**LETTER OF INTENT TO PARTICIPATE IN**

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES AT WORK® PROJECT: COHORT** **SEVEN**

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 at Work® (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 PLC at Work process within select schools. These schools will serve as the seventh cohort of working laboratories of the PLC at Work process, conducting action research and sharing best practices with other schools throughout the state. The Project provides intensive training and support for each school with a focus on increasing student achievement through the PLC process.

**Overview of the Project**

The seventh cohort of schools will begin in the 2023-2024 school year. 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. Educating 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.

**Commitment from District and Building Level Administration**

District and building level administration must commit to the method of improvement through “leadership by doing”.  Each year of the project the principal and other campus leaders will be involved in two half days of project planning with the lead coach and cohort leader from Solution Tree. As a commitment to this project, district administration **must** participate in these two project planning days. Additionally, district administration is invited and strongly encouraged to attend all other coaching sessions.

The building level principal plays a critical role in leading the work of a professional learning community.  The principal must be an active participant in the implementation of the PLC at Work Project.

An active participant includes:

* communicating with both DESE and the Solution Tree contacts
* planning and coordinating meaningful job-embedded professional development
* actively participating as a learner in the project
* attending one of the two-day work sessions “The Role of the Principal in a PLC” offered throughout the state at various locations and dates

The district leadership team, including the Superintendent, is required to attend the one-day monthly session, “Leading PLCs Districtwide” located in Little Rock.

**Intended Outcomes**

The intended outcomes of the project include the following:

* Create a Professional Learning Communities at Work culture within the school to promote continuous improvement.
* Increase levels of student achievement through teacher collaboration, a relentless focus on learning, and a results orientation.

**Eligibility**

All K-12 Public Schools and Open Enrollment Charter Schools within Arkansas are eligible to apply for this project. 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 8, 2023**.

**Anticipated Awards**

It is anticipated approximately 10 schools will be selected for the seventh cohort of schools. The award period is for three years (July 2023 – June 2026), 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. Rubrics, including evaluation criteria, will be sent with the application.

At least one application will be chosen from each of five designated regions across the state (See map below). Once finalists are chosen, interviews will be conducted with the principal and superintendent of each school.

**Projected Timeline**

Informational Zoom for Interested Applicants – (Attend **one** of the following.)

March 3, 2023 @ 1:00 pm Register at ESC Works (Session # [#497436](https://www.escweb.net/ar_esc/catalog/session.aspx?session_id=497436))

March 7, 2023 @ 11:00 am Register at ESC Works (Session # [#497442](https://www.escweb.net/ar_esc/catalog/session.aspx?session_id=497442))

Letters of Intent Due to ADE March 8, 2023

Application Sent to schools March 10, 2023

Applications Due March 27, 2023

Evaluation Period March 28-April 10, 2023

Superintendent and Principal Finalist Interviews April 10-April 21, 2023

Notification of Award April 28, 2023

Anticipated Project Start July 2023

**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
* Reason for Applying
* Intended Outcomes for Your School
* Describe the level of Support from District Superintendent and Building Leadership
  + Must include the commitment of the Superintendent to attend the monthly training with district level team
  + Must include the commitment of the Principal/Principals to attend one two-day work session, “The Role of the Principal in PLCs” during the first year of the project

**Letters of Intent may be submitted electronically to**: [Missy.Walley@ade.arkansas.gov](mailto:Missy.Walley@ade.arkansas.gov)

If mailing a hard copy send to:

Missy Walley

Director of Policy and Special Projects

Arkansas Department of Education

Four Capitol Mall, Room 103 B

Little Rock, AR 72201

**The deadline for the Letter of Intent is March 8, 2023.**

**Arkansas Region Map**

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