

## RFP: SA-18: Common Core Institute with Sponsored Common Core Institute Fellowship Questions and Answers

**Please note that this Q&A document was revised on September 26, 2014 to include question # 34.**

### **Prequalification Process**

Pre-qualification for all non-for-profit organizations must be completed by the due date of the grant application (public school districts and BOCES are exempt from this requirement; however, charter schools must prequalify). The prequalification process may take up to a few weeks to complete, so interested organizations are encouraged to begin this process immediately upon RFP announcement. The process is described in the RFP. If you have any questions about prequalification registration, please go to the Grants Reform website (<http://www.grantsreform.ny.gov/Grantees> ). If you intend to submit an application and have a question about your institution's status, contact NYSED at [prequal@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:prequal@mail.nysed.gov) .

### **Eligible Applicant**

1. **Question:** As a community school in District 24 Queens, New York City, are we eligible to submit a proposal or is the grant limited to proposals from school districts?

**Answer:** No. Community schools are not eligible. Eligible applicants are NYS public school *districts*, Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and NYS charter schools. In NYC, the eligible applicant is NYC Department of Education, not community school districts.

2. **Question:** Can we pursue this grant if we do not use any NYS Module materials K-4 for ELA, nor materials for math K-8? We have been referencing our approach to the modules for math and ELA for Grades 9-12 as "adapting."

**Answer:** Yes, you may pursue this grant if you have not used NYS Curricular materials. However, applicants are asked to provide evidence within their application of high quality Common Core aligned instruction across the district (Section B1 within Elements of the Proposal), and this evidence will be evaluated as a scoring criterion during NYSED's technical review of the application (see Appendix B, Scoring Rubric). Further, as stated in the Mandatory Application Requirements section, nominated educators are required to have either experience facilitating at least two sessions of local professional development or equivalent to support the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards **OR** participation in two Network Team Institutes. The details regarding this professional development experience will also be considered during scoring (see Section B2, Artifact 7, of the Elements of the Proposal and corresponding section of the Scoring Rubric.)

3. **Question:** Is this project period an absolute? Concern: This project period will require providing release time to teachers in the middle of the school year, and since the award notification is December 2014, a search for teachers during the mid-year will be difficult.

**Answer:** Yes, this project period is an absolute since the funding source is Race to the Top and these grant funds must be encumbered by June 30, 2015.

4. **Question:** What is the December date for notification of awards?

**Answer:** There is no exact date in December. This is an estimation of time since award notification depends on multiple levels of approval. NYSED is working as quickly as possible to meet all approvals.

### **Professional Development**

5. **Question:** RE: The professional development resources and opportunities for families and community - Does SED have a particular focus in mind? Or is any topic related to Common Core appropriate (such as from detailed info on a particular CCLS for a particular grade to a broad overview)?

**Answer:** No, NYSED does not have a particular focus in mind. Applicants should identify a focus aligned to existing family and community Common Core engagement plans.

### **Budget Guidance**

6. **Question:** Are laptops or other technology an allowable expense? Do they have to fall under the "supplies and materials" budget code (and so less than \$5,000) to be eligible?

**Answer:** Laptops or other technology is an allowable expense, if the program office determines that the justification provided by the applicant demonstrates that the expenses are appropriate, reasonable and necessary. The justification must also clearly align to the goals and intent of the RFP. As indicated in the Budget Guidance section of the RFP, equipment items under \$5,000 should be included under Supplies and Materials, Code 45—this means the *unit value* is under \$5,000, not the total for all units. The “supplies and materials” budget code should be used for any laptops or other technology in these applications, as a technology unit greater than \$5000 could not be justified under this RFP.

7. **Question:** Can we include printing and/or Communications support as part of the budget, for production of the family/community resources?

**Answer:** Yes, printing and/or communications support is an allowable expense if justification provided is determined by the program office to be appropriate, reasonable and necessary. The justification should also clearly align to the goals and intent of the RFP.

