



Illinois State Board of Education

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Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

April 7, 2008

TO: Eligible Applicants

FROM: Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): Advanced Placement Classes - College and Career Success for All Students Program

General Information

Eligible Applicants: Public school districts are eligible to apply if they have one or more schools serving any of the grades 6 through 12 where 40 percent or more of the students are from low-income families (i.e., eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches under the School Breakfast and Lunch Program [105 ILCS 125]). Public university laboratory schools approved by the State Board of Education, area vocational centers, and charter schools are eligible to apply on the same basis as school districts. In addition, a Regional Office of Education may apply on behalf of one or more eligible school districts located in its region.

An eligible high school district and any eligible elementary school district whose students feed into that high school district may submit a joint application for funds. However, in each case an administrative agent must be designated, and the joint proposal must have the signature of each district superintendent participating in the joint application. An eligible applicant can participate in only one proposal for a College and Career Success for All Students Program.

For a list of eligible entities, as determined by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), go to http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/html/advanced_placement.htm. Entities that are not on the list but believe they qualify should contact ISBE staff at the telephone number provided on the following page. Those not on the list must provide a school report card or other documentation as proof of eligibility.

Grant Award: Annual grant awards will average \$100,000 per entity with no more than \$50,000 allocated to an individual school as determined by the program design, size of program, and available funds. Total amount of funding that will be available is \$1,500,000.

Grant Period: The grant period will begin no sooner than July 1, 2008, and will extend from the executed date of the grant until June 30, 2009. Funding may be available for two additional years. Funding in the subsequent years will be contingent upon a sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress in the preceding grant period.

Application Deadline: Mail the original and two copies of the proposal to the Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, C-215, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001, to ensure receipt no later than 4:30 p.m. on May 22, 2008. **No facsimile or electronic copies will be accepted.**

Proposals also may be hand-delivered to the following locations:

Springfield Office
Information Center
1st Floor
100 North First Street

Chicago Office
Reception Area
Suite 14-300
100 West Randolph Street

Online Bidders' Forum: There will be an online question-and-answer forum about the RFP. This forum can be found at http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/html/advanced_placement.htm. All questions and answers will remain on the website until May 22, 2008. Applicants should carefully review these responses before submitting their proposals.

Should the conditions of this RFP change, the State Board of Education will post the changes at <http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/Default.htm>.

Contact Person: For more information on this RFP, contact Mike Hatfill, 217-557-7323, or by email at dhatfill@isbe.net.

Background and Program Specifications

The purpose of the College and Career Success for All Students Act (105 ILCS 302) is to “ensure that each Illinois student has a sufficient education for success after high school and that all students have equal access to a substantive and rigorous curriculum that is designed to challenge their minds, enhance their knowledge and skills, and prepare them for success in college and work.”

To that end, the Illinois State Board of Education will be funding grants to encourage school districts with 40 percent or higher of low-income students to establish or expand programs designed to offer the rigorous coursework necessary for their students to succeed in postsecondary education or in the work place. Such programs include Advanced Placement (AP[®]) and Pre-Advancement (Pre-AP[®]) programs for students in grades 6 through 12.

The AP[®] program, sponsored by the College Board, consists of college-level courses that are offered as part of the high school curriculum for students who are highly motivated (see <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html> for further information). The AP[®]

program exposes high school students to the rigors of college work and high standards while the students are working in the more nurturing confines of the secondary school setting. Pre-AP[®] courses provide middle and high school students with the “active, high-level learning” needed to develop skills and study habits and learn the concepts they will need to successfully complete AP[®] coursework.

Currently, a large number of students in many urban and rural high schools do not have access to the rigorous coursework provided through the AP[®] program. Unfortunately, the geographic location or academic resources of the students and their respective schools often play a significant role in determining whether these students will have opportunities to enroll in an AP[®] course. The availability of a sufficient number of teachers with the necessary training to conduct AP[®] or Pre-AP[®] courses also is critical to students’ access to AP[®] coursework.

Applicants must propose project activities that are designed to increase the number of low-income and other disadvantaged students who would participate in or benefit from pre-advanced placement and/or advanced placement courses and exams. Proposals may address one or more of the following activities; each of these is explained in more detail under its respective heading below.

- Activities designed to establish new or expand existing AP[®] and/or Pre-AP[®] programs, such as teacher training, promotional materials, course materials for students and parents, and student assistance efforts to prepare students to enroll in AP[®] courses.
- Activities designed to ensure students currently enrolled in AP[®] courses successfully complete those courses and take the examinations following completion of those courses.

