

Vanguard Project

Guidance for Applicants

December 10, 2013

Background

The Vanguard Project will enable Kentucky schools to perform at levels comparable to those of the schools in the top-performing countries in the world. Kentucky proposes to get there by using the strategies of those countries, among the most important of which is the presence of superbly trained, highly effective teachers in its schools. No country has reached the top ranks of performance without:

- recruiting high-performing students into its teacher preparation programs;
- tightening the admissions standards for its schools of education;
- increasing its expectations for teachers' mastery of the subjects they will teach;
- providing demonstrably effective opportunities for prospective teachers to master the craft of teaching;
- raising the standards for teacher licensure; and
- providing concentrated support to new teachers when they begin their teaching career.

All have realized that they cannot attract top-quality candidates to teaching unless they make teaching much more attractive by offering prospective teachers a real career in teaching. That requires the creation of career pathways like those available in high-status careers and the opportunity for master teachers to be compensated like school principals.

In 2013, Robert Brown, Executive Director of the Education Professional Standards Board; Terry Holliday, Commissioner of Education; and Robert King, President of the Council on Postsecondary Education invited a group of university presidents, provosts and deans, as well as school superintendents, union leaders, business group representatives, and others to attend two briefing sessions on the Vanguard Project to present the idea and solicit their interest in participating in the project. At the second of those meetings, Mr. King explained that the work of the Vanguard Project will be done by consortia, each of which will consist of at least one university and several school districts, formed for this purpose and assisted by the state and internationally recognized experts assembled by the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). Those consortia will not be competing with one another for state support, but rather against a set of criteria. As many consortia will be asked to join the project as meet the criteria.

This document provides guidance to those consortia preparing proposals with respect to material to be included in those proposals, the form in which that material should be presented, the date and place, they are due, the criteria to be used in evaluating them, and the process to be used in deciding which consortia will be asked to participate in the Vanguard Project.

Project Schedule

The first meeting of partners is scheduled for December 17, 2013, at 11:00am in Conference Room A of the CPE offices. If consortia are interested in meeting with members of the Vanguard team prior to that, they should contact John DeAtley at the contact information below. After that meeting, technical assistance for proposers will be scheduled both on an individual basis and in groups. It is anticipated at the moment that proposals will be due on or around May 1, 2014.

Delivery of Proposals

Proposals should be delivered to:

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Proposal Format

The proposal narrative should be no more than 15 pages, single-spaced, in 12 pt type with normal borders. The narrative should include all the information you think the reviewers must read. Other material submitted should be included as attachments. The reviewers may or may not read that material.

Proposal Context

This initiative, focused on the quality of new teachers, will be integrated with two others over the next few years:

Excellence for All

Currently being piloted in several Kentucky schools, *Excellence for All* is designed to make the best curriculum, instructional methods, and assessments in the world, aligned to the Common Core Academic Standards, available to Kentucky schools and to change the structure of Kentucky high schools to greatly increase the proportion of high school students who leave high school ready for college and work.

Excellence for All is inspired by the high school designs used by the top-performing education systems in the world. While there is a lot of variation in these arrangements, there are distinct commonalities in their structures. In these systems, a common curriculum is implemented during approximately the first ten years of compulsory schooling. This curriculum defines what that country believes all young people should know and be able to do before they take their next steps. After completing compulsory education, students can enter a number of pathways such as continued preparation for university or a vocational or technical program. All of the top-performing countries have set-up formal gateways between the major stages of education and employment. Each of these gateways is associated with examinations and qualifications defining the courses student must have taken and the grades they must have achieved to move through the gateway to the next destination.

Proposers can read more about *Excellence for All* at <http://www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/excellence-for-all/>. While specific integration with this program will not be required

for proposers at this time, it is envisioned that over several years this structure, or one like it, will begin to permeate Vanguard schools.

