

Linking Title II and College Readiness Programs

Query – 02.09.2009

Query:

I wonder if any state has **linked their Title IIA/SAHE grant program to existing state programs on "college readiness"**? That is, has anyone used Title IIA money to fund professional development projects (from appropriate HE partnerships w/ high need LEA) that focus on high school/college course alignment and ways to better prepare high school students for college level work? If so, I'd love to connect and learn from your examples. In Massachusetts, we are thinking about doing this, and want to get ideas of suitable projects so that we can draft the RFP best. Thank you for any information/advice you can share.

From: Massachusetts

Responses:

Utah

The professional development would be a little different because we would need to bring together not only the Title I high school teachers in math, science, and English/ composition, but also college faculty in these disciplines.

Utah did this five years ago and it worked very well. Following several years of updating learning outcome competencies both the high schools and colleges needed in order to have students move successfully from high school into college-level courses, we did not have the money to implement professional development strategies that support high school teachers. Some of these strategies may have been a little unconventional at the time: learning communities within the schools, invited guest speakers, focus on individual problems experienced by teachers, etc. And they might not fit exactly with the Title II guidelines. It is interesting to note that the math high school and college faculty and their composition counterparts arrived at the exact same professional development strategies separately on their own.

We are addressing alignment through our K-16 Alliance. However, you raise an interesting idea. Theoretically, if we are preparing high school math, science, and composition teachers to improve their practice through PD, their students should be better prepared for college. Aiming for these high school teachers would present a challenge. And, yes, we start with elementary teachers. Anyway, the possibility is intriguing. Let us know what you might do.

With the new administration in Washington, we might be able to at least hold a discussion with the DOE and its attorney so that we can meet the educational needs of our students.

*(Addendum: In response to the following Follow-Up Query from SHEEO:
"Upon looking back on my notes from our meeting last August, I found that you had also mentioned other P-16 efforts in Utah that might be connected to Title II work. From my meeting notes, it appears that in addition to the K-16 Alliance, Utah has a monthly meeting of public and private institution Deans of Education; an active involvement in high-school-to-college articulation, including math and English assessment, standards, and teacher professional development (aligned with Achieve's ADP initiative); and, within assessment, active efforts to map the Explore/Plan pieces*

	<p><i>of the ACT test battery, as well as the ACCUPLACER, to core curriculum in the high schools. Would you take a few moments to let Eileen and I know if any of this activity is directly connected to your efforts with the NCLB Title II grants, and if so, how?" – sbc)</i></p> <p>None of the activities you cited is linked to Title II Part A funds. Instead, we do the activities on a shoestring. I am hoping to use some of the stimulus funds to assist with the K-16 curriculum and assessment efforts that are ongoing in Utah. My three Title II Part A funds are supporting three projects in elementary and middle school language arts and math/science. Because these are limited to Title I schools, none of the three would be able to cover the work in which the K-16 Alliance engages. Actually, there is no state money for the Explore, Plan, Accuplacer and ACT, a real disappointment to K-12 and to higher education. Perhaps, I ought to be thinking about how to use Title II Part A funds to support our K-16 efforts. I need to wrap my head around this concept. Sorry I do not have something more concrete for you, Eileen. Utah receives around \$485,000 which supports only about three projects.</p> <p><i>(What follows is a second addendum from Utah, sent May 2009)</i></p> <p>I wanted to respond to your addendum to what was a very long-winded response to Eileen’s query on the use of Title II, Part A funding for college readiness.</p> <p>The Utah Council of Education Deans meets monthly and did in the last week form a subcommittee that works as a K-16 subgroup for the K-16 Alliance. Even though I will co-chair this group, the goals are a little unclear. Our colleges of education are decentralized which means that other academic departments teach the discipline-specific courses that prepare pre-service teachers for middle school and high school classrooms.</p> <p>In addition we have been working with K-12 on the use of ACCUPLACER as a tool that would provide information on what high school students need in math and composition to better prepare while still in high school. It is fair to say that some superintendents were opposed to the use of ACCUPLACER. In addition, the legislature funded – barely – a pilot project in three high schools on the use of ACT’s Explore/Plan programs which seems to map to the learning outcomes – core curricula – expected by K-12. Hopefully, our economic picture will improve and we will learn if the ACT program really prepares students to be successful their first year of college.</p> <p>As part of the K-16 Alliance, I co-chair a subgroup on curriculum and assessment and we continue to study issues of college readiness and what tools will get us there.</p> <p>None of the above activities connects with the Title II, Part A. Right now, the projects that are submitted tend to serve elementary and middle school teachers. Perhaps, I ought to rethink the guidelines so the college readiness might be considered in the next NCLB/RFP cycle.</p>
Montana	<p>We do bring together HS and college faculty to work on improving teacher quality in writing and mathematics, especially. We’re beginning to see declines in the remediation rates of our recent HS grads because teachers know what students need</p>

