

## **LETTER OF INTENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INCLUSIVE PRACTICES PLC PROJECT**

The purpose of requesting a Letter of Intent (LOI) is to gauge the level of interest, readiness, and commitment among the schools and districts across the state. A LOI is the **required** first step of the application process. This document is intended to provide an overview of the program, the intended outcomes, and the application/selection process so that schools and districts can fully and seriously consider this opportunity.

### **Technical Abstract**

There is an abundance of evidence in the education community that the best way to ensure high levels of learning for all students is for schools to function as Professional Learning Communities (PLC). The Arkansas Department of Education Division of Elementary and Secondary Education and Solution Tree, Inc. have established a partnership to develop and expand the Professional Learning Communities at Work→ process with a focus on inclusive practices within select schools. These schools will serve as working laboratories of the PLC at Work process, conducting action research and sharing best inclusive practices with other schools throughout the state. The Project provides training and support for each school with a focus on increasing achievement for all students through the PLC process.

### **Overview of the Project**

The selected schools will begin in the 2021-2022 school year. Selected schools will be matched with a certified Solution Tree associate and receive onsite support as they implement, deepen, and sustain the PLC process with a focus on inclusive practices. Each school will create action plans that focus on increasing achievement of students with disabilities through aligned curriculum, formative assessment practices, and proven instructional strategies. The plans will be collaboratively (including both general and special education teachers) developed at the beginning of the project. Educational equity for all students will serve as a foundation for the project, so that every child receives the time and support necessary for high levels of learning. Participation in the project will also include a partnership with the school's Education Service Cooperative. Selected schools will serve as learning sites for other schools to visit.

### **Intended Outcomes**

The intended outcomes of the project include the following:

- Strengthen the current Professional Learning Communities at Work culture by ensuring that all sub populations of students are addressed
- Increase the number of students with disabilities being taught to grade level expectations and who are making progress towards proficiency on grade level standards
- Increase access to grade level standards and rigorous curriculum
- Increase knowledge of innovative service delivery models

After full implementation of above outcomes:

- Increased levels of student achievement through teacher collaboration, a relentless focus on learning, and a results orientation for all students with an intentional focus on outcomes for students with disabilities
- Increased academic performance as measured by district and state assessments
- Increased collaboration between the district and the corresponding regional educational cooperative for sustainability of the project

### **Eligibility**

Any K-12 Public School and Open Enrollment Charter School within Arkansas\* is eligible for this project. Priority will be given to schools with an Additional Targeted Support designation due to performance of students with disabilities as identified by the Arkansas Department of Education. Efforts will be made to ensure equitable geographic distribution across the state.

All schools intending to apply must submit a LOI. Applications will only be sent to those schools that have submitted this letter. **All LOIs must be received by 5:00 p.m. on March 19, 2021.**

\*If the school is participating in the PLC Project Cohort two, three, or four they are ineligible as they already have intensive support provided by the state.

### **Anticipated Awards**

It is anticipated four schools will be selected for the Inclusive Practices Project.

### **Process for Selecting Schools**

Schools will be selected through a rigorous application and evaluation process, determined by a committee of educational professionals knowledgeable of the Professional Learning Communities at Work process. Rubrics, including evaluation criteria, will be sent with the Application. Selected schools will serve as learning sites for other schools. Therefore, efforts will be made to ensure equitable geographic access and distribution across the state. Once finalists are chosen, interviews will be conducted.

### **Projected Timeline**

Letters of Intent Due to ADE	March 19, 2021
Application Emailed to Point of Contact	March 31, 2021
Applications Due	April 15, 2021
Evaluation Period	April 19 – April 23, 2021
Finalist Interviews	April 26 – May 7, 2021
Notification of Award	May 14, 2021
Tentative Project Start	July 2021

### **Process for Eligible Schools to Respond**

Interested applicants should submit a Letter of Intent. The LOI should be no more than two single sided pages, double spaced, 12 pt. font. The following information should be included:

- Name of School
- Primary Point of Contact for Project
  - Include email address and telephone number
- Brief Demographic Data with a focus on Special Education population
- Brief description of current PLC practices
- Reason for Applying
- Intended Outcomes for Your School
- Describe the level of Support from District Superintendent and Building Leadership, and Education Service Cooperative

Letters of Intent may be submitted electronically to: [michelle.waldo@ade.arkansas.gov](mailto:michelle.waldo@ade.arkansas.gov)

If mailing a hard copy send to:

Michelle Waldo, Administrative Specialist  
Arkansas Department of Education  
1401 W. Capitol Ave, Suite 450  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
Office: 501.682.4074  
Fax: 501.682.5159

**The deadline for the Letter of Intent is March 19, 2021.**

### **Arkansas Region Map**