8. **Question:** Can districts use the budget under this RFP to pay for substitute teacher costs (the subs who are replacing the Common Core fellows)?

**Answer:** Substitute teacher costs may be an allowable expense in this RFP, if the applicant determines that this is the most efficient approach, as stated in the Scope of Work section, to supporting “the cost to release one full-time Common Core Institute Fellow (or equivalent with two part-time Fellows; for the purpose of this document, the term “Fellow” will refer to either a full-time Fellow or two part-time Fellows, each at 50 percent) for the grant period (including salary and benefits of the Common Core Institute Fellow).” However, applicants may NOT request funds to support both the Fellow’s salary and the substitute teacher’s salary.

9. **Question:** Is the cost for a substitute teacher an allowable expense? The Substitute Teacher would cover the time the Fellow will be out of the classroom.

**Answer:** See the answer to question # 8.

### **Page Limits and Standards**

10. **Question:** Is there an overall page limit for the application?

**Answer:** There is no overall page limit for the application. Please see the recommended page maximums within the Elements of the Proposal section of the RFP.

11. **Question:** Does the section B1 recommended page limit on page 18 of the RFP -- maximum of 5 pages -- include the resume? Or is it max 5 pages of text, plus the resume?

**Answer:** The recommended maximum of 5 pages in Section B1 does not include the resume.

12. **Question:** On the section B2 recommended page limit on page 18 of the RFP -- do you have a recommended maximum page limit in mind?

**Answer:** There is no recommended page limit for Section B2; however, there is a recommended maximum of 7 artifacts.

13. **Question:** The requirement to double-space all text -- does that apply to the required resumes and letter of recommendation? Does the requirement to double-space all text apply to all artifacts?

**Answer:** The double-spacing guidance applies to “all text in the proposal narrative; double space between titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, figures, and graphs, unless not possible due to the formatting of the template” as stated in the Page Limits and Standards section of the RFP. Resumes (Artifact 3) and letters of recommendation (Artifact 1) do not need to be double spaced.

14. **Question:** Is there a page limit to the budget narrative?

**Answer:** There is no overall page limit for the budget narrative.

### **Fellow/s Selection**

15. **Question:** Could SED potentially choose two full-time fellows from the same district in different content areas?

**Answer:** Yes. As stated in the Scope of Work section of the RFP, “While applicants are encouraged to submit multiple proposals to increase the chances of becoming a Common Core Institute, separate applications are required for each educator / educator

pair and supervisor. The Supervisor identified for each educator or educator pair may vary as he/she must have the qualifications and experience related to the Fellow's particular grade level/band and content area."

16. **Question:** Can we nominate a .5 fellow for 6th grade Math and a .5 fellow for 6th grade ELA?

**Answer:** No. You must nominate one full time Fellow or two part-time Fellows for a *particular grade level and content area*. As stated in the Scope of Work section, "The award will support the cost to release one full-time Common Core Institute Fellow (or equivalent with two part-time Fellows)."

17. **Question:** If a potential fellow declines the award, will it be offered to an educator with the next highest score?

**Answer:** Please note that applicants will certify, by signing the Application Cover Page (Attachment I) that "it is understood by the applicant that this application constitutes an offer and, if accepted by the NYS Education Department or renegotiated to acceptance, will form a binding agreement. With that said, if the Fellow (or one or both of the part time Fellows) nominated by the Common Core Institute is unable to accept the Fellowship due to unforeseen circumstances, then that particular Common Core Institute proposal is no longer eligible for funding; the award will go to the next highest-ranked proposal within that particular grade level/band, according to the process outlined in the Ranking and Award Methodology section of the RFP.

### Interviews

18. **Question:** When does SED anticipate scheduling interviews of nominated educators?

**Answer:** NYSED anticipates the interviews to occur between mid-October and November 26, 2014

### Supervision

19. **Question:** We are considering submitting proposals and are wondering about supervisors and their time commitment. Is the recommendation that supervisors be building principals or district level administrators?

