career ladder, which are part of an overall TLE system and/or 3) Recruitment and/or transfer award(s), if appropriate and necessary in order to improve the equitable distribution of effective and highly effective educators. Please note that applicants must complete Attachment VI: Budget Narrative, which must detail and justify the funding requests under the STLE 3 RFP.

10. Question: Do responsibilities for career ladder positions and “moves” up the ladder have to be permanent? For example, could a teacher meeting Professional Teacher eligibility requirements be provided a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) responsibility in exchange for additional compensation for a limited amount of time (1-2 years)?

Answer: No, career ladder positions do not need to be permanent; however, please keep in mind that the career ladder design will be evaluated based, in part, on the measurable outcomes to be achieved in order to accomplish the program goals. Each applicant must include “long-term” criteria for career ladder positions and should also include a sustainability plan that includes each cost associated with the implementation of the career ladder to demonstrate how the district plans to fund the career ladder after the grant period.

11. Question: One of the questions asks about results of any previous federal grants. The only federal grant we have received was a Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) grant from the Department of Education several years ago. Since this program did not address student learning, should we still provide results of this initiative?

Answer: No, you do not need to include a description of previous federal grants as evidence of organizational capacity in the STLE 3 RFP if they did not relate to measurable increases in student achievement.

12. Question: Will the funds be available for 1 year only? If more than 1 year is there a projection as to how many years?

Answer: The STLE 3 anticipated project period is March 3, 2014 – June 30, 2015, with Program Period 1 being from March 3, 2014 to June 30, 2014, and Program Period 2 being from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.

13. Question: What are the chances of STLE1 award winners being awarded funds in this round?

Answer: STLE 1 grantees that are eligible to apply for STLE 3 will go through the same review and scoring process as all other STLE 3 applicants. Please see Application Review and Scoring section of the [STLE 3 RFP](#) for more information on the award methodology.

14. Question: Can positions created in the first round of the STLE grant be funded through this round, or must positions created in round 3 be brand new positions?

Answer: Activities may build upon or enhance career ladder positions that were implemented using STLE 1 funds, but they **must not duplicate or supplant STLE 1 activities**. The applicant must demonstrate that any activities that are designed to build on STLE 1 are directly related to the proposed STLE 3 initiatives and they must meet all of the requirements set forth in the STLE 3 RFP. Details regarding the three types of activities that may be supported by STLE 3 funds can be found in the Funding & Awards section of the RFP.

15. Question: Career ladder goals and measurable outcomes are addressed in both section A and section B of the RFP. In which section should these goals/outcomes be laid out? In which section of the narrative should the template in Appendix B be used?

Answer: The overall goals and measurable objectives for the applicant's career ladder and related activities should be stated in Section B. In Section A, the applicant should provide the measurable objectives for each position in the proposed career ladder.

The template found in Appendix B of the [STLE 3 RFP](#) is to be used as guidance for including the overall program goals and measurable outcomes that will determine the program's success. This may be used in its entirety, modified as necessary, or disregarded for a more appropriate format as determined by the applicant. Please note: the activities included in this template do not need to be specific, but details of these activities should be included in Section A.

16. Question: Must the applicant-selected initial criteria used to select teachers/principals for advancement until the appropriate number of years of APPR results are available be based on the existing APPR evaluations? Are there specific guidelines that this criteria must meet?

Answer: The Initial Criteria for Eligibility must include at least the NYSED Minimum Criteria described in the shaded column of Attachment V. Applicants should include different criteria for the evaluation rating minimum until the appropriate number of years of APPR results are met. This alternative must still take into account some type of applicant-determined teacher/principal evaluation results and must indicate the dates for which the criteria are valid. These initial, short-term criteria for evaluation may only be implemented until the specified number of years of APPR results (Highly Effective/Effective/Developing/Ineffective) are available to use for the long-term criteria for eligibility. To be clear: applicants **must** use State evaluation results for teachers and principals in their career ladders as enough years of APPR results continue to become available. Currently, all districts but NYC have at least one year of APPR results from the 2012-13 school year which must be used as part of the criteria for eligibility.

17. Question: Is it correct to assume that there could not be any teachers or principals at the Professional or Leader levels on the career ladder in the first year of our program, since both levels are required by NYSED to have at least one year of experience at the level below that? We currently have some additional roles that teachers and principals can take on, which could be considered part of a career ladder, but the requirements we have locally are not the same as the NYSED requirements.

Answer: The Professional and Leader ‘rungs’ on the career ladder do require prior experience as part of the initial criteria for eligibility (please see Attachment V of the [STLE 3 RFP](#)). If a district is creating a new career ladder, then it is correct that there will not be teacher or leaders at the Professional or Leader ‘rung’ during the first program period. However, if a district already has career ladder positions in place that meet NYSED’s requirement as outlined in Attachment V, then they may have teachers and leaders in Professional and Leader positions in the first program period. If the equivalent positions are using career ladder position names other than what is detailed in the STLE 3 RFP, using parentheses, please indicate in the proposal the position equivalent using Novice Teacher and Novice Principal, Professional Teacher and Professional Principal, Teacher Leader and Principal Leader.

18. Question: The NYSED minimum eligibility criteria states that Professional Teachers/Principals must first have experience as a Novice Teacher/Principal and Teacher/Principal Leaders must first have experience as a Professional Teacher/Principal. Does this mean that in grant project period it will not be possible to have Professional or Leader Teachers/Principals unless the district already has a career ladder in place that meets the minimum eligibility criteria?

Answer: Please see the response to question #17.

19. Question: We are a public school district which received STLE 1 funding. We are on the eligibility list to apply for an STLE 3 grant. May we apply to be part of a consortium applying for an STLE 3 grant? If so, may we serve as consortium lead for a STLE 3 grant application?

Answer: Eligible applicants who were awarded an STLE 1 grant may apply as a consortium member or as a consortium lead for STLE 3. Please note: while already existing career ladder positions/activities may be included in the application, ***funding from this grant cannot supplant or duplicate positions/activities already funded through other sources, including previous STLE grants.*** Additionally, consortium applicants’ career ladder(s) must be implemented across all consortium members, including the lead applicant unless the lead applicant is a BOCES.

20. Question: Are Non-Public 853 schools eligible to apply for STLE 3?

Answer: Non-Public 853 schools are not eligible to apply. As stated on page 1 of the RFP, only public school districts, public charter schools (as individual applicants or consortium leads) and BOCES (as a consortium lead) may apply. Please see the eligibility list for eligible districts and charter schools: <http://usny.nysed.gov/rttt/rfp/gt-23/eligibility.html>.