National Institute for School Leadership (NISL)

NISL is a highly successful school leadership program designed to greatly improve the skills of aspiring and serving principals. NISL's Executive Development Program emphasizes the role of principals as strategic thinkers, instructional leaders, and creators of a just, fair and caring culture in which all students meet high standards. It ensures that school leaders can competently and effectively set direction for teachers, support their staffs, and design an efficient organization.

The program combines best practices in teaching and learning, subject-area content knowledge, and leadership knowledge and practices, including:

- Leadership knowledge and skills: Strategic thinking; strong school culture and team building; data-driven organization; importance of systems; turnaround leadership competencies.
- Best practices in teaching and learning: Coaching and teacher supervision; use of standards-based classrooms; formative assessment; instructional teams; compelling school vision; differentiated instruction; and professional learning communities.
- Subject-area knowledge: Creating excellent school-wide programs in English language arts, mathematics and science; identifying and coaching towards strong instruction in the content areas.
- Best practices for delivery of adult curriculum: 360° assessments; cohort-based; job-embedded learning; simulations; case studies; group discussion; and extended period of study.

Through this train-the-trainer model, districts can deliver the program in-house, minimizing costs and maximizing the impact on instructional leadership in the district. More information about NISL can be found at: www.nisl.net.

NISL is not the only principal development program that can achieve these results, but consortia will need to consider how such professional development will be provided to current school leaders.

All of these activities, or ones like them will, over time, become integral parts of the Vanguard Project, providing Kentucky with what amounts to a single integrated strategy for strengthening the school curriculum, aligning that curriculum with high-quality assessments which are in turn closely aligned with the Common Core State Standards, and improving the quality of Kentucky's aspiring and serving teachers and principals. In addition to addressing the criteria in this guidance, consortia preparing Vanguard Project proposals should consider how their work might reflect these other initiatives and how they, or similar initiatives, might be incorporated into their projected plans and strategies.

Proposal Contents

Reviewers will not expect that all the criteria will be met at the outset, but will be looking for hard commitments and a plan to implement them on a reasonable schedule. Thus both the universities and

school districts may choose to start implementation of key program features in what amounts to a pilot program, but there must be a clear plan to expand implementation to the whole university program for the preparation of teachers and to the entire school district within a reasonable period of time.

Both the universities and school districts may wish to specify certain current regulations and laws that would have to be changed in order for the districts and universities to implement the plans they present, though they need not do so at this time.

Universities and school districts may also wish to specify financing they believe will be necessary to accomplish the transition to the new system. The state is committed to finding modest sums where it can in existing programs that can be used for the requested purpose and to join with the universities and districts in seeking funds from the federal and state government, private foundations and businesses wherever possible. Applicants are urged to submit rough budgets for such requests as part of their proposal. The narrative should include the total amounts and periods of these requests. Detailed budgets may be included in the attachments. All such plans, which may be dependent on grant funding for start-up, must address longer-term, sustainable financing strategies.

Review Criteria

The expectation is that each consortium applying to be a part of the Vanguard Project will address all of the criteria below in some way. A standard reply is not expected; in fact, it is expected that each group of partners will approach these criteria in a unique and innovative way. That being said, as the Vanguard Project adopts a systems approach to education reform, all of the criteria must be addressed. The criteria should also be considered a minimum for what elements need to be addressed; reviewers will welcome new and innovative ideas from proposers. The criteria are divided into two sections for the purposes of explanation, school district and university responsibilities; however, most projects will address the items in a joint way where possible.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Educator compensation and career pathways

Beginning compensation for new teachers coming from the Vanguard teacher preparation programs will need to be comparable to beginning compensation for at least some of the high-status professions. How this compensation is determined and through what mechanisms it is raised will be an individual consortium decision. Districts will agree to adopt at least two career pathways, one for teachers planning to go into school administration, culminating in the position of principal, and the other a career in teaching, culminating in the position of master teacher. These pathways, and the criteria for progressing up the pathways, will be developed through a collaboration involving the state and those districts participating in the first round of the project. These changes will require significant input from current teachers, local school boards and site-based decision making councils. Many of the changes will demand the intervention of the General Assembly and therefore the support of the three education agencies, which are committed to working on those issues.