**Answer:** This is a decision to be made by the applicant and justified in the proposal. As stated in the Scope of Work section of the RFP, "The award will support the cost [for]... partial salary and benefits of identified Supervisor (not to exceed 10% of full-time employee or equivalent)."

20. **Question:** Can a District Superintendent serve as the Supervisor of the Fellow if the Superintendent is a highly qualified Curriculum and Instruction supervisor and has had experience in managing curriculum projects in accordance with expectations and timelines?

**Answer:** Yes. A District Superintendent may serve as Supervisor of the Fellow if he/she has the required School Building Leader, School District Leader, School District Business Leader certification, as stated in Mandatory Application Requirements section of the RFP. Further, as requested in the Elements of the Proposal section, Section B1, of the RFP, “The resume of the Supervisor should include:

- Teaching and/or curriculum experience in Common Core ELA (if supervising an ELA Fellow or ELL Fellow) or Common Core Math (if supervising a Math Fellow);
- Supervisory experience; and
- Project management experience.”

21. **Question:** Can a BOCES representative serve as the Supervisor of a Fellow who is located in a school district?

**Answer:** Yes. A BOCES representative may serve as the Supervisor of a Fellow if he/she meets the qualifications stated in question # 20.

### **Qualifications of Nominated Educator**

22. **Question:** How would a teacher’s APPR score be affected – i.e. would they still be accountable for their students’ scores, even though that teacher will be out half of the school year?

**Answer:** If an educator is evaluated as a classroom teacher pursuant to Education Law §3012-c and he/she is in the classroom for more than 40% of his/her full-time position, then he/she would be required to receive a complete APPR evaluation. See B2 and B3 of APPR guidance for definitions of part-time experience and teacher of record (<https://www.engageny.org/resource/guidance-on-new-york-s-annual-professional-performance-review-law-and-regulations/>)

23. **Question:** The minimum qualifications of an educator nominated for the Common Core Institute Fellowship include a requirement that an educator receive a minimum rating as effective on the comprehensive annual evaluation system consistent with Education Law §3012-c. What is a comprehensive annual evaluation system consistent with Education Law §3012-c?

**Answer:** For purposes of this grant, a comprehensive annual evaluation system consistent with Education Law §3012-c shall mean the following:

For educators who are classroom teachers subject to Education Law §3012-c and are employed by school districts or BOCES, in order to be nominated for this grant award, the educator must be rated effective or higher pursuant to the school’s district’s or BOCES’ APPR plan approved by the Commissioner.

For educators who are not subject to Education Law §3012-c or are employed by a charter school, in order to be nominated for this grant award, the educator must be rated effective or higher pursuant to a comprehensive annual evaluation system.

For purposes of this grant only, a comprehensive evaluation system must be consistent with any applicable collective bargaining agreements and contain the following elements of Education Law §3012-c:

- (1) Is based on multiple measures of effectiveness, including 40% student achievement measures, which would result in a single composite effectiveness score for every teacher and principal;
- (2) Differentiate effectiveness for teachers and principals using the following four rating categories: Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, and Ineffective; and uses such annual evaluations as a significant factor for employment decisions including promotion, retention, supplemental compensation, and professional development; and;
- (3) Provides for the development and implementation of improvement plans for teacher or principals rated developing or ineffective.

24. **Question:** When must an educator be rated effective or higher to be nominated for a grant award?

**Answer:** An educator must be rated as effective or higher under a comprehensive annual evaluation system as defined in question # 23 in the 2013-2014 school year.