Establishment and Expansion of AP[®] and Pre-AP[®] Programs

Applicants with established AP[®] programs could propose offering courses currently not available or offering additional sections of current offerings to accommodate all interested students. Those districts, as well as districts which do not currently offer AP[®] courses, should design recruitment and preparation efforts aimed at attracting a larger and more diverse group of students to the AP[®] program. Applicants should also consider the steps necessary to integrate rigorous coursework into the curriculum in lower grades (i.e., 6 through 10), so that students are ready to successfully complete AP[®] courses in their junior and senior years.

Allowable activities include:

- curriculum development;
- course materials development and purchase;
- teacher and administrator training (see below);
- recruitment of students for the program, to include the development of materials and other promotional items for dissemination to low-income students and their parents or guardians about the benefits of participating in AP[®] and Pre-AP[®] programs, particularly in helping these students gain access to postsecondary education;

- counseling, enrichment, tutoring or other assistance opportunities, during the school day, before or after school, or during school breaks, to prepare interested students for the rigors of the AP[®] courses in which they want to enroll; and/or
- programs designed to encourage students in grade 10 to take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholars Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) in order to determine which students are prepared, or need additional preparation, to enroll in AP[®] courses.

Staff Training Staff training is a necessary component of this grant; therefore, each applicant must designate 20 percent of its proposed budget for the costs associated with College Board-sponsored training. Successful applicants will contract for this training directly with the College Board and identify steps it will take to ensure that the staff participates in the training. According to the College and Career Success for All Students Act, these courses must:

- provide teachers of Advanced Placement and teachers in courses that lead to enrollment in Advanced Placement courses with the necessary content knowledge and instructional skills to prepare students for success in Advanced Placement courses and examinations and other advanced course examinations and mastery of postsecondary course content;
- provide administrators, including principals and counselors, with professional development that will enable them to create strong and effective Advanced Placement programs in their schools;
- provide middle grade, junior high, and high school teachers with Advanced Placement Vertical Team* training and other Pre-AP[®] professional development that prepares students for success in Advanced Placement courses; and
- support the implementation of an instructional program for students in grades 6 through 12 that provides an integrated set of instructional materials, diagnostic assessments, and teacher professional development in reading, writing, and mathematics that prepares all students for enrollment and success in Advanced Placement courses and in college.

**An “AP[®] Vertical Team” is a group of teachers and educators from different grade levels in a given discipline who work cooperatively to develop and implement a vertically aligned program aimed at helping students from diverse backgrounds acquire skills and knowledge necessary for success in AP[®] courses and other challenging courses.*

College Board professional development training that will be available includes the following:

- AP[®] training and Pre-AP[®] training workshops;
- administrator, AP[®] coordinators and counselor training;
- product training;
- online training; and
- summer institutes and conferences.

Further information about these opportunities is available at <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/prof-dev> . Contact information, as well as a list of the available courses, with times and locations, will be provided to each grantee.

All grantees are required to enroll staff in professional development. Space available in these sessions is limited; therefore, applicants should carefully consider their needs and goals for the program before committing teachers and administrators for participation in particular sessions.

Student Support Programs

The program goal is to assist students, particularly disadvantaged and low-income students, to complete the courses, both Pre-AP[®] and AP[®], at the level that would enable them to receive AP[®] test scores for which college academic credit is awarded.

Such supports could include:

- additional books and materials for AP[®] or Pre-AP[®] coursework;
- online courses or enrichment materials to assist students enrolled in or interested in enrolling in AP[®] courses;
- computer programs or consultants to review student work or assessments; and
- tutoring programs and test preparation programs.

Fiscal Information

Grant awards will average \$100,000 per grantee, with no more than \$50,000 allocated to an individual school. Funding may be available for two additional years, contingent upon a sufficient appropriation and satisfactory progress of the grantee in the preceding grant period. Total amount of funding available for the program in FY 2009 will be approximately \$1,500,000.

No more than 5 percent of the grant award may be used for administrative costs. No funds may be expended on activities not directly related to the establishment or expansion of AP[®] or Pre-AP[®] programs or to assist students, particularly disadvantaged and low-income students, to succeed in the programs in which they are currently enrolled. Funds may not be used to pay for the services of teachers to teach AP[®] or preparatory courses. Funds provided by this grant must be used to supplement not supplant funds available under other state or federal programs.

