FORM 5
Acknowledgment of Amendments
Request for Information (Q&A)
State Invested Pre-K Program

Amendment Number One
August 23, 2022

1. Can school districts replace local funds of existing classrooms with this funding to increase the quality of the pre-K classrooms?

Public school districts may apply to serve four-year-old children in two ways: create new pre-K programs or create new pre-K classrooms in existing programs.

If programs that have current classrooms and are using local funds, they may use the SIP grant funds to replace district local funds. Districts must explain in detail how they will implement the quality improvements in question a. in the application on page 23, that also includes a continuous quality improvement system (item J on page 10) and professional learning through early childhood coaches (item K on page 10).

Awarded public school districts that accept this funding must ensure that all classrooms serving four-year-old children that the district operates are meeting all the requirements listed on Form 1, Section III, Program Requirements. These funds can be used to support quality improvement in all classrooms serving four-year-old children.

2. Our pre-k is a tuition-based entity. Parents pay a monthly tuition. The district covers the expenses for our pre-k program, so am I assuming correctly to say we are not funded by the state?

The Early Learning Collaboratives (ELCs) (state funded programs) are listed at this link: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/elc_map_041822.png

3. Do you have to be a certified teacher to be qualified to apply for this program position?

This grant is not for the Educator in Residence (EIR) program. It is for a pre-k program developed by a local public school district.

4. Can the funds from the State Invested Pre-K Program be used as match funding for the Early Learning Collaborative Grant?

Early Learning Collaboratives are not eligible for this funding.
5. On Form 1, pages 21 & 22, what is the difference between number two and number five?

   This is a typographical error of duplication of items.

6. On Form 1, page 22, what is the difference between number three and four?

   Number three addresses the information in the first paragraph of section L on page 11. Number four addresses the information in the second paragraph of section L on page 11. The Head Start partner needs to sign the respective line in the Required Signatures on page 22 if the school district is working with the Head Start to dually enroll (coordinated enrollment) students at the public school pre-K program.

   Training is posted on the Early Childhood webpage (www.mdek12.org/ec) of the MDE website titled, “Ways School Districts Can Work with Area Head Start Entities to Coordinate Enrollment”. Visit the site to listen and find out more about coordinated (dual) enrollment.

7. Why are Collaboratives excluded although it states that the money can be used for expansion, and it’s woven into every aspect of the grant that these funds may be used to expand current programs?

   ELCs are not eligible for this state funding, however, there is a process if ELCs wish to expand can do so. Please contact Dr. Jill Dent at jdent@mdek12.org to find out more information.

8. Under the justification of need for the program, the majority of the criteria appears to speak to the needs of the district. How does this account for existing pre-k programs that may need more resources?

   In House Bill 1600 (http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/documents/2022/pdf/HB/1600-1699/HB1600SG.pdf), this funding is specifically allocated to public school districts.

9. What are the guidelines for determining student eligibility?

   Eligibility for enrollment is determined by the public school district.

10. Does the Executive Director signature mean Head Start?

    If the district is partnering with Head Start the representative would sign on page 22 with the other required signatures. The grey box at the bottom of page 22 is for MDE use only.

11. Item 3 speaks to partnership with Head Start or Childcare and is only worth 4 points while the others are at 5, why?

    This was the determination of points for this item.

12. Under the priority area, applicants can get 14 points without Head Start- what’s the incentive for partnership?

    Partnerships are incentivized with additional priority points and additional funding. See the response to number 26.

13. How does coordinated (dual) enrollment work specifically?

    Please see the response to question number six.
14. What is the maximum number of classes that can be applied for?

There is no maximum.

15. Is the application available in a Word document rather than a PDF?

Yes, please go to https://mdek12.org/PN/RFP.

16. On Section I (Eligibility) of the application, do I put the current classroom numbers we have by each school in the district if this is an expansion project? If so, what would we use as the type of pre-k classroom for the current classrooms, if we are doing an expansion?

In the case of expansion, please list the school’s name and the number of classrooms the district would like to add. In the next column, indicate if it is a program expansion and indicate the number of children that would be enrolled in the classrooms.

If the program is using this funding to replace local funds, indicate the school, number of classrooms, “improvement of quality”, and the number of children in the pre-k classrooms.

Please see the response to question number one.

17. Are Districts with existing Pre-K programs eligible to apply under the create new pre-k programs component on page 5?

Yes, this would be considered an expansion as long as the district does not have an Early Learning Collaborative grant.

18. Does program redesign (i.e., embedded professional development for Pre-K teacher and Pre-K assistant, coordinated and collaborative professional development with area child care providers, adopting a rigorous curriculum with both adaptive instruction/assessment technologies and direct instruction capabilities, and routine monitoring of classroom instruction using a research-based instrument such as CLASS as an essential function of the Pre-K coordinator) satisfy the criteria of new on page 5?

All programs/pre-K classrooms funded in the district must meet all the criteria identified on Form 1, Section III; Program Requirements, number 1. These funds can be used to support quality improvement in all classrooms serving four-year-old children.

19. Does the addition of (e.g., embedded professional development for Pre-K teacher and Pre-K assistant; adopting a rigorous curriculum with both adaptive instruction/assessment technologies and direct instruction capabilities; routine monitoring of classroom instruction using a research-based instrument such as CLASS as an essential function of the Pre-K coordinator) satisfy the criteria of expansion on page 20?

All programs/pre-K classrooms funded in the district must meet all the criteria identified on Form 1, Section III; Program Requirements, number 1. These funds can be used to support quality improvement in all classrooms serving four-year-old children.
20. If writing the grant as an expansion for our current pre-K program, what will happen if our current classrooms can no longer be funded after the 2022-2023 school year due to another grant ending after that school year? Will we be penalized or expected to continue our current classrooms if we have no funding?

