



STEM SCHOOL RFP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTION: Is an Educational Service Center (ESC) eligible to submit a proposal on behalf of a consortium of school districts.

ANSWER: According to Section 3326.03 (B)((1)(2)(3) proposals may only be submitted by a partnership of public and private entities consisting of at least all of the following:

- A city, exempted village, local or joint vocational school district;
- Higher education entities
- Business organizations

The statutory language is clear that a proposal must be submitted by a partnership consisting of at least a city, exempted village, local or joint school district; higher education entities; and business organizations. However this language would not prohibit an ESC from also being a partner.

QUESTION: STEM Teacher Licensure has not yet been defined. Does the current alternative licensure process provide good guidance for applicants to follow?

ANSWER: Teachers in STEM schools may be licensed in a variety of ways. All three of the following options are currently available to STEM school teachers.

- 1) traditional licensure: <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/3301-24-05>
- 2) alternative licensure: <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/3301-24-10>
- 3) the new licensure route created in Ohio Revised Code section 3319.28:
<http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3319.28>

QUESTION: Section 2.1, Teacher Licensure, of the RFP notes “the proposal must include a description of the structured apprenticeship program and the regularly scheduled training seminars that will be conducted for those teachers.” Is there a structured apprenticeship program for STEM licensure and is the regularly scheduled training something ODE is going to offer?

ANSWER: The structured apprenticeship program must be provided by the employing STEM school, in partnership with either an Educational Service Center (ESC) or an institution of higher education approved to prepare teachers. The regularly scheduled training is a part of this apprenticeship program and is to be provided by the STEM school in partnership with an ESC or an institution of higher education approved to prepare teachers. The Ohio Department of Education will not provide this training. Requirements for the apprenticeship program and training are outlined in Ohio Revised Code section 3319.28 (C); see <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3319.28>

QUESTION: Can you clarify STEM licensure? Is it by discipline?

ANSWER: Ohio Revised Code Section 3319.28 requires that the state board issue educator licenses for teaching science, technology, engineering, or mathematics in grades 6-12 for STEM school teachers who meet certain requirements. Therefore, these discipline-specific licenses will be issued according to statute. In addition, an integrated STEM license will be considered in the future.

QUESTION: Can existing schools apply for the STEM School RFP?

ANSWER: According to Section 3326.03 (A) The STEM Subcommittee may approve up to five STEM schools to operate under this chapter in the school year that begins July 1, 2008...No STEM school established under this chapter may open for instruction earlier than July 1, 2008. Proposals must demonstrate the creation of a new STEM school (not simply a program within a school). An existing school could be converted to a STEM school, but the proposal must demonstrate an acceptable plan to cease current operations of the school and re-open as STEM school after July 1, 2008. Funding provided by the grant could only be used for new school operations.

QUESTION: Can a career center submit a STEM school proposal?

ANSWER: No, a career center cannot submit a STEM school proposal with the designated higher education partners and business organization partners. A joint vocational school district is specifically identified as an eligible entity (with the designated partners) but a career center would require the proposal being submitted by the school district board or joint vocational school district board.

QUESTION: Can STEM school students participate in their resident district extracurricular activities?

ANSWER: A student who is enrolled in a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics school established under Chapter 3326. of the Revised Code may participate in any extracurricular activities offered at the traditional public school that is operated by the school district in which the student is entitled to attend school and to which the student otherwise would be assigned. See Ohio Revised Code section 3313.537 for further information: <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3313.537>

QUESTION: Page 4 of the RFP, section 2.3.6, notes that curriculum principles should “demonstrate alignment with all 7 academic content standards and when appropriate, the national content standards for K-12 engineering/engineering technology by the American Society of Engineering Education (ASEE).” We cannot find those ASEE standards and in fact they may be either in draft form or not being finalized in the near future. What should we use?