	<p>to be able to do in order to succeed as freshmen in college. In math, we spend more time with MS teachers because they are having trouble preparing kids for HS and then it's a downward spiral.</p> <p>In Montana, our RFP includes as priorities high-need partner schools with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A high percentage of secondary teachers assigned to teaching courses in which they do not have college majors; 2. A high percentage of students who do not meet the mathematics and/or writing proficiency thresholds for the Montana University System; 3. A low percentage of students who continue to college and/or a high percentage of students who must take developmental coursework in the Montana University System; 4. A high percentage of students who do not enroll in a rigorous college preparatory curriculum; and/or 5. Adequate Yearly Progress not achieved. <p>As a result, many of our projects focus on college-readiness. We've posted these priorities for several years.</p>
Kentucky	<p>In 2006 Kentucky implemented statewide use of ACT's EPAS system, that has students in 8th, 10th, and 11th grade taking the ACT or ACT-like tests to indicate their level of college readiness. My agency then incorporated ACT's college readiness benchmarks into admission requirements for Kentucky's public institutions. As a result, we elected to require our Title II projects, while doing the same work as always, to incorporate college readiness benchmarks and assistance for teachers in preparing their students for the EPAS exams. So far this PD has worked quite well, as our teachers were hungry for PD in these areas.</p>
Wisconsin	<p>In Wisconsin, we are initiating a project to better align college entry requirements with high school graduation requirements-with particular attention on mathematics. Wisconsin is one of the American Diploma Project states and I suspect many of you are as well. I am most interested in learning more about 1) states that have completed this alignment AND 2) have also begun to address the need for professional development for <u>K-12 teachers</u> and <u>university faculty in education and letters and sciences</u>.</p> <p>I will be talking with Phil soon about how we can advance this work through the Title II and college readiness initiatives and it would be wonderful to see how we can also create links between states who are working on similar projects. I would be very interested in seeing how we might work together to use technology to create web-based professional development offerings, thus increasing access and reducing long-range costs.</p>
California	<p>Natalie Sidarous just forwarded me your inquiry about Title II-A SAHE grants that might be tied to college readiness, especially because California now has the EAP process in our state university. The answer is that we have not specifically targeted any of our projects to issues of college readiness <i>per se</i>, including issues of alignment and making sure students had basic college skills before they left high school.</p> <p>In the past two years, we have been focusing on elementary schools, but our 2005 and 2006 grant cycles primarily addressed middle and high school. The 2005 cycle</p>