Allowable costs include:

- student support costs (e.g., books and materials for AP[®] or Pre-AP[®] coursework, online courses, enrichment materials, computer programs, tutoring programs, test preparation programs);
- transportation costs associated with field trips, after-school tutorials and summer sessions, provided that the costs charged to the grant are over and above what the district would normally incur and are not subject to reimbursement under Article 29 of the School Code and rules governing Pupil Transportation Reimbursement (23 Ill. Adm. Code 120);
- use of consultants to support new or expanded initiatives or consultants to review student work or assessments;
- materials necessary for preparation and administration of the PSAT/NMSQT;
- staff release time for professional development activities;

- expenses for professional development, such as stipends for those participating and for substitutes, travel, housing or per diem;
- expenses associated with staff attendance at regional College Board conferences or College Board workshops; and
- development of curricula and related professional development activities necessary to expand or implement AP[®] or Pre-AP[®] programs for the 2008-09 school year.

As mentioned above, 20 percent of the proposed budget must be used for training provided by the College Board. No exceptions will be made.

Proposal Format

Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please use the following as a checklist in assembling your completed proposal.

- _____ **1. Cover Page (Attachment 1):** Must be signed by the school district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal. School districts submitting a joint application must identify an administrative agent.

- _____ **2. Proposal Abstract (Attachment 2):** In 250 or fewer words, describe the overall objectives and activities of the project.

- _____ **3. Proposal Narrative (Attachment 2A; limit to 10 pages):** Respond to each of the following in the order in which they are presented below (duplicate the attachment as needed).
 - a. **Current Status:** Describe your school and community and, if applicable, any AP[®] or Pre-AP[®] programs currently in place. Address at least the following in the description:
 - AP[®] or Pre-AP[®] courses offered at your school;
 - the results of the latest AP[®] exams; and
 - how you market AP[®] or Pre-AP[®] courses to parents, students, faculty, and the community.

 - b. **Need:** Describe the need for Advanced Placement - College and Career Success for All Students Program funds and how that need was determined. This description could include information such as:
 - the type of curriculum currently being offered, the status of the instructional program and students' access to rigorous academic coursework limited by appropriately trained instructional staff, resources and materials;
 - number or proportion of low-income students currently taking AP[®] courses (if any are offered);

- number or proportion of low-income students enrolled in rigorous courses (e.g., college preparatory, accelerated, honors) for schools not offering AP[®] classes;
 - number or proportion of low-income students taking AP[®] exams;
 - number or proportion of low-income students attending college; and/or
 - how limited sources of funding would prevent the applicant from conducting or expanding the program without the grant.
- c. **Program Description:** Indicate whether the proposed program will address the development or expansion of a Pre-AP[®] program or the implementation or expansion of an AP[®] program or both, or that a greater number of students will have access to AP[®] or Pre-AP[®] courses. Indicate the curricular areas to be addressed by the program, the grade levels to be targeted, and any materials that may be purchased to enhance the existing program or assist students in successfully completing the course(s). Also describe any vertical articulation efforts the program has been undertaking or will develop as a result of current funding and College Board training.
- d. **Student Participation:** Estimate the number of students to be served by the program. Describe the process to be used to select students for Pre-AP[®] or AP[®] courses. Describe the process for recruiting all students, particularly those students who may be underrepresented in advanced placement classes (i.e., low-income and minority students), to participate. Describe any additional support in new program areas (additional courses, extended day or summer tutorial), including online offerings that will be provided. Include the steps to be taken to increase the number of enrolled students who take advanced placement exams to achieve scores on AP[®] tests for which college credit is awarded.
- e. **Online Courses:** If applicable, describe the types of online coursework or enrichment materials that will be utilized by this program and what outcomes are expected of online work. Include a description of the provider, cost and type of courses to be offered, and indicate whether credit will be given to participating students for successfully completing the course(s).
- f. **Staff Training:** List the number and type of staff to participate in professional development opportunities offered by the College Board and indicate the sessions that they will attend. Describe any other professional development training to be offered to support staff in new program areas. Describe how this professional development fits into the overall plan for implementation or expansion of AP[®] or Pre-AP[®] instruction.
- g. **Sustainability.** Describe the commitment of the eligible applicant and each school that will receive funding under the grant to supporting and expanding AP[®] or Pre-AP[®] beyond the term of the grant. Indicate the local resources (fiscal, staff support) that will contribute to building the program, even if state support ends. Provide clear measures that are tied to student achievement. Indicate how you

will provide the data that is necessary to indicate success on AP[®] exams and testing measures. Describe how you will disaggregate data that includes demographics and student status.