ANSWER: In light of the American Society of Engineering Education recent decision not to move forward at this time with the draft national K-12 Engineering content standards, the STEM School RFP has been corrected as follows:

Curriculum Principles:

“2.3.6 Demonstrate alignment with all 7 of the Academic Content Standards. Proposals should demonstrate evidence of research and plans to incorporate technology and engineering (the T & the E in STEM) into proposed curriculum.”

Planning is underway in an effort to provide awarded proposals with curriculum technical assistance in this area.

QUESTION: Under the current career-tech funding formula, "home" schools are allowed to keep (essentially as an add-on) 20% of the FTE for their students attending career centers. Some believe this has been an incentive for home districts to encourage participation in JVSD programs. However, some of stakeholders have read Sec. 3326.32 (F) as not allowing the home districts to retain this 20% FTE amount. Can we get a clarification?

ANSWER: No funding would be retained by the home school district.

QUESTION: Is there a percentage cap on indirect costs for the fiscal agent (defined as pure fiscal administration), or should that just be something put in under the 2000 object code (support services)?

ANSWER: There is no cap on the amount of indirect or administrative charges charged to the grant. However, the amount of indirect/admin being assessed should be included in the application budget narrative and will factor into the overall rating of the application.

QUESTION: Section 3326.10 (D) appears to make it clear that there can be no admission limits based on academic achievement or aptitude. Based on our experience with an existing dual credit program in engineering, there is significant demand for these slots. We are assuming then we would need to do a lottery or first-come, first-served in order to comply with this section?

ANSWER: The statute and STEM Schools RFP are clear that the "school will not limit admission to students on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or athletic or artistic ability; the school will assert its best effort to attract a diverse student body that reflects the community; and the school will recruit students from disadvantaged and under-represented groups." Section VII 2.10 of the RFP asks for a description of how the school plans to recruit students and comply with the statute.

If the school offers special programs such as the Post-Secondary Enrollment Option program (PSEO) - the school will need to comply with appropriate section of the code for those programs. However, there are multiple dual enrollment and accelerated learning options available, including PSEO, early college high schools, AP, Tech Prep and others.

QUESTION: Section 3326.50 states that a STEM school shall not charge tuition for any student enrolled in the school. We to take this literally to mean the students themselves won't be charged, correct?

ANSWER: Correct, the language prohibits a STEM school from directly charging parents for education costs (teacher/administrator salaries, etc.).

QUESTION: Section 3326.08 (A) says that the governing body of each STEM school shall employ a chief administrative officer to serve as the school's instructional and administrative leader. Is the expectation that this would be a stand-alone position, or could it be made part of an existing administrator's responsibility?

ANSWER: Ohio Revised Code states that each STEM school shall employ individuals as necessary for the school to carry out its mission and oversee the operations of the school. While no specification is made regarding whether the chief administrative officer must be a full-time position or not, STEM schools may want to consider the guidelines provided for traditional public schools in Ohio Administrative Code. OAC 3301-35-05 states that schools with fifteen or more full-time equivalent classroom teachers must have a full-time principal, and no principal can be assigned to more than two schools. While STEM schools may want to consider this ratio, it is not mandated for STEM schools.

QUESTION: Based on Section 3326.20 (B), it appears that a proposing entity may be able to request alternative transportation. Is this correct?

ANSWER: Proposals for STEM schools may provide for other means for student transportation; if alternative means are not provided, then school districts must provide transportation as specified in Ohio Revised Code 3326.20.

QUESTION: May college faculty lacking a K-12 license instruct in a STEM school? How much instruction can be offered through unlicensed college faculty and how much must be offered through licensed K-12 teachers?

ANSWER: College faculty who are not licensed to teach in K-12 schools can obtain a 12-hour teaching permit or a 40-hour teaching permit. The 12-hour permit is for part-time teaching (up to 12 hours per week) and the 40-hour teaching permit allows for full-time teaching. Requirements for these teaching permits are specified in <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3319.301>. All individuals teaching in a STEM school need to hold either a teaching license or a teaching permit. There are no mandates regarding the percentage of instruction that must be offered by licensed K-12 teachers or college faculty.

