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**\*IMPORTANT UPDATE: as of 4/27/17**

¾ The following clarification is made to the RFP: The minimum scoring threshold for an application to be considered for funding was misprinted as 65 points on page 22, Section XI. Evaluation Criteria. The minimum scoring threshold is 60 points , as correctly stated on page 20, Section IX. Distribution of Awards.

**\*Reminder: Non -Mandatory Notice of Intent**

The Notice of Intent (NOI) is not a requirement for submitting a complete application by the application deadline; however, NYSED strongly encourages all prospective applicants to submit an NOI to ensure a timely and thorough review and rating process. A non- SURILW DSSOLFDQW¶V 12 , ZLOO DOVR KHOS WR IDFLOLV prequalification materials. The notice of intent is a simple email notice stating your RUJDQLJDWLRQ¶V XVH WKH OHJDO QDPH LQWHQW WR VXEF DOVR LQFOXGH \RXU RUJDQLJDWLRQ¶V 1<6 9HQGRU ,' 7KH send the NOI to [STECHSRFP@nysed.gov](mailto:STECHSRFP@nysed.gov).

**\*Important Clarifications as of 4/25/2017**

¾ The following items are to clarify eligibility of existing ECHS partnerships with respect to bonus points and the lead fiscal agent. This information clarifies information provided in the RFP and Webinar:

- 1) Any existing ECHS partnership may apply for the Smart Transfer ECHS program.
- 2) Only existing Smart Scholars ECHS partnerships have the option to submit an application for the Smart Transfer ECHS program with the IHE as the lead applicant ±provided the IHE is the lead applicant in their existing partnership.
- 3) Five (5) bonus points will be awarded to any existing ECHS partnership that can demonstrate its graduates have earned an average of 24 or more college credits for at least 2 years prior to S-3(g)6(r)2 263.09 Tm 1 0 0 rg 1 0 0 RG [30 612sf rg 1



3. Is the \$1,287,750 available for planning and summer programming the total amount available statewide for those activities?

Yes, the \$1,287,750 is the total amount available to a maximum of 17 projects for a planning phase funded at a maximum of \$75,750 for each project.

4. When will award notifications be made?

We expect to notify applicants during the summer.

5. In the past, public school districts have not been required to prequalify through Grants Gateway/the New York State Grants Reform website. Are school districts required to prequalify through Grants Gateway/the New York State Grants Reform website under this program?

No, as stated on page 24 of the ST ECHS RFP, under Prequalification for Individual Applications: Public school districts serving as the lead applicant/fiscal agent are not required to prequalify. Only any non-profit IHE applicants serving as the applicant/fiscal agent are required to prequalify by the application deadline.

- 6.





the ST ECHS funding from the State to support their ST ECHS program. This document is addressed further in Section XXII of the RFP, Application Instructions (pages 34 ±35).

14. Is there a maximum percentage of indirect costs?

As noted in Section XXIII of the RFP, Allowable Costs (page 37), school districts must use the restricted indirect cost rates calculated by the State Education Department. For existing Smart Scholars ECHS partnerships that apply for this program, and the IHE continues as the lead fiscal agent, these agencies continue to use an 8% rate. For more information on indirect costs, visit the NYSED website.

### C.) Program

1. Will previous Smart Transfer ECHS awardees be prioritized over applicants that have not previously won awards?

The Smart Transfer ECHS Program is a new grant program being initiated with this RFP. There are no previous Smart Transfer ECHS awardees. As was clarified on the first page of this Q & A: Five (5) bonus points will be awarded to any existing ECHS partnership

4. I am writing to inquire as to if the BOCES can be the applicant/fiscal agent on the NYS Smart Transfer ECHS Program? Please advise.

No. As outlined in Section VI of the RFP, page 15, a single school district, a consortium of school districts, a BOCES, or any combination of these entities may participate in a ST ECHS application. However, only a school district or an IHE in an existing Smart Scholars ECHS partnership may apply as the applicant/fiscal agent for the NYS Smart Transfer ECHS Program. Please note that a BOCES may be designated as the implementation lead for the project. The role of the implementation lead is outlined on page 16 of the RFP.

5. 7 KH DSSOLF DWLRQ VWDWHV RQ SDJH 3)RFXV 'LVWULF districts for the 2016-2017 school year. Applicants that will have at least 51% of their students enrolled from a Focus district(s) will receive a 5 point bonus. A listing of the eligible Focus districts and Priority and Focus schools may be found RQ WKH 1 < 6 (' ZHEVLWH ' \$UH 3ULRULW\ DQG )RFXV 6FKI points?

A district with a Priority or Focus School is always a Focus District. If the school is a Priority or Focus School, whose students will make up at least 51% of the ST ECHS enrollment, the applicant will be eligible to receive 5 bonus points.

6. Can multiple districts partner to apply for funding? If one of the districts is a Focus district and at least 51% of the participating students are from that district, would the application receive the 5 bonus points?

Yes, as outlined in Section VI of the RFP, page 15, a single school district, a consortium of school districts, a BOCES, or any combination of these entities may participate in a ST ECHS application. However, one school district, or an IHE in an existing Smart Scholars ECHS partnership, must serve as the applicant/fiscal agent for the NYS Smart Transfer ECHS Program. If one of the districts is a Focus district and at least 51% of the participating students are from that district, the application would receive 5 bonus points.

Please keep in mind that the application must include a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by all partners in order to be reviewed for consideration.

