

## Partnership Guidance for Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) Program Grants

The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) is offering the following guidance to help you determine if an existing or proposed partnership complies with the law and would be eligible to submit a proposal for an Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) grant. The essence of an Improving Teacher Quality (ITQ) project is that it is developed and implemented by a partnership formed in compliance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act and U.S. Department of Education guidance.

### Notices of Intent and grant proposals that do not include the required partners will be disqualified from further consideration.

There are two key issues regarding partnerships—the identity of the higher education partners, and the eligibility of the school district partners.

#### Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) partners:

- MUST include a School or Department of Education in a four-year baccalaureate college or university AND a School or Department of Arts and Sciences (or comparable) from a four-year baccalaureate college or university. Both public and private institutions of higher education are eligible to apply.
- Each of these partners must play a definable role in delivering the proposed project. The projects must provide *both* subject matter content and pedagogy, hence the requirement for two university partners.
- Other types of institutions, including community colleges and community-based educational organizations, may participate as *additional* partners, but *cannot take the place* of the mandated IHE partner.
- It is understood that organizational patterns vary on campuses, so the name of your schools may not be the same as above, but they must be essentially the same.
- It is not required that both IHE partners come from the same institution—they may come from two different institutions.

#### School District/Local Education Agency (LEA) partners:

Only school districts are eligible to be the “mandated” LEA partner in a grant. County offices of education cannot take the place of a required LEA. At least one school district in the partnership must qualify under federal law as “high-need.” *The definition of “high-need” for the ITQ program is different from definitions used in many other federal education programs.* Some districts that are “high-need” in reality may not be able to meet the tests to qualify for ITQ grants. There are two key tests to determine if a specific school district is eligible as “high-need” or not:

- ✓ **The first test is based on children living in poverty as measured by U.S. Census statistics for the school district.** This is a population-based test for the entire school district, not a socioeconomic test for specific schools or even for all students enrolled in the district.
  - Either 10,000 students OR 20% of the children aged 5-17 who live within the district boundaries MUST come from families who living in poverty. While most large urban school districts will likely meet the test, many medium-sized and smaller districts do

not, even though their school enrollment may have a very high percentage of poor students (such as those eligible for free and reduced lunches).

- If a school district is not designated as population-eligible in that list, it cannot meet the test of being a “high-need” district under the law. CPEC provides and updates a listing of California school districts that clearly identifies those meeting the population test. It is available at <http://www.cpec.ca.gov/FederalPrograms/EligibleDistricts.pdf>.

- ✓ **The second test is based on teacher qualifications.** The federal requirements mandate that the district must have a “high percentage” of teachers who are not teaching in the academic subjects or grade levels that the teachers were trained to teach, **OR** there are a high percentage of teachers with emergency, provisional, or temporary certification or licensing. This test is hard to quantify, as most districts have moved very close to ALL teachers being “highly qualified” under NCLB, which may be seen as a proxy for the qualification level required.

Each year, CPEC indicates what percentage automatically qualifies a district. This year, as in years past, the eligibility is contingent upon 2% or more of the teachers not meeting the NCLB definition of “highly qualified.” Districts that are close to meeting this requirement, and meet the poverty requirement, will be considered on a case by case basis by CPEC. CPEC tries to be flexible in determining what percentage a “high percentage” is depending on the most recent statewide figures from the California Department of Education.

All applications must still include specific teacher data for the school district designated as high-need in an application; such data may come from the district itself or the California Department of Education (CDE). To reach specific district data on the CDE website, go to <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/page2.asp?level=District&subject=NCLBStaff&submit1=Submit>. There is no data beyond the 2008-2009 school years, so it will be necessary for each proposer to use the data available to make the case that they meet the eligibility requirement this test.

**The 2011 RFP will require a California County Office of Education as a fourth mandatory partner to enable IHEs to build on the COEs current work on the California Common Core Standards and vice versa. County offices of education are currently planning events locally to communicate with school district personnel, principals and teachers about the new California standards. They also plan to offer in-depth professional development for teachers. Successful ITQ grant proposers partnering with COEs will maximize resources available for professional development based on the work already underway by both COEs and IHEs for the benefit of teachers in a time when funding for such endeavors is scarce.**

**Potential applicants are encouraged to determine whether their proposed “mandated” partners are truly eligible BEFORE they start to develop a proposal. All proposers must demonstrate initially that the three proposed NCLB mandated partners actually meet eligibility requirements. The fourth mandatory partner, a California County Office Education, already meets the eligibility requirements.**

Please carefully read all relevant ITQ information and keep it in mind in seeking partners for ITQ grants. For further information, contact the ITQ staff by e-mail at [Teacher\\_Quality@cpec.ca.gov](mailto:Teacher_Quality@cpec.ca.gov).