April 11, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Thomas R. Bice
State Superintendent of Education

RE: Application for Project Closing the Gap: Creating Effective Inclusive Environments

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Office of Learning Support, Special Education Services Section, is pleased to announce a competitive State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) for Project Closing the Gap (CTG) Request for Application (RFA). Through this competitive process, one new Project CTG site will be selected for the 2014-2015 school year, with the option for one year’s renewal contingent upon project performance and mutual agreement.

The selected project site will implement SPDG Goal 2: Implement the coordinated professional development system that will increase the capacity of educators and families to understand and utilize a multi-tiered system of support for students with disabilities, which will lead to improved student performance and graduation outcomes. In order to address Goal 2, the selected Project CTG site will focus on creating effective inclusive environments for students with disabilities in Grades 3-9 in one feeder pattern designated by the local education agency (LEA). The selected LEA Project CTG will accomplish this goal through the implementation of evidence-based practices to include instructional coaching, collaborative teaching, and behavioral management. Ongoing professional development will be provided by SPDG consultants, state-level staff, and school district personnel involved in the project.

The SPDG intends to award one grant in the amount of $234,000 for the period June 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015, to support two full-time Project CTG coaches and other implementation support as outlined in the RFA. The salary and benefits will be paid 100% for the first coach and 50% for the second coach. The LEA will be responsible for the remaining 50% of salary and benefits of the second coach. These funds are provided by the ALSDE through the SPDG to develop “scale-up” demonstration sites throughout the state. The SPDG is a five-year grant awarded through the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The application packet for Project Closing the Gap: Creating Effective Inclusive Environments is attached.

If your LEA is interested in applying for funds to develop a Project CTG Demonstration Site, please complete and return the attached application packet in the format requested no later than April 30, 2014. The proposal must be received in the ALSDE, Special Education Services Section, by the close of business on April 30, 2014. Faxed submissions will not be accepted.

If you need assistance, please contact Susan Williamson, Theresa Farmer, or Lisa Highfield in the Special Education Services Section by telephone at (334) 242-8114 or by e-mail at swilliamson@alsde.edu, tfarmer@alsde.edu, or lhightfield@alsde.edu.

TRB:TF:RG
Attachment
cc: City and County Special Education Coordinators
FY14-2050
ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Request for Application

Alabama State Personnel Development Grant
for
Project Closing the Gap: Creating Effective Inclusive Environments
(AL SPDG-CTG)

NOTE: Faxed or e-mailed applications will not be accepted.

Mailing Address: Lisa Highfield
Alabama State Department of Education
Special Education Services
P. O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36130-2101

Physical Address: Gordon Persons Building, Room 3305
50 North Ripley Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

DEADLINE: Proposal must be received no later than 5 p.m. on April 30, 2014

- An original signature is required on the proposal.
- Clearly mark on the outside of the envelope Project Closing the Gap (CTG).

PROPOSAL PUBLIC OPENING

May 1, 2014
8:30 a.m.
Whetstone Conference Room
Gordon Persons Building, Room 3346
50 North Ripley Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36104
ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES
FY 2014 APPLICATION COVER PAGE
Project Closing the Gap
Creating Effective Inclusive Environments (CEIE) Grant

LEA Name: 

LEA Address: 

LEA/School Contact: 

Address (if different from LEA): 

LEA/School Contact Telephone: LEA/School Fax: 

LEA/School Contact E-Mail Address (Required): 

LEA Superintendent: 

Signature: Superintendent of Education

Signature: Custodian of Funds or Chief Financial Officer

Proposed Feeder Pattern Site for Project Closing the Gap (CTG):

No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, gender, race, religion, national origin, color, age or genetics. Ref: Sec. 1983, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C.; Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972; Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008: Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 242-8165.
PROJECT CLOSING THE GAP
CREATING EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS (CEIE) GRANT
STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES

_____________________________________, as applicant, hereby assures the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Office of Learning Support, Special Education Services Section, that it will:

1. Provide to the ALSDE the services of two full-time employees (FTE). One Master’s Degree level General Education Teacher who will serve as a Project CTG Coach and one Master’s Degree level Special Education Teacher who will serve as a Project CTG Coach.
2. Provide funding to support .5 FTE for one of the Project CTG Coaches.
3. Provide funding to support travel within the school district for both Project CTG Coaches.
4. Provide funding to supply both Project CTG Coaches with laptop computers equipped with the most current operating systems capable of supporting online/virtual coaching.
5. Provide both Project CTG Coaches an office space and/or a base office located centrally to targeted feeder pattern schools.
6. Establish a LEA Project CTG implementation team to collaborate with Alabama State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) staff and Project CTG consultants to support Project CTG CEIE implementation within a selected feeder pattern and target schools within the feeder pattern. Select members of the implementation team will participate in 70 percent of the specialized professional development (PD) offered by SPDG staff and/or SPDG consultants. When applicable, PD activities will be recorded and archived for constant viewing. Specialized PD topics and technical assistance (TA) support will be offered virtually through WebEx and/or other video conferencing, Webinars, and face-to-face methods (see attachment for a list of specialized PD and TA support). The LEA Project CTG implementation team will participate in the initial Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) meeting to assign contact personnel for each key point listed in the Request for Application (RFA). The LEA Project CTG implementation team will include:
   • The LEA Superintendent.
   • The Special Education Coordinator.
   • Other Key LEA Instructional Leaders.
   • Project CTG Coaches.
   • One of more LEA Technology Support Personnel.
   • Administrative representation from schools within the selected feeder pattern.
7. Appoint a supervisor(s) who will provide administrative support and work closely with Project CTG Coaches. The SPDG request administrative support including, but not limited to, the following:
   • Coaching, guidance, and professional support.
   • Informing Project CTG Coaches of LEA Board procedures and protocol for participating in activities scheduled by the SPDG outside of the LEA.
   • Supporting Project CTG performance objectives and performance measures required by OSEP.
   • Evaluating Project CTG Coaches annually, in accordance with LEA Board Policy.
8. Collaborate with SPDG staff and consultants to design an implementation plan to:
   • Review operational processes and identify issues of concern.
   • Review and monitor Project CTG Performance Measures required by OSEP.
   • Implement and utilize Alabama Parent Education Center (APEC) resources.
   • Scale-up and sustain Project CTG implementation objectives beyond the awarded grant period.
9. Establish at least one collaborative team consisting of one general education and one special education teacher at each school within identified feeder pattern.
10. Comply fully with Alabama Act #2000-775 relative to criminal history and background checks, if applicable.

The applicant further assures the ALSDE that the following compliances will be met:

- *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* - PL 108-446
- Protection of Human Subjects – HEW policy
- Sex Discrimination, Title IX, Education Act, 1972
- Civil Rights - PL 88 352
- Freedom of Information – PL 03-502

______________________________    ________________________    __________
Signature of LEA Superintendent       Typed Name            Date
ALABAMA STATE PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT GRANT (SPDG) 
FOR 
PROJECT CLOSING THE GAP (CTG): CREATING EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE 
ENVIRONMENTS 

PROJECT DESIGN INTRODUCTION 

The Alabama State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) Project Closing the Gap (CTG) received initial 
funding on October 2012 (ALSPDG application www.alspgd.org). The SPDG proposal was based upon the 
promise of building stronger linkages across the professional development (PD) systems utilized by the 
Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), as well as within the professional development 
system utilized by the Alabama Parent Education Center (APEC). These strengthened linkages were 
developed in order to maximize the impact of professional development upon teacher practice and family 
outcomes, specifically in the areas of literacy and mathematics, behavior, and post-school outcomes. The 
specific components of Project CTG’s Project Performance Measures were developed to measure specific 
indicators that when implemented in conjunction with the Implementation Science Drivers and Response to 
Intervention (RtI) are designed to create effective inclusive environments (CEIE).