25. **Question:** Does the teaching experience have to be direct classroom instruction or would experience as an Instructional Support Teacher, working with classroom teachers to identify and implement instructional strategies in the content area, meet this requirement? Re: pg 12- *3 years of teaching experience in the content area and grade/grade band for which they are applying*

**Answer:** As stated in the Minimum Application Requirements section of the RFP, the minimum qualifications of an educator nominated for the Common Core Institute Fellowship include “3 years of teaching experience in the content area and grade/grade band for which they are applying, as indicated on the educator’s resume included in the application. For example, the ELA Fellow for grade 6 must show experience working with 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA, the Math Fellow for grade 6 must show experience working with 6<sup>th</sup> grade Mathematics, and ELL Fellow for grades 5 and 6 must show experience working with 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELLs.” For purposes of this grant award, this teaching experience may also include educators who perform instructional support services such as literacy coaches who are certified in the content area/grade band applied for.

26. **Question:** Can a BOCES Instructional Support Specialist - who does not get an APPR rating but primarily supports the CCLS; has attended all SED events on the modules & plans and facilitates the module PD would still qualify as a recipient with their vast knowledge & experience at incorporating the modules?

**Answer:** If the BOCES Instructional Support Specialist does not receive a rating in the 2013-2014 school year under a comprehensive annual evaluation system, he/she does not meet the minimum qualifications stated in the RFP and is not eligible to be nominated for a grant award. See question # 23 for the definition of a comprehensive annual evaluation system.

27. **Question:** Can a person assigned as a literacy coach in a district with no actual student load be awarded this position?

**Answer:** Yes, if the literacy coach is not required to be evaluated under Education Law §3012-c, but he/she receives a rating of effective or higher in the 2013-2014 school year under a comprehensive evaluation system consistent with Education Law 3012-c, they

may be nominated for a grant award under this RFP. See question # 23 for definition of comprehensive evaluation system.

28. **Question:** Can BOCES apply for this grant if they are proposing the use of Consultants?

**Answer:** If this question is asking about nominating a Consultant as the nominated educator, the answer is no. The nominated educator must be an employee of the district/BOCES/charter school. However, if the question is asking about the use of consultants in another capacity, this may be allowable. It is difficult to answer this question without clarification.

29. **Question:** I am a grade 4 math teacher. Do I understand correctly that I might be assigned to enhance grade 3, 4, or grade 5 modules because of scoring protocols?

**Answer:** Yes. As stated in the Ranking and Awards section of the RFP, "The first awards in each grade level/band and content area will be awarded to: the six top highest-scoring applications in each of the lower grade bands of Math and ELA (K-2 Math, 3-5 Math, and 3-5 ELA), regardless of region. (Fellows within these lower grade bands will be awarded regardless of grade level or region, but may be assigned to any grade level within that band, upon award.)" NYSED will consider the specific grade levels (along with other relevant factors, such as region) when assigning educators post-award, and will keep educators within their grade levels to the greatest extent possible.

### **Application Submission**

30. **Question:** If we wish to apply for more than 1 FTE Fellow, should the applications be mailed in separate envelopes?

**Answer:** Yes. Each Fellow (or two part-time Fellows) must be treated as a separate proposal.

31. **Question:** May the CCI application be mailed by October 7? Is it acceptable to have the application postmarked by that date?

**Answer:** It is not acceptable for the application to be postmarked by the due date of October 7, 2014. As stated in the Application Instructions section of the RFP, "All requirements, as detailed in the RFP, must be received at NYSED no later than October 7, 2014. Applications not received by October 7, 2014 will not be accepted for review."

### **Artifacts**

32. **Question:** Under Section B2, Artifact 4, please clarify what you mean by "this lesson enhancement should be provided through tracked changes." Does this mean to download the lesson in Microsoft Word, and use the "track changes" feature? If yes, can we also use the 'insert comments' feature? If no, can you please clarify?

**Answer:** Yes, that is correct. "This lesson enhancement should be provided through tracked changes" means that the lesson should be downloaded in Microsoft Word 2010 or newer and the "track changes" feature should be utilized. The "insert comments" feature may also be utilized as applicable.

33. **Question:** Will you accept videos as evidence of lesson enhancements?

**Answer:** Videos may only be submitted as part of “lesson extensions/supplemental materials, where relevant.” Lesson enhancements should be provided through tracked changes as stated in the Elements of the Proposal, Section B2, “...lesson enhancement should be provided through tracked changes and include but not be limited to....”