- _____ **4. Objectives and Activities (Attachment 3):** Use the form provided to list the objectives and activities of the proposed project in a time-specific format. Each objective must include an explanation of the activities; a timeline for said activity, including beginning and completion date; person(s) responsible; and evaluation measures.
- _____ **5. Evaluation Design (Attachment 4; limit to three pages):** Provide a detailed description of the methodology to be used and data to be collected to determine whether the program has been effective. The evaluation plan should address the following indicators and describe how the results will be used to improve the program:
- the number of core academic courses having advanced placement testing;
 - the number of students who are taking an advanced placement course in each subject area offered;
 - the number of students taking the exam for each course in that subject;
 - the proportion of students successfully completing advanced placement exams, measured by receiving a score of 3 or better on an exam;
 - the number of students scoring at different levels on advanced placement tests in each subject area offered;
 - demographic data (disaggregated by race, ethnicity, sex, English proficiency status, socioeconomic status, and special education status) on individuals taking advanced placement courses and tests, by subject area offered;
 - the number of direct student services (before- and after-school tutorials, summer classes, and online reviews and courses) received by students taking advanced placement exams;
 - the number and subject matter of new AP[®] courses to be offered in the 2008-09 school year and an estimate of the number of disadvantaged and low-income students likely to enroll;
 - description of any Pre-AP[®] programs to be offered in the 2008-09 school year and an estimate of the number of disadvantaged and low-income students likely to enroll; and
 - the number and type of staff successfully completing College Board training and those who will be assigned to teach AP[®] or Pre-AP[®] courses beginning in the 2008-09 school year.
- _____ **6. Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 5):** Must be submitted on the form provided and signed by the district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal. The payment schedule should be based on the projected date of expenditures. Salaries and fringe benefits should be requested in equal intervals on the schedule. Supplies, equipment, contracted services and professional development

should be requested in the month for which the expenditure is anticipated. At least 20 percent of the proposed budget must be allocated for professional development costs associated with College Board-sponsored training.

- _____ **7. Budget Breakdown (Attachment 6):** Must include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Budget Summary. Must include subcontract information, if applicable (see the document titled “Certifications and Assurances, and Standard Terms of the Grant,” Attachment 6, for the information to be provided).

- _____ **8. Certifications and Assurances (Attachments 7 and 8):** Each applicant is required to submit the certification forms attached (“Program-Specific Terms of the Grant” and “Certifications and Assurances, and Standard Terms of the Grant”). These must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its contents.

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

Proposals will be reviewed according to the criteria listed below. The maximum number of points an application may earn is 100. It is ISBE’s intention to fund as many programs as possible that show substantive and sustaining interest in preparing their students for the rigorous coursework that Advanced Placement involves.

Proposals will be evaluated by a panel of practitioners familiar with all aspects of Advanced Placement programs, as well as individuals familiar with challenges of low-income schools and districts. ISBE reserves the right to negotiate budget amounts and program activities based on readers’ comments and to award grants on the basis of fair and equitable distribution of programs throughout the state.

Selection criteria and point values are as follows:

1. Need (15 points)
 - A. The proposal describes the status of the applicant’s instructional programs and demonstrates that students’ access to rigorous academic coursework is limited by the scarcity of appropriately trained instructional staff or other necessary resources and materials.

 - B. The proposal demonstrates that other sources of funding are limited to such an extent that the applicant is unable to conduct or expand the program as proposed without funding under this program.

2. Quality and Scope of the Plan (45 points)

- A. The proposal demonstrates that the training to be funded and the staff members to be involved will permit the district to offer AP courses or preparatory programs that are not currently available, or that greater numbers of students will have access to AP courses or preparatory programs, as applicable.
- B. The proposal includes plans for support and for collaboration among staff members and administrators that will result in the sequential alignment of rigorous course offerings across grade levels, culminating in Advanced Placement studies.
- C. The proposal demonstrates that the activities and materials to be supported with grant funds will enhance students' preparedness for AP courses and strengthen their ability to participate successfully.

3. Student Recruitment and Support (25 points)

- A. The proposal provides evidence that the intended outreach and recruitment strategies respond to the needs of low-income students in the communities to be served.
- B. The proposal presents a combination of supportive elements that will strengthen low-income students' preparation for AP coursework, assist them in successful completion of the courses chosen, and enhance their likelihood of success on the culminating examinations.

4. Cost-Effectiveness and Sustainability (15 points)

- A. The scope of the proposed activities is reasonable in light of the amount of funding to be provided, and the project will be cost-effective considering the number and types of courses to be supported and the number of students to be served.
- B. The proposal gives evidence of the district's commitment to continuing efforts to foster greater participation in AP coursework by low-income students and to support them in achieving greater success and achievement in that coursework.