Districts must also present a plan for how current teachers will be integrated into the proposed career pathways. The development of the current teaching corps is an essential element of this transformation and opportunities to enter these pathways must be provided.

Structure of elementary schools

Elementary school teachers will need to demonstrate mastery of the subject or subjects they will teach. Teachers will specialize in mathematics and science or in English/literacy and social studies. Elementary pre-service teachers will at least minor in the subjects they will teach. Districts that wish to participate in this initiative will have to commit to changing the format of their elementary school over time to emulate this structure. Mastery-based advancement, long ago authorized in KERA, should be considered.

Educator induction

One of the principle responsibilities of master teachers will be to mentor and supervise new teachers and ultimately evaluate their suitability for the teaching profession. New teachers will have reduced teaching loads. They will spend much of their time observing the master teacher doing demonstration lessons and the master teacher will spend substantial time observing and critiquing the practice of the new teacher. Master teachers will play a key role in deciding whether the new teachers should be awarded tenure in the profession. This induction period will need to be aligned with the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program and the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System.

Educator professional learning

All teachers in districts participating in this program would be entitled to no less than 100 hours per year of continuing professional learning. This will align with state procedures for professional learning or the consortium will present a plan for how those requirements should be adjusted. The expectation is that these opportunities would be personalized for teachers and aligned to student learning.

Perhaps most importantly, consortia should present a plan for how current teachers would be provided the time to work together to determine their professional learning so that it will advance the performance of their school's students. Teachers, particularly those that teach the same subject, must have the time to work together so that the focus of their work is to be more successful at engaging students. In their time together, teachers will exchange information about what is working and what is not working. They will visit one another's classrooms to observe technique. Professional learning and collaborative time must be built on the assumption that teaching is professional work and it is up to the professionals in the school to steadily, methodically improve their practice by systematically developing what they hope will be more effective practices, trying them out and identifying what works. This shift in school structure will not be easy and perhaps not even possible on a large scale immediately. Consortia should, however, determine how they will begin to address such issues.

Collaborative relationships with participating higher education institutions should also be considered.

School governance structures

Districts must provide a plan for how Site Based Decision Making Councils and school boards will be integrated into this transformation.

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

Admission to teacher education programs

Universities participating in this program will show that they have in place or are on their way to putting in place admissions policies and practices that include a two-step admissions process: 1) A paper review in which the applicant must show that they graduated in the top quarter of their high school class and have appropriately rigorous scores on exams measuring basic skills, and 2) another review in which the applicant is interviewed by a team of leading professional educators to determine whether the applicant has the appropriate dispositions required to do the job well.

Structure of teacher education programs

Universities participating in this program will offer a five-year program of teacher preparation to applicants coming directly from high schools. This program will culminate in a master's degree in teaching. Another program of preparation will be available for applicants who majored in the subject they are going to teach and who may or may not have workforce experience. This path would consist of taking a full-year program in the craft of teaching leading to a master's degree.

The curriculum will be structured so that all students in either program would have to emerge with: 1) a major in the subject that they plan to teach in secondary school, 2) a minor in the subjects that they plan to teach in elementary school, and 3) not less than a year of instruction in the craft of teaching, not less than half of which must be based in the schools, in clinical settings in which the prospective teacher has a chance to work under the supervision of a master teacher.

All changes necessary to teacher education programs will need to align with the new standards of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation and complementary work from the Network for Transforming Educator Preparation, of which Kentucky is a member, funded by the Council of Chief State Schools Officers

Teacher preparation curriculum

Schools of education will provide extensive instruction for their prospective teachers designed to enable them to quickly identify students having problems keeping up with a very demanding curriculum and to identify appropriate remedies for those problems, based on the best research available. They must also provide extensive instruction for their prospective teachers in research methods, so that they can discriminate between solutions based on strong research and those based on weak research.

