

LETTER OF INTENT TO PARTICIPATE IN
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES AT WORK® PROJECT: COHORT SIX

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 sixth 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 sixth cohort of schools will begin in the 2022-2023 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 curriculum alignment, formative assessment practices, and proven instructional strategies. The action 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 a foundation for the project so that every child receives the time and support necessary to achieve 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 day project planning sessions 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 any and all coaching sessions throughout the 3-years of the project.

The building level principal plays a critical role in leading the work of a professional learning community. The principal is required to be an active participant in the implementation of the PLC at Work Project. An active participant includes:

- timely and consistent communication with both DESE and the Solution Tree associates assigned to the school
- planning and coordinating meaningful job-embedded professional development
- and, actively participating as a learner in the project.

Intended Outcomes

The intended outcomes of the project include the following:

- Create a sustainable Professional Learning Communities at Work culture within the school in order 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 January 28, 2022.**

Anticipated Awards

It is anticipated approximately 15 schools will be selected for the sixth cohort of schools. The award period is for three years (July 2022 – June 2025), 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

Letters of Intent Due to ADE	January 28, 2022
Application Sent to schools	February 4, 2022
Applications Due	March 18, 2022
Evaluation Period	March 21-April 1, 2022
Superintendent and Principal Finalist Interviews	April 4-April 27, 2022
Notification of Award	April 29, 2022
Anticipated Project Start	July 2022

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

Letters of Intent may be submitted electronically to: 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 January 28, 2022.

Arkansas Region Map