QUESTION: Section 3326.33 (G) appears to state that it is the sole responsibility of the STEM school (and school or even JVSD) to provide special education services to qualifying students. Is that correct?

ANSWER: As indicated in Ohio Revised Code Section 3326.23, each STEM school must have a plan for providing special education and related services to students with disabilities and must assure the Ohio Department of Education in writing that the school has the capacity to provide those services in accordance with state and federal law.

QUESTION: Can a previously written concept paper be part of the appendix and then be referenced in the proposal?

ANSWER: STEM Schools proposals are limited to 20 pages, double spaced with 1" margins and size 11 font. The 20 page limit does not include the cover page and the letters of support. No other pages should be attached. A concept paper cannot be part of an appendix.

QUESTION: Section 2.15 of the RFP refers to a "timeline". Is the timeline page in the RFP appendices the timeline that we should be using? If so, is this meant to be in the narrative section of the proposal (and thus count in the 20 page limit) or is this intended to be in the appendix of the proposal?

ANSWER: The timeline page is to be included in the narrative section of the proposal. As noted in #2 on page 3 of the RFP, the acceptable attachments to the 20 page narrative are the cover letter and the letters of commitment.

QUESTION: In item V. Project Term of the STEM School RFP, it states that the "work will begin around February, 2008 and continue through November 30, 2008 with a final evaluation and expense report due December 30, 2008." If we are planning to open in Fall of '09, will we be able to use any of the FY08 funds for the period from December 1, 2008 to the opening of the school, or do all funds have to be for expenses incurred before December 1, 2008 (with any remaining funds returned to the state)?

ANSWER: FY08 STEM school grant funds must be expended by November 30, 2008. Any unexpended funds must be returned to the state. As noted, a final expense report and project evaluation report are due by December 30, 2008.

QUESTION: Please advise on the depth of the contingency plan. Are you concerned about physical assets, students or faculty?

ANSWER: The contingency plan should be thorough enough to adequately describe how the partners will discontinue operations should the need arise.

QUESTION: Clarification is needed in what are the 7 academic content standards that you are referring?

ANSWER: The academic content standards can be found on the Ohio Dept. of Education website at <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx?Page=2&TopicID=7&TopicRelationID=305>

QUESTION: Can columns be added to the table in the RFP that asks for goals, activities/tasks, and measurable outcomes? We would like to add timeline and evaluator information to that table in additional columns.

ANSWER: You may add columns to the table; however you may not delete any portion of the table as it is provided in the RFP.

QUESTION: Should we use the Letter of Intent tracking number on our school submission documents, or another reference?

ANSWER: While you are not required to reference the Letter of Intent tracking number, it would certainly be helpful to include this number in the cover letter of your proposal. All proposals received by the deadline will be matched up with the corresponding Letter of Intent.

QUESTION: Will the cover letter remain with the grant application as part of what is read by the readers and scored by the rubric?

ANSWER: The cover letter will stay with the application. The rubric does not address the cover letter.

QUESTION: May we amend the budget form (page 8 of the RFP) to include columns for year two and year three, in order to comply with the rubric's request for a detailed three year budget?

ANSWER: You must use budget forms provided. In another FAQ, we did allow for additional columns to be added to the timeline page. You may also add columns to the budget page without changing the overall format. However, the budget pages are only intended for expenditures this grant period. Additional data on subsequent years can be provided within your 20 page proposal narrative.

QUESTION: We have approximately 75 different partners committed to this project and each has submitted a separate letter of commitment. In order to make these easier for the reader, is it acceptable to include a table of contents of the letters as the first page of this Appendix?

ANSWER: No other pages may be added to the appendices. It would be helpful if all letters of support were combined into one electronic PDF in your CD and all the letters can be attached to the hardcopies.