	<p>was on academic literacy, which is certainly a college readiness strategy. However, proposers were not directed to tie their projects to college readiness, although some mentioned it as a positive impact. The 2006 grants were targeted to retention of math and science teachers—it’s somewhat of an experiment and the results, while certainly helpful to students in mastering high school math and science, will likely only have an indirect impact on college readiness.</p> <p>Over the years I’ve been at CPEC, I have done considerable work on the overall topic of readiness for college and career as an outcome of K-12 education, and we work with some organizations, including Achieve (and their American Diploma Project) and ConnectEd in California on how to improve high schools so students emerge better able to succeed in college and the workforce. I’ve been thinking for some time about whether we could somehow support that general goal through ITQ grants, but it sure gets tricky, especially if you are looking at the possibility of dealing with teachers of technical or work-oriented courses, so we haven’t pursued it.</p> <p>Our agency does collaborate with programs like GEAR UP, AVID, the California Academic Partnership Program, and other reform programs that, in many cases, function as outreach and academic preparation for students in middle and high schools. In some instances, our grants can support projects similar to or tied to their projects. But we’ve not done anything specific to the EAP, even though our agency is very supportive of the university’s effort in this regard.</p>
North Carolina	<p><i>(In response to the following Follow-Up Query from SHEEO: “Upon looking back on my notes from our meeting last August, I found that several SAHEs had mentioned P-16 efforts in the states that might be connected to their Title II work. In North Carolina, my notes indicate that the council of Education Deans gather for a monthly meeting; all public institutions are included, with an invite to private institutions, as well as the K12 teacher licensure person; and that teacher education is part of the Achieve ADP initiative in the state. Would you take a few moments to let Eileen and I know if this activity is directly connected to your efforts with the NCLB Title II grants, and if so, how?” – sbc)</i></p> <p>In North Carolina there is not a link between the NCLB Title II grants and college readiness in terms of aligning high school and college courses. While there are many ongoing connections between the University system and the State Department of Public Instruction, this is not one of them.</p>
Washington	<p><i>(In response to the following Follow-Up Query from SHEEO: “Upon looking back on my notes from our meeting last August, I found that several SAHEs had mentioned P-16 efforts in the states that might be connected to their Title II work. In Washington, my notes indicate that SAHE project directors submitting proposals receive 5 points for including college readiness in their teacher professional development work (which I suppose gives them an edge in being funded?). Would you take a few moments to let Eileen and I know a bit more about this initiative (how it is stated in the RFP, what effect it has had on proposals and resulting funding and project activities, etc.)?” – sbc)</i></p>

The 5 points you refer to were from our 2007 RFP, in which we took a baby step towards trying to get some synergy between ITQ and college readiness. We did so with the following reviewer criterion:

(5 points out of 100) “Key objectives clearly connect to participants’ current classroom work and utilize the State’s content standards in the appropriate content area(s), especially those standards most pertinent to college readiness.”

Here is some text that was in the RFP related to college readiness (this text was in the instructions to proposers for developing their proposal narrative).

3. Key Objectives – Describe the key objectives, which program goals they address, and how. Provide a detailed and convincing explanation of how each project objective promotes the accomplishment of one or more program goals. Describe in detail explicit connections between the project’s professional development objectives and the State’s Essential Academic learning Requirements (EALRs) and Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) in the appropriate content areas. Standards most pertinent to college readiness in math, English and science are noted in the Transition Mathematics Project’s College Readiness Mathematics Standards and the HECB’s College Readiness Definitions for English and Science. For more information, please see the following websites:

<http://www.hecb.wa.gov/collegeprep/collegereadinessproject.asp>

<http://www.transitionmathproject.org/>

<http://www.learningconnections.org/clc/hecb.htm>

Before we wrote any of this into the RFP, we had a dialog internally and with our State Board for Technical and Community Colleges about whether the college readiness standards were “state standards” and concluded that they were, based on factors like the level of review they’d gone through (they were vetted across the state) and the buy-in we’d received from stakeholders the various education sectors in the state.

