

KENTUCKY

Vanguard Project Top Quality 21st Century Teachers

Like other states, Kentucky must improve the success of its K-12 students to the needs of 21st century society and a highly competitive global economy. Following the lead of countries whose students have outperformed those in the United States, Kentucky is challenging its school districts and its universities to develop partnerships to prepare new teachers and principals and assist current teachers and principals to be the leaders in 21st century learning so that Kentucky's students can perform at world class levels and succeed in society and the economy. School districts and universities have been challenged to develop proposals by May 2014 that will launch them on paths to improve the effectiveness of Kentucky's teachers.

Background

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

- recruiting high-performing students into its teacher preparation programs;
- 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 as they begin their teaching career.

Kentucky cannot attract top-quality candidates to teaching unless it makes 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, state leaders from the Education Professional Standards Board, the Office of Education; and the Council on Postsecondary Education convened university leaders, school superintendents, union leaders, business group representatives, and others to present the idea of the Vanguard Project and solicit interest by consortia of universities (public and private) in partnership with school districts, assisted by the state and internationally recognized experts assembled by the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). The 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. Final proposals are expected by May 2014.

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.

More information about *Excellence for All* is available at <http://www.ncee.org/programs-affiliates/excellence-for-all/>. While specific integration with this program will not be required for proposers, 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 school leadership program designed to 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. More information about NISL can be found at: www.nisl.net.

Vanguard Proposals

Partners and consortia may not meet all the criteria initially, but will be expected to make firm commitments and prepare plans to meet them on a reasonable schedule. There must be a clear plan from partners to expand implementation to the whole university program for the preparation of teachers and to the entire school district.

Both the universities and school districts can specify regulations and laws that would need to be changed in order for the districts and universities to implement the plans they present.

Universities and school districts may also specify financing they believe will be necessary to accomplish the transition to the new system. The state is committed to finding modest sums from existing resources 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.

Review Criteria

The expectation is that each consortium will address all of the criteria below in different and innovative ways. The criteria are a minimum for what elements need to be addressed. The criteria are divided into two sections, school district and university responsibilities; however, most projects probably will address the items jointly.

School districts will be expected to:

- a. Establish beginning compensation for teachers coming from Vanguard teacher preparation programs at levels comparable to those paid in other high status professions;
- b. Establish clear career pathways for teachers to become either master teachers or principals;
- c. Develop a plan for integrating current teachers into the career pathways;
- d. Ensure that elementary teachers specialize in either science/mathematics or English/literacy and social studies and that pre-service teachers have at least a minor in the subjects they will teach;
- e. Require that new secondary teachers hold bachelor's degrees in subjects relevant to their teaching responsibilities;
- f. Consider mastery based advancement for teachers;
- g. Ensure that master teachers mentor and supervise new teachers;
- h. Reduce teaching loads for new teachers;
- i. Ensure that master teachers have a role in tenure decisions for new teachers;
- j. Provide teachers in this program with at least 100 hours per year of continuing professional learning;
- k. Present a plan for how current teachers will be provided the time needed to work together to determine how their professional learning can be tailored to advance the performance of students;
- l. Collaborate with participating higher education institutions; and
- m. Present a plan for how Site Based Decision Making Councils and school boards will be integrated into this transformation.

Universities will be expected to:

- a. Admit to teacher preparation programs only students who have been in the top 25% of their high school class and who are recommended after a rigorous interview process;
- b. Develop a five-year MAT program for new applicants from high school;
- c. Develop a distinct MAT program leading for students with bachelor's degrees in other fields;
- d. Require that students receive a subject matter bachelor's degree if they will teach in high schools and a subject matter minor if they are to teach in elementary schools;
- e. Align their programs with Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation standards;
- f. Adhere to defined curricular requirements;
- g. Ensure that programs from across the university take responsibility for the education and training of teachers;
- h. Focus on clinical education;
- i. Partner with school districts for effective teacher professional development;
- j. Align principal training programs with the changes made for teachers; and
- k. Work with districts to ensure that serving principals can improve their skills.

Review Process

The proposals will be reviewed by staff 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

Technical assistance will be available to those intending to apply. Group workshops and individual visits will address such topics as: *Excellence for All*, NISL, systems engineering, economics (both statewide, district-level, and institutional), mastery-based learning, etc. Topics also will be identified at statewide group meetings.

This entire multi-year effort is designed to fit with other Kentucky initiatives to improve the success and competitiveness of the state's students. Because it has not yet been launched, it is too soon to determine how many effective consortium proposals will be developed and what fruit each of them will bear. But Kentucky's ambitious plans show a statewide multi-agency commitment to student success.

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