This Request for Application (RFA) seeks applicants addressing Goal 2 of the SPDG. Goal 2 focuses upon 
Project CTG RtI/CEIE implementation within feeder pattern target schools in a local education agency (LEA), 
selected through the RFA. Attachments containing detailed information about the U. S. Department of 
Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), requirements for state grantee and ALSDE LEA 
partners are noted throughout this application. Specifically, Goal 2 of the SPDG is detailed below:

Goal 2: Implement the coordinated PD system that will increase the capacity of educators and families to 
understand and utilize a multi-tiered system of support for Students with Disabilities (SWD), which will lead 
to improved student performance and graduation outcomes.

Purpose and Scope 

The purpose of this RFA is to select one LEA as a new Project CTG Implementation Site and to clearly identify 
roles and responsibilities related to the SPDG Project CTG and LEA partners selected through the RFA 
process. The overall project period for the SPDG is October 2012-September 2017. The time period specific 
to this RFA is June 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015.

Duration of Understanding 

For this agreement, the project year will begin June 1, 2014, and end June 1, 2015. An additional project year 
ending in June 2016 is contingent upon project performance and mutual agreement.

THE SPDG Commits To: 

- Provide funding to support salary and benefits for two full-time Project CTG coaches (General Education- 
and Special Education-certified employees) according to the following:
  - One Ten-Month Contract (including salary and benefits based on a Master’s Degree employee) paid 
at 100 percent.
  - One Ten-Month Contract (including salary and benefits based on a Master’s Degree employee) paid 
at 50 percent (the LEA will be responsible for 50 percent of the second coach’s salary).
• Provide funding to support Project CTG implementation and coaching activities including, but not limited to, the following:
  o Operational supplies and materials.
  o Subscription with a video conferencing client capable of supporting online/virtual coaching and PD for Project CTG implementation support.
  o Online coaching, co-planning, and co-teaching equipment as approved by the SPDG Director.
  o Project CTG implementation materials as approved by the SPDG Director.
• Provide funding to support substitute reimbursement for collaborative teams to attend PD conducted in selected schools in the LEA feeder pattern participating in Project CTG.
• Provide funding to support implementation materials for selected schools in the LEA feeder pattern participating in Project CTG as approved by the SPDG Director.
• Provide funding to support Online Coaching, Co-Planning, and Co-Teaching equipment for selected schools in the LEA feeder pattern participating in Project CTG as approved by the SPDG Director.
• Provide funding and process travel claims in accordance with state rules, regulations, and rates for SPDG supported activities outside of the selected LEA participating in Project CTG.
• Provide funding for expert consultants to offer specialized PD and technical assistance (TA) to support:
  o Evidence-based Professional Development Components required by OSEP (attached).
  o Co-teaching in Content Areas.
  o Virtual Coaching on Co-Teachers’ Planning and Instruction. http://acumen.lib.ua.edu/content/0015/0000001/0000924/0015_0000001_0000924.pdf
  o Instructional Coaching Group – Jim Knight (The Instructional Coaching Institute).
  o Alabama Parent Education Center (APEC). http://alabamaparentcenter.com/
  o Technology support and implementation.
• Collaborate with the selected Project CTG LEA implementation team to design a plan to:
  o Review operational processes and identify issues of concern.
  o Review and Monitor Project CTG Performance Measures related to SPDG OSEP requirements and the LEA partnership.
  o Scale-Up and sustain Project CTG objectives beyond the awarded grant period.
• Schedule a meeting with the selected LEA to determine and assign contact personnel for each key point listed in the RFA (May 1, 2014).
THE SELECTED LEA COMMITS TO:

- Provide to the ALSDE the services of two full-time employees (FTE).
  - Project CTG Coach One TBA.
  - Project CTG Coach Two TBA.
- Establish a LEA Project CTG implementation team to collaborate with SPDG staff and consultants to support Project CTG’s RTI/CEIE implementation within a selected feeder pattern and target schools within the feeder pattern. Select members of the implementation team will participate in 70 percent of the specialized professional development offered by SPDG staff and/or consultant(s). The LEA Project CTG implementation team will include:
  - The Superintendent.
  - The Special Education Coordinator.
  - Other Key LEA Instructional Administrators.
  - Project CTG Coaches (2).
  - Key Technology Support Personnel.
  - Administrators from the Project CTG selected feeder pattern schools.
- Appoint a supervisor who will provide administrative support and work closely with the Project CTG coaches. The SPDG requests administrative support including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Coaching and guidance.
  - Providing feedback and professional support.
  - Informing Project CTG coaches of Board procedures and/or protocol for participating activities scheduled by SPDG outside of the LEA.
  - Supporting Project CTG performance objectives and performances measures required by OSEP.
  - Evaluating Project CTG coaches annually in accordance with Board Policy.
- Within each school of the identified feeder pattern, establish at least one collaborative team consisting of one general education and one special education teacher who will co-teach, co-plan, and receive virtual coaching.
- Provide funding to support 50 percent of salary and benefits for one Project CTG Coach.
- Provide funding to support travel within the LEA for both Project CTG coaches.
- Provide office space and/or a base office located centrally to the targeted feeder pattern schools for each Project CTG Coach.
- Provide Project CTG coaches with access to Progress Monitoring Data Reports.
- Submit reimbursement claims to ALSDE on a monthly basis.
- Support and provide opportunities to implement Online coaching and co-planning.
- Attend all scheduled SPDG Project CTG quarterly meetings and/or assign a designee to attend meetings.

GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT CTG COACHES

- Project CTG coaches will be selected by the LEA Implementation Team and an SPDG committee (see Criteria for selecting general and special education Project CTG coaches).
- Prior to employment, potential coaches will meet with the LEA Implementation Team and the SPDG committee to review the roles, responsibilities, and expectations for Project CTG coaches.
- Project CTG coaches will participate in annual evaluations approved in accordance with the LEA Policy.
- Project CTG coaches’ summer employment schedules (hours per day) will be based on the LEA Policy.
- Project CTG coaches will submit a Consultant Activity Report (CAR) to the appointed SPDG staff member during summer employment.
Reporting

- The CTG coaches will be required to submit timely reports and data, as requested, related to submission of required SPDG federal reporting.

The OSEP requires the Alabama SPDG to submit an Annual Performance Report (APR). The SPDG data results are analyzed and reported to OSEP by the SPDG External Evaluator (Evergreen Evaluation, Inc.). The LEA Project CTG coaches will be required to collect and submit data, as required, upon request from the SPDG staff.
ALABAMA STATE PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT GRANT (AL SPDG)
PROJECT: CLOSING THE GAP (CTG)
CREATING EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS (CEIE)

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

Each application must include all specified items in order to be considered complete. Incomplete applications will not be scored. Please adhere to word limits. Complete applications must include narrative addressing the following sections:

I. **Need for the Project:** (Include data to support the need for implementation of this project in your local education agency (LEA). Word limit: 250 words. If graphs are included, place graphs in an appendix rather than inserted into the narrative. (15 points).

II. **Project Proposal:** Describe what the LEA proposes to do to meet the need described in Section I through Project CTG implementation. Include a description of the demographics and data related to the projected feeder pattern site. Word limit: 500 words. (25 points)

III. **Project Personnel Capacity:** Please include names (if known), titles, position descriptions, and resumes for key LEA and school personnel who will be associated with Project CTG implementation. (20 points)

IV. **Project Partnerships:** Please include a description of the roles of other agencies or regional staff (such as Alabama Reading Initiative; Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative; Regional Planning Team, etc.) who will assist with project implementation. Include letters of support from partners in the appendix. (15 points)

V. Describe how parents of students with disabilities will be involved with project implementation. Word limit: 250 words. (20 points)

VI. Briefly describe any potential barriers to implementation and ways in which the LEA intends to overcome those potential barriers. (5 points)

Project Evaluations will be conducted by the Project CTG External Evaluator. All budgets for this project will be developed by the Alabama State Personnel Development Grant and negotiated with the LEA.