

Smart Scholars ECHS RFP Webinar – Chat Questions/Answers

NOTE: Deputy Commissioner Joseph Frey's responses to questions received during the webinar are summarized below. The following are NYSED's official responses to the questions posed.

1. Can Cohort 1 schools apply with new initiatives to enhance the existing Early College High School?

Yes, they can. But it is important to start new partnerships between colleges and high schools that are offering this product to the students for the first time.

2. Is the Intermediary funded through each individual grant?

No. We have set aside money that will be used to fund the intermediary. Your grant does not have to include any money for that purpose.

3. Is there a list of Cohort 1 recipients and their partners?

Yes. Here is a link that shows our partners.

<http://www.oms.nysed.gov/press/SmartScholarsDec2009.html>

4. If students are at the high school for part of the day and at the college for part of the day, will this count as a full day program?

Yes. You have to meet the requirements for instructions for secondary students but it can be broken up between high school and college locations.

5. How many grants are you expecting to award in the Capital Region?

Probably one grant based on the amount of money that we have allocated to that area.

6. In rural areas "near campus" could be a very significant distance away--and prevent reasonable on campus delivery. How will "near" be defined by region?

We want to see that in the proposals. We would like to see what effective models you have to help students connect with the campus and the appropriate ways you can excite students into pursuing a secondary education.

7. Can we follow one grade over the course of the years or must we do multi grades at the same time?

It is not prohibited in the RFP, however, you could be at a disadvantage if there are not additional students being added to the program because we will be evaluating what the grant money would be used for.

8. Can we create a partnership with a private IHE in a bordering state?

No. If you notice on page 1 of the RFP, it states that eligible applicants will be: public, private, proprietary and independent degree-granting colleges and universities (IHEs) whose programs are registered with the New York State Education Department (unless they have permission to operate in NYS).

9. Are more or less points awarded for larger or smaller cohorts of students - for example, if we want to begin with a cohort of 34 students and grow to 100 three years down the road?

Budget points are based on the average cost per student for the period 4/1/11 to 8/31/12. Points aren't awarded by the size of the cohort, but the size of the cohort will affect the average cost per student. For the purposes of the RFP, the cost per student in Years 2 and 3 will not be considered for scoring purposes, but subsequent budgets for those years will be reviewed for reasonableness.

10. Can two or more districts collaborate with a single, or multiple, IHE partners?

Yes. Just keep in mind the regional distribution; the partners must be within the same region.

11. Can we use TAP and Pell funds to support short and long term costs?

No. As of right now, in order to be eligible for TAP and Pell, you have to have completed your secondary education. This is a work in progress, however. Our

Smart Scholars Advisory Council is pursuing legislation that may make these opportunities possible in the future.

12. Can students receive both high school and college credit for the college classes?

Yes. That is the idea behind the ECHS initiative. Offering dual credit courses will accelerate high school completion.

13. Has the statewide intermediary been identified?

We are working on this now and hope to have this information soon.

14. If you were awarded a grant under the first cohort or were a partnering institution in the first cohort, are you eligible to apply for these funds?

Yes. You may apply but we recommend that you explain in detail how you are using the new dollars to expand your program and not just requesting more money for the existing program.

15. What is the average cost per student in those programs funded in the first cohort?

Obviously since the program is still growing, that information is still changing. The first year costs went towards the “planning year” for those partners. The students started the program in September 2010. Whether your Cohort 2 cost is greater or less than Cohort 1 will have no bearing on the financial criteria score. That score is based on how the cost per student compares to the cost per student of other applicants in the same Regents Higher Education region.

16. In which Regents Higher Education Region is Rochester located?

The Finger Lakes. Here is the link which breaks down the counties located in each Regents Higher Education Region.

<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/aipr/regions.html>

17. Are best practices from the first cohort available?

Only what we have online right now. We are looking for partners that have developed a conceptual design that they feel will be successful. There are some examples of other states around the nation that have been doing this for quite some time that you may find some good information on. The national Early College High School Initiative's website, <http://www.earlycolleges.org/> is a good starting point.

18. Can we get FTEs for college courses offered?

If you are referring to state aid from SUNY or CUNY, that is something that they would have to answer.

19. Does the funding need to be used in equal amounts in the final 3 years?

For example, could Year 3 have a higher budget amount?

The expectation is that program services will begin in April 2011 (planning phase) in anticipation of students entering the ECHS in September 2011 (first implementation phase). Pending availability of funds and program approval, once the implementation phase begins, any unused funds from the first implementation phase may be used in the subsequent year.

20. Does the administrator of the program have to be 1.0 FTE?

We want to understand how the program is being managed. There has to be management capacity so we have insurance that it will be well implemented but I do not believe there is a requirement in the RFP. It does not have to be a FTE.

21. Is there a preference for the direct instruction to be by IHE faculty or HS instructor (assuming qualified)?

No. There has to be assurance that appropriate background and support is being offered to the high school faculty to offer college courses and that the faculty members have appropriate educational background and are qualified.

22. In what ways does the University partner benefit from establishing a partnership with a Local High School?

You get students coming into your institutions that are better prepared. Better prepared students have a higher likelihood of returning from freshman to sophomore year.

23. If all funds are not allocated to a region, how will remaining funds be dispersed?

Please see page 18 of the RFP, bullet point #3 stating:

Any remaining regional allocations shall be pooled into a statewide allocation which will be distributed to remaining unfunded bidders in rank order of final score. A program may be partially funded at the State level if the NYSED Program Officer deems the partial award would still allow the program to operate with fiscal viability.

24. Will the presentation slides be available as well as the audio after this presentation?

Yes. The presentation and the audio clip will both be available.