**REQUEST FOR LETTER OF INTENT**

**TO PARTICIPATE IN**

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES PILOT PROJECT**

**Arkansas Department of Education General Comments**

The primary purpose of requesting a Letter of Intent (LOI) is to enable ADE program managers to gauge the level of interest, readiness, and commitment among the schools and districts across the state.

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. The Arkansas Department of Education and Solution Tree, Inc. have established a partnership to develop and expand the Professional Learning Communities at Work™ process within select schools. These schools will serve as working laboratories for the PLC at Work™ process, conducting action research and sharing best practices with other schools throughout the state.

The Pilot Project will provide intensive training and support for each school with a focus on increasing student achievement through the PLC process. Participating schools will be part of a collaborative evaluation process that gathers data regarding student achievement, teacher practices, and professional development processes.

**Overview of the Project**

Selected schools will be matched with a certified PLC at Work™ Associate from Solution Tree and receive intensive onsite support as they implement, deepen, and sustain the PLC process. Each school will create action plans that focus on increasing student achievement through aligned curriculum, formative assessment practices, and proven instructional strategies. The plans will be collaboratively developed based on a thorough needs assessment at the beginning of the project. Educational equity for all students will serve as an underpinning for the project, as we will ensure intervention systems are in place so every child receives the time and support necessary for high levels of learning.

**Intended Outcomes**

The intended outcomes of the project include the following:

* Each school in the project will realize increased levels of student achievement through teacher collaboration, a relentless focus on learning, and a results orientation.
* Successful strategies (collaboration, assessment, RTI, instruction, engagement, etc.) will be identified and shared with other schools within the project.

**Eligibility/Appropriateness**

All K-12 Public Schools and Open Enrollment Charter Schools within Arkansas are eligible to apply for this project. Multiple schools (small, rural) are also eligible to be co-applicants. Applicant schools can be at any point along the continuum of Professional Learning Communities (pre-initiating, initiating, implementing, developing, or sustaining). The application will provide guidance to assist schools in assessing their current reality, as well as expectations for readiness and commitment.

**Anticipated Awards**

It is anticipated that between 8-12 schools will be selected in the initial award period. The award period is for three years (July 2017 – June 2020 subject to appropriations and funding).

**Process for Selecting Schools**

Schools will be selected through a rigorous application and evaluation process, determined by a committee comprised of educational professionals knowledgeable of the Professional Learning Communities at Work™ process.

Evaluation Criteria will be included in the Application.

**Projected Timeline**

Letters of Intent Due to Arkansas ADE Friday, June 16th, 2017

Release of Application Wednesday, June 21st, 2017

Applications Due July 14th, 2017

Evaluation Period July 14th – July 28th, 2017

Notification of Award August 1st, 2017

Tentative Project Start August – September, 2017

**Process for Eligible Schools to Respond**

Interested applicants should draft a **Letter of Intent to Apply** which includes the following information:

* Name of School(s)
* Brief Demographic Data
* Reason for Applying
* Initial Intended Outcomes for Your School
* Support of District Superintendent and Building Principal

Letters of Intent should be no more than two single sided pages, double spaced, 12 pt. font, and should be addressed and sent to:

Tina Smith

Director of Policy and Special Projects

Arkansas Department of Education

Four Capitol Mall, Room 305-A

Little Rock, AR 72201

Letters of Intent can also be sent electronically to:

Tina.Smith@Arkansas.gov

The deadline for the Letters of Intent to Apply is Friday, June 16th, 2017.