7. On page 13 of the RFP it states, "At least 51% of the students are eligible to SDUWLFLSDWH LQ WKH IUHH RU UHGXFHG SULFH OXQFK the applicant district needs to be eligible for free/reduced lunch, 51% of the combined district populations if multiple districts apply together under 1 district, 51% of the high school student population, or just 51% of the actual Smart Transfer ECHS participants?"





Yes, there can be more than one four-year institution of higher education partner. Keep in mind that all partners must sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

13. Is a college allowed to be a partner in more than one proposal?

Yes, a college may be a partner in more than one ST ECHS proposal.

14. Page 1 of the application indicates there will be up to 17 awards, but other sections indicate there will be one award made per region for the 10 Regent regions, which would only be 10 awards. Please clarify the anticipated number of



students.





Although PTECHs cannot be expanded through the NYS Smart Transfer ECHS program, would outcomes ach

A Smart Transfer cohort begins in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. As stipulated in the RFP, Section IV Detailed Requirements/Specifications (page 11), Eligible students enter the ST-ECHS at no later than the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level and complete the ST-ECHS program in four years. A ST ECHS partnership cannot begin funding for 12<sup>th</sup> graders and build from there.

38. I understand that either a school district or an IHE currently serving as a fiscal agent in existing Smart Scholars partnerships are eligible to apply. Is it possible that either a school (and not the Central NYCDOE) or a CUNY college (other than City Tech and Medgar Evers) are eligible to apply? I have a scenario that , ¶ G OLNH WR SXUVXH ZLWK <RUN & Rock Early College Academy - that offers students up to 60 college credits by the end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade, EXW LW ¶ V QRW FOH DU WR PH ZKHWKHU WKH LGHD ZRXC

As we clarified at the beginning of the Q & A document, eligible applicants will be 1HZ <RUN 6WDWH SXEOLF VFKRRO GLVWULFWV 3 VFKRRO serving as the fiscal agent in existing Smart Scholars ECHS partnerships, applying on behalf of the partnership. An individual school building or an IHE that is not applying on behalf of an existing Smart Scholars partnership may not apply as the lead fiscal agent for this grant. Therefore, a CUNY College that is not serving as the lead applicant/fiscal agent for an existing Smart Scholars ECHS partnership may not apply as the lead fiscal agent for this grant. In addition, a school may not apply in lieu of the Central NYCDOE. The NYC DOE would be the eligible school district applicant in NYC, not individual Community School Districts. The NYC DOE must designate the location for the ST ECHS. Also note that any existing partnership would begin its Smart Transfer program with only the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level, and add a grade level each grant period. In addition, as noted in Section XXII., Application Instructions, on page 35, the Budget Narrative, an existing ECHS partnership should take special care to address issues of supplanting and duplicative services. ST ECHS funding cannot supplant existing funding sources.

39. It would appear that requiring a minimum cohort of 25 students for the STECHS grant places smaller districts at a disadvantage. Is it possible for two districts to partner, or could a smaller district offer the program to a cohort of less than 25 each year?

As outlined in Section VI of the RFP, page 15, a single school district, a consortium of school districts, a BOCES, or any combination of these entities may participate in a ST ECHS application. Note that in all caml ET Q q 0.00000912 0 612 79

40. The cohort number is my biggest concern with this. Looking at our current 8th grade class (because if this were to start next year they would be our incoming 9th graders), to get 25 students enrolled would be 30% of that entire class. My question is whether or not we can apply for a waiver to oversee this, or if there was any possibility of going off of a percent of a grade. My understanding of what I read was that if you do not meet the 25 student minimum then you are disqualified from the funding. They also put a cap of 45, which a district can try to get raised. I do not believe it says anything about changing the minimum though.

As outlined in Section X. Project Funding (page 21), the limits for the size of grade cohorts are a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 45 students. Existing ECHS partnerships applying for this grant program may present their case for serving larger cohorts by providing justification in the Target Population section of the Proposal Narrative.

41. May two or more districts, all within 45 minutes of the partner IHE's campus, partner together under one proposal in order to meet the minimum number of students per grade level, provided that at least three college courses are held on the partner IHE campus along with other program activities for all participating students?

As outlined in Section VI of the RFP, page 15, a single school district, a consortium of school districts, a BOCES, or any combination of these entities may participate in a ST ECHS application. Note that in all cases, the ST ECHS must be located at one common site. In addition, one school district must be designated as the lead applicant/fiscal agent.

42. Can an entity apply for Smart Scholars ECHS monies (the four year grant cycle) without necessarily applying in tandem for planning, summer programming and orientation etc., activities.

First to clarify, this question must be referring to Smart Transfer ECHS monies, not Smart Scholars ECHS monies. NYSED expects that all Smart Transfer ECHS grantees will need to conduct some level of planning to implement their program; however, as addressed in Section VIII page 20, and in Section XXIII, page 36, the funding provided for the planning phase may also be used to conduct activities for the initial 9<sup>th</sup> grade cohort.

43. If an entity were to apply for planning etc. monies in tandem with Smart Transfer ECHS , could they phase the planning in as discussed on pages 35 and 36 in the pre-opening phase thru Dec 2017, then implement a summer program plan and orientation through August 2018, then begin the four year cycle for the larger program in Fall 2018?



No, the implementation of programming for the initial 9<sup>th</sup> grade cohort must start by January 1, 2018; however, it may start during the planning phase (August 1 ± December 31, 2017).

Yes, this is correct with respect to serving as the lead applicant and fiscal agent.  
As outlined in