34. **Question:** What evidence would you like for attending Network Team Institutes? Do you require a certificate of participation/completion, or is a narrative including dates, goals, and knowledge learned sufficient?

**Answer:** A certificate of participation/completion is not required, but may be provided. The portfolio (Section B2, Artifact 7) should include, as evidence of the required participation in at least two separate Network Team Institutes, the identified goals for each session attended and a description of how knowledge learned was applied in the classroom. It should be clear from this section of the narrative how many sessions were attended by the nominated educator and what they learned from each of these experiences, respectively.

### **Scope of Work**

35. **Question:** Will NYSED request grade-level input from teachers in the field while the January-June project is underway or will previously collected feedback be the primary source of in-the-field input? This, of course, would be in addition to the Fellow’s own recognition of areas needing enhancing based on personal experience and through local requests for input.

**Answer:** Previously collected feedback will be the primary source of field input along with a collection of input from all CCI Fellows gathered during the initial 4-day training. As stated in the Scope of Work section of the RFP, Stage 1 of the Enhancement Process, “During the initial 4-day training, NYSED staff will share the prioritized feedback with Common Core Institute Fellow grade/content area teams. This prioritized feedback is a consolidated list of ongoing feedback that NYSED has received from educators who have used the materials. Teams will have an opportunity to share their proposed list of enhancements, based on their review of the curricular materials, before the list of enhancements is finalized. Once the list is finalized, Fellows will be expected to begin incorporating the enhancements on the first two lessons from Module 1 and receive frequent differentiated feedback from NYSED staff and/or NYSED designee for the purpose of calibrating to NYSED’s high standards.”

36. **Question:** Will NYSED give a Fellow a WebEx account or access to another robust teleconferencing platform in which to conduct frequent and meaningful collaboration with his/her grade-level Fellow or will the school district be responsible for this accommodation and expense?

**Answer:** NYSED will provide access to WebEx for meetings with Fellows and Supervisors. The school district will not be responsible for this accommodation or expense. However, the applicant may choose to include in their budget a teleconferencing platform (such as WebEx) for conducting regional trainings.

37. **Question:** Different grade-levels have different demands for revisions and enhancements. Will provisions be made for greater access to NYSED resource personnel during revision work-time if necessary for feedback? For example, the progression of mathematics in the Grade 6 modules is technically easier since it is the first year in the three-year Story of Ratios and because the Modules address the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for Mathematics almost exclusively by Domain. In Grade 8, the third year of a Story of Ratios, the Modules are more complex and do not address the CCLS by Domain. Instead the Standards are mixed throughout the Modules. This means that enhancing the Grade 8 modules will require more effort and feedback.

**Answer:** NYSED fully expects to provide greater access during revision work time for those modules that are more complex.

38. **Question:** Is it expected that the enhancements include more Problem Set questions and formative assessments or will the enhancement work focus on the instructional lessons (e.g. include scaffolds for differentiation, smooth the transition in the development of the mathematics in lessons that need some revision, etc...)?

**Answer:** While NYSED expects enhancements to focus on improving the instructional elements of lessons (e.g. scaffolds for differentiation, consistency and coherence across grade levels, etc.), enhancements may include the creation of additional problem sets, and/or revising formative assessments

## **Materials**

39. **Question:** What is meant by ‘facilitator guide?’

**Answer:** Facilitator Guides are training outlines, including specific instructions that can be used by educators planning to replicate training; a guide for colleagues to teach other colleagues. Grantees will develop Facilitator Guides as one of the six elements of local Common Core Implementation, as described in the Scope of Work section of the RFP: “Development of at least three resources for colleagues (Resources are to include, but will not be limited to, the following: PowerPoint presentations, Facilitator Guides and Handouts.)” This activity is meant to expand access to materials throughout the educational organization (District, BOCES or charter school).