The result of this 2007 effort was that one project of 8 funded focused on college readiness. Now fast forward to 2009: We issued a new RFP last month, and we’ve given college readiness a little more air time by doing things such as:

- Mentioning college readiness in the “Overview” at the beginning of the RFP
- Offering supplemental state funding for activities related to college readiness that fall outside of the Section 2134 allowable activities (e.g. a project could use state \$ to add a teacher or principal prep component to a project that also involved professional development)
- Made 4 reviewer points out of 100 available to award projects for synergy with other projects (which could include current, state- or Gates Foundation-funded college readiness projects)
- Explicitly mentioned college readiness standards in our RFP’s translation of the section 2134 language
- Used “readiness for college” language in a couple of review criteria (see criteria 2.1, 3.1 on pages 10 and 11 of the RFP)
- Listed links to our college readiness standards in a “helpful links” section in

	<p>the RFP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During technical assistance workshops, we’ve encouraged people to follow those links and check out the standards. Some of our applicants weren’t even aware they existed.
Oklahoma	<p><i>(In response to the following Follow-Up Query from SHEEO: “Upon looking back on my notes from our meeting last August, I found that several SAHEs had mentioned P-16 efforts in the states that might be connected to their Title II work. In Oklahoma, my notes indicate that the State Department of Education is involved in a high school reform initiative attempting to increase the graduation rate throughout P-16, and that this effort will include teacher education as part and parcel of increasing grad rates. Would you take a few moments to let Eileen and I know if this activity is directly connected to your efforts with the NCLB Title II grants, and if so, how?” – sbc)</i></p> <p>Let me give you a little background about what is happening in Oklahoma with college readiness curriculum, high School reform and graduation/dropout rate. This may or may not be helpful to answer your questions but indicates our continuous efforts to align our k-12 and higher education curriculum so our students are more prepared for their higher education endeavors.</p> <p>Oklahoma has adopted the Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE) Act of 2005, revised in 2006, is a statewide effort to raise expectations for student achievement in Oklahoma public schools. It provides a framework for all Oklahoma school systems to implement standards, curriculum, and assessments with the rigor and relevance necessary for Oklahoma students to be prepared for college and the world of work. Attached is a copy of the brochures of "Oklahoma Requirements for High School Graduation, Student Testing, and Oklahoma’s Promise" fyi! Also, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (SDE) http://sde.state.ok.us/ has lunched high schools reform program emphasizing on graduation/dropouts rates last year. Note in last decades a sizeable reduction in dropouts, about 3%, have been reported by SDE.</p>

STATE HIGH SCHOOL TOTALS			
Year	October 1 st Enrollment Grades 9-12	Number of Dropouts, Grades 9-12	Dropout Rate *
2007-2008	178,316	5,214	2.9%
2006-2007	178,146	5,768	3.2%
2005-2006	176,534	5,798	3.3%
2004-2005	175,026	5,682	3.2%
2003-2004	174,481	6,217	3.5%
2002-2003	174,163	6,421	3.6%
2001-2002	175,124	7,243	4.1%
2000-2001	176,709	8,614	4.8%
1999-2000	174,717	8,969	5.1%
1998-1999	175,332	8,730	5.0%
1997-1998	173,286	9,488	5.5%

*Includes only dropouts under 19 years of age (Grades 9-12)
Source: OSDE State Dropout Reports

Title 70 O.S. Section 35E

In Oklahoma, the Title IIA/SAHE grant serves the high-needs LEAs in addition to the schools who are listed in "School Improvement List" by SDE! These are the schools who did not make Academic Performance Index. Oklahoma's Academic Performance Index (API) was created in law to measure the performance and progress of a school or district based on several factors, primarily state assessment scores, that contribute to overall educational success. We have allocated extra points (weighted) in our annual RFP to encourage the grantees to recruit teachers from these schools. We also required the awardees to provide teachers with challenging curriculum that aligns with Oklahoma's Priority Academic Student Skills and the ACT Standards for Transition. Lastly, our external evaluators collect students' college readiness data through their teachers' work-product who attended our PD institutes. This information is shared with the project directors yearly.