Universities participating in the program will review the findings from the TELL Survey, the New Teacher Survey, and any and all data sources in Kentucky to modify their offerings and make them more responsive to the needs of teachers. This continuous improvement process should also include successful programs in Kentucky that are already doing much of this kind of work, such as the Kentucky Center for Mathematics, the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development, AdvanceKY, and others.

Programs from across the university will unite to take responsibility for the education and training of teachers. While this occurs on a variety of levels already, a focus on, for example, the integration of Arts and Sciences, Business, Engineering colleges into the training of teachers must be considered. This is particularly important in assuring that programs provide deep content knowledge and discipline-specific pedagogy.

Teacher education finance within the university

Consortia must present a plan for how the finances of this type of teacher education training will impact the university and how those issues will be addressed.

Clinical model of teacher education

Each university in each Vanguard consortium will need to decide how it intends to address the clinical preparation of teachers. One possibility is the combination of efforts with projects currently underway with CPE funding; another is the establishment of schools that will essentially serve as "teaching hospitals" for new teachers, as most universities in the top-performing countries do. Pre-service clinical training provides future teachers with a valuable experience, but a residency model after graduation would provide an even more intense experience. These "teaching hospitals" are far more than places in which students do their practice teaching. They are places in which the university faculty and the school faculty work very closely together along a wide range of research and training interests. Key school faculty are also full faculty members at the university. Regardless of the specific method, clinical training is an important feature of programs that will be selected to join the Vanguard Project.

Support for educator professional development

Much of the needed instruction for currently practicing teachers will not occur on university campuses but at the schools where the teachers work and it will often mean providing instruction that is directly related to that school's plans for upgrading instruction. Kentucky has several initiatives that provide rigorous professional development. Advance Kentucky and the Kentucky Center for Mathematics are two examples of successful programs that provide rich pedagogical content knowledge, increasing the effectiveness of teachers in many of the areas already discussed. University and school district partners must address this professional development together, as partners.

Principal Training

The quality of teacher training must be matched with improvements in the quality of principal training. Many changes to improve principal preparation programs have been made in the last several years in Kentucky. Consortium members would have to commit to ensuring that those changes for principals align with the changes made for teachers as a Vanguard consortium.

In addition, assistance for current principals will be needed. Kentucky is committed to expanding access to NISL to all participating districts to work with serving principals to improve their skills and work with schools of education in the state to improve the training provided to aspiring principals. NISL is not the only path to such training. If proposers have another mechanism in place, or plans for such a mechanism, that should be described in the proposal.

Again, these criteria are not meant to be all-inclusive, but a minimum from which consortia should begin the development of their proposals. Appropriate additions and new ideas will be welcomed by reviewers.

Review Process

The proposals will be reviewed by staff members of the CPE, KDE, and EPSB, with the assistance of external reviewers selected for their expertise regarding the countries with the world's most effective education systems.

Assistance with Proposal Preparation

Various degrees of technical assistance will be available to those intending to apply. Group workshops and individual visits will be planned. Topics will include items such as: *Excellence for All*, NISL, systems engineering, economics (both statewide, district-level, and institutional), mastery-based learning, etc. Topics for assistance will also arise as a part of the statewide group meetings. Proposers should feel free to ask for assistance on any topic.

Questions in connection with this announcement should be address to John DeAtley, who can be reached at:

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Non-conforming Proposals

Proposals are expected to conform to the guidance and criteria provided in this document. Notwithstanding that fact, however, the readers will entertain non-conforming proposals to the extent that those submitting them make a strong case that the strategies proposed will plausibly accomplish the stated goals of the Vanguard Project at least as well as conforming proposals.