

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS: EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) ([20 U.S.C. 1228a](#)) applies to applicants for grant awards under this program.

ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW GRANT AWARDS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.

Please respond to the following requests for information:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education is committed to providing guidance and support to promote excellence in education from infancy to adulthood for children with disabilities as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). Oklahoma's Special Education Policies and Procedures establish legal requirements for the State Education Agency (SEA), local education agencies (LEA), and other public agencies involved in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities. These policies incorporate by reference all of the IDEA's statutory requirements (20 U.S.C. §1400, et seq.) and regulatory requirements (34 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), Part 300). In addition, these policies establish additional legal requirements by the State of Oklahoma that exceed federal law. Oklahoma has also developed a general supervision system designed to ensure the implementation of the IDEA. This system is designed to: a) ensure compliance with federal and state regulations and b) improve services and results for students with disabilities.

In addition, Oklahoma's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) part B seeks to improve K-3 early literacy outcomes for students in low performing schools. The Office of Special Education Services is working with several OSDE offices and grants to improve early literacy at struggling school sites by implementing a tiered intervention framework (modeled as a multi-tiered system of support). The three tiers in the framework will provide different types of evidence-based interventions to site personnel who will implement those practices in their classrooms to benefit all students.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

Although many students with disabilities participate in the general education curriculum (as evidenced by LRE data in the most recent APR submission - Indicator 5), proficiency rates on state assessments remain low. In addition, access to effective teachers, due to a nationwide teacher shortage, impacts access to quality instruction.

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

The OSDE is already committed, through work on the SSIP, to focusing on providing evidence-based interventions for students with disabilities to increase access to the general education curriculum in

the area of literacy. More information about the SSIP can be found in the most recent APR submission (under Indicator 17) and here <https://sde.ok.gov/state-systemic-improvement-plan>.

The OSDE is also working towards a statewide multi-tiered system of supports (OKMTSS) to improve the identification of students in need of instructional support before learning failure. It has made available, at no charge to districts, an early warning dashboard to identify students who are at risk in the areas of literacy, math, behavior, and attendance all in one location. The system also allows for the input of high-quality intervention plans targeted to student needs, and the ability to monitor student progress with more frequency and alter intervention plans quickly to continue supporting student needs. In addition, the OSDE will make available training and a self-assessment tool to assist districts in identifying their next steps in the OKMTSS implementation process.

The OSDE is also committed to recruiting and retaining special education teachers. Annually, the OSDE provides funding for districts to provide professional development to teachers, hosts a variety of professional development sessions, and provides extensive technical assistance to support teachers of students with disabilities. Along with training provided under the SSIP, there is now an opportunity to earn a micro-credential in Dyslexia, improving capacity to provide more intensive and effective instruction to students with Dyslexia and other reading disabilities. The OSDE has also provided a professional learning sequence and instructional coaching for early career special education teachers through the work of the SPDG. The OSDE believes that high quality professional development and access to resources can positively impact teacher retention.

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

The OSDE will continue to annually focus on State Performance Plan indicators with LEAs and utilize our general supervision system as a continuous feedback loop in order to improve outcomes and access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities.

In addition, for the activities identified in question 3:

- 1) The OSDE will continue to implement and evaluate activities identified through the SSIP until FFY2025.
- 2) The OSDE will continue to refine the OKMTSS and support schools in implementing multi-tiered systems of support throughout the 2024-2025 school year. Opportunities for district's OKMTSS self-assessments will begin in the summer of 2024.
- 3) The OSDE will continue to provide additional professional development and technical assistance support. Additional intensive dyslexia training will continue throughout the 2024-2025 school year.

Notes:

1. Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity in order to submit an application.
2. Applicants may identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.

3. Applicants may have already included some or all of this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) and page number(s) in their applications or State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1894-0005. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain a benefit. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this individual collection, send your comments to ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference OMB Control Number 1894-0005. All other comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual form may be addressed to either (a) the person listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section in the competition Notice Inviting Applications, or (b) your assigned program officer.

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