Maine

*(In response to the following Follow-Up Query from SHEEO:
"Upon looking back on my notes from our meeting last August, I found that several SAHEs had mentioned P-16 efforts in the states that might be connected to their Title II work. In Maine, my notes indicate that you have a Center for Teacher Quality that assesses teacher quality standards for the state; as well as a Professional Development Community of Practice, with 50 members including faculty and Deans from the Schools of Education as well as K12 representation. Would you take a few moments to let Eileen and I know if any of this activity is directly connected to your efforts with the NCLB Title II grants, and if so, how?" - sbc)*

I have been reading the responses to your query, Eileen. Our effort with higher education through the Center for Teacher Quality was focused on using Maine's initial Teaching Standards for assessing pre-service teachers so it wouldn't really apply to the topic of getting students college ready. I am going to forward this to Patsy Dunton, our Literacy Specialist because she is very familiar with the Composition Coalition, which is doing work related to helping students to be college ready in Language Arts. Although this is not at the present time a Title II supported program, it well could be, and provides a good model for the type of projects you are looking into.

Texas	<p><i>(In response to the following Follow-Up Query from SHEEO: “Upon looking back on my notes from our meeting last August, I found that several SAHEs had mentioned P-16 efforts in the states that might be connected to their Title II work. In Texas, my notes indicate that there is current work on "Closing the Gaps"; attempts to align STEM academies in the High Schools with STEM Centers for Professional Development in the Universities; and requesting that SAHE project directors use college readiness standards in their teacher Professional Development work. Would you take a few moments to let Eileen and I know if the first two activities are directly connected to your efforts with the NCLB Title II grants, and if so, how? Obviously, the third activity is both alignment- and SAHE-specific; if you could provide some detail on that, it would be much appreciated as well.” - sbc)</i></p> <p>In Texas, the Career and College Readiness Standards (CCRS) are integrated into the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The TEKS are the state standards delineating what K-12 students are expected to know and know how to do. The TEKS have been updated to align with the CCRS. The CCRS were developed with state money and the rigorous process by which they were aligned with and integrated into the TEKS was also funded by the state.</p> <p>Our work indirectly supports the “Closing the Gaps” efforts in the state since our grants provide content and pedagogy to in-service teachers working in high-need schools – through our grants, students in those schools have access to better-prepared teachers. In some cases we have projects that have documented that student achievement has increased after teachers have participated in the grant intervention, although this is difficult data to access and analyze . We’ve also found that participants tend to stay in the classroom for at least a year after participating in a grant, which is consistent with the “Closing the Gaps” efforts to retain high quality teachers. Some of our project directors work closely with STEM Centers and Academies across the state through other work they do, outside of their TQ grants.</p> <p>The language in our RFP concerning STEM programs is as follows:</p> <p>Recommended Recruitment and Selection Strategies</p> <p>Applicants are highly encouraged to incorporate several of the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with teams of teachers from the highest need campuses within a high need LEA. • Working to embed professional development into the life of the school. • Working with campuses on a trajectory to not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) according to TEA requirements • Focusing on conceptual strands within an LEA feeder pattern. • Working with high schools with T-STEM programs. • Aligning efforts with existing school reform programs. <p>We encourage applicants to recruit from high schools with STEM programs as</p>

	<p>coordinating work with STEM efforts on campuses provides teachers with additional resources and further support change their classroom behavior.</p> <p>As the TEKS and CCRS in Texas are already aligned, and the project directors are required to connect their grant work to what the teachers need to know and know how to do, the CCRS are, in this way, already built into their work. Through our grants we provide content and pedagogy to teachers so that their students are better prepared to meet the TEKS standards and, thus, the CCRS. We provide our directors with updates from the state, which includes information about the CCRS but we do not require that our project directors include grant activities centered specifically around the CCRS or college-high school alignment activities as this might stray from our mandate to work with high-need teachers in core content areas.</p>
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