

Yonkers Public Schools

Cultivating School Leadership Capacity to Build Systems for English Language Learner (ELL) and Multilingual Learner (MLL) Success

Proposed Scope of Work

Submitted by WestEd

September 2019

Proposed Scope of Work

WestEd is pleased to submit this proposal at the request of Yonkers Public Schools to serve in partnership with the district to support leadership capacity development and their design of school site plans to implement effective practices for English Language Learners (ELLs)/Multilingual Learners (MLLs).

Introduction

Yonkers Public Schools (YPS) has been engaged in the Cultivating District Leadership to Build Systems for English Language Learner (ELL) and Multilingual Learner (MLL) Success initiative (a Professional Learning Initiative of Stanford University and WestEd) to create the *Yonkers Public Schools ELL/MLL Master Plan for Success* that identifies its ELL/MLL Vision, Language Development Approach, Core Competencies, and Instructional Programs, as well as goals and high-yield improvement strategies. This proposal extends and deepens the work that YPS has already begun by refining its guidance documents and building leadership capacity to assess the quality of policy, practices, and instruction offered to ELLs/MLLs. This proposal will also support site leaders as they design and implement continuous improvement school site processes and plans. WestEd will offer school site leaders a series of face-to-face and virtual professional learning and planning sessions that are inquiry-driven and informed by data to improve the quality of ELLs/MLLs' education. The central objective of this proposal is to engage all site leaders in a sustained professional learning network to build their site's capacity to develop and implement *Yonkers Public Schools ELL/MLL Master Plan for Success* and Language Development Approach. This year involves intensive professional learning and planning focused on systemic coherence, grounded in theory and practice with a focus on ELLs/MLLs in grades PreK–12.

Leaders will develop expertise in:

- Characteristics of high-quality instruction that apprentices *all* learners with specific focus on ELLs/MLLs into conceptual, academic, and linguistic practices to meet the expectations of CR-Part 154, the *Blueprint for English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner Success*, and the *State's Next Generation Learning Standards*.
- Components of the *Yonkers Public Schools ELL/MLL Master Plan for Success* and Yonkers Language Development Approach, which includes Core Educator Competencies and a foundational instructional model for all classrooms with ELLs/MLLs.
- Theories of learning, principles for high-quality instruction for ELLs/MLLs, defining appropriate scaffolding for instruction, academic discourse, and academic writing that supports the accelerated development of all learners with specific focus on ELLs/MLLs.
- Systemic shifts to ensure that ELLs/MLLs have access to and are successful in meeting the demands to prepare them for college, career, and life.
- NYSED tools and resources for schools including the *Blueprint for English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner Success*, the standards and progressions, Commissioner's Regulations Part 154, ELL/MLL Program Quality Review and Reflective Toolkit, and ELL/MLL Graduation Rate and Dropout Prevention Planning Tool.

Period of Work

This work will take place from October 2019 to June 30, 2020.

Cost

The total cost for the proposed Scope of Work is \$27,000 and includes related labor, program costs, materials, books, travel costs, and fees.

Yonkers Public Schools Goals and Outcomes

Yonkers Public Schools has begun development of an ambitious plan to challenge every ELL