No, this grant does not impact other grant activities. However, in submitting this grant the local district should consider this as an opportunity to sustain funding for the pre-K program that will not be funded after spring 2023 which could be explained in the application and budget.

21. If we are writing for a particular number of classrooms at different schools within our district but have an increase or decrease in enrollment after this current year, could we move those funded classrooms to other needed schools within our district (who will be included in the grant)?

Yes

22. If we are awarded the grant, will the expectation be to begin these new pre-K classes during the 2022-2023 school year? Could the spring semester be used as a planning semester for the implementation of classrooms to begin 2023-2024?

All considerations for programming will be based on the needs of the public school district. If there are challenges to meet that timeline, programs may begin in August 2023.

23. Under the state invested pre-K program, can public charter schools partner with childcare centers or Head Start where the classroom is not on their campus?

Pre-K classrooms are required to be on the public school/charter school campus.

24. Because public charter schools can accept students across district lines, can they serve childcare centers in different districts?

See response to number 23, and the charter school policy for admission.

25. Can a public charter school that does not serve a kindergarten grade participate in this program?

No, there would be no continuum of early learning services for students.

26. What is the responsibility of the child care and head start partner?

Districts have two options for partnerships that is identified on page 11 of the RFA.

1. MDE encourages districts to partner and collaborate with child care centers and Head Start entities to engage in transition activities, professional development, and professional learning communities.

In this partnership option, the district will be responsible for working with Head Start and child care entities in their community to offer professional development, and professional learning communities. Districts will also need to engage in transition activities with Head Start and child care providers. Districts should reach out to the providers to organize and offer the opportunity for the activities. The Head Start and child care providers should participate in the transition activities, professional development, and professional learning communities; if possible, if they have agreed to be part of the project.
2. Enrollment in the prekindergarten program can be coordinated with the Head Start agencies in the local areas and can prevent a reduction in children served by the Head Start program. Programs can work with area Head Start entities and offer coordinated enrollment (dual enrollment) at the public school program. Coordinated enrollment (dual enrollment) can offer families of children housed at public schools opportunities for additional support and resources. Programs that work with Head Start entities to coordinate enrollment and dually enroll children will be able to request up to $125,000 per classroom. Those that do not will be able to request up to $100,000 per classroom.

In this partnership option, Head Start will have to be a vital part of coordinating the program implementation so that they can dually enroll the children in the Head Start program that are attending the pre-K program at the public school district. For more information about this option, please review the document at this link: https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/early-childhood/coordinated-enrollment-success.pdf?sfvrsn=2, and the video located on the Office of Early Childhood website at www.mdek12.org/ec.

Please see the response to question number 6.

27. Do we have to complete two separate applications for two different school sites?

No, not if they are in the same public school district.

28. Does the project coordinator have to have an Early Childhood Degree or Pre-K certification? Can that person be a district administrator?

It is not necessary that the project coordinator have an early childhood degree, but the coordinator should be familiar with early childhood developmentally appropriate practices. This position can be a district administrator.

29. The District Kindergarten Readiness Rate requested is that the Beginning-of-Year (BOY) or End-of-Year (EOY) scores?

This rate is the percentage of children scoring ≥ 681 in the district. That information is in the 2021-2022 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Results report located at this link: https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OEA/OPR/2022/spring_2022_kindergarten_readiness_assessment_results_kg_final.pdf.

30. If we are a grant recipient and cannot find a qualified teacher, what is the recourse?

MDE will work with the district to help identify qualified personnel. MDE offers the Specialized Early Childhood Bootcamp Training at no cost that teachers and assistants may attend to acquire the early childhood specialization.

31. We have approval pending for an Early Childhood Collaborative grant. Would it be possible to decline those funds and, instead, compete for SIP funds?

Early Learning Collaborative grantees for Cohort V were approved at the August 18 State Board of Education meeting. Early Learning Collaborative grant funds are more reliable with continued funding each year since 2013. As long as the program meets the requirements and appropriations for the ELCs are provided by the legislature, the grant to the collaborative will be continued.
The State Invested Pre-K (SIP) program is new, therefore, additional appropriation of funds are not established or guaranteed to continue at this time. The SIP grant program is highly competitive and has a three-year project period.

32. If a PreK class is currently supported by ARP funds, can the SIP funds take over at the end of ARP funding?

ARP ESSER funds may be replaced after the end of the ESSER grant award with SIP grant funds if the funding can be used by the designated timelines indicated in the RFA. The SIP grant funds can be used to supplement and create additional classrooms in the existing program.

Please see the response to question 20.

33. Can letters of support be attached to the application?

On page 15 the application requirements are: 1. Signed Cover Sheet (Form 1) - Required Signature(s), 2. Application, and 3. Budget Forms A & B – Complete.

34. I understand Forms 2-5 are not required until or unless there is notice of award. Should EUI verification be submitted with the proposal?

On page 29 in the RFA, the Required Attachments after Notice of Award are listed and include the EUI verification.

38. Please clarify “functioning” by January 2023. Does that mean that the entire group of students must be present? Can additional children be added a little later as long as staffing is in place?

See the response to question 22. Yes, children can be added later if seats are still available.

Amendment Number One

NOTE: This amendment one is hereby made a part of the Mississippi Department of Education’s Request for Applications. The Applicant acknowledges receipt of said amendment and is made aware of the changes contained therein. By signing this form, the Applicant accepts the changes as part of the subgrant requirement.

________________________________________                       ___________________________
Authorized Signature                Date

________________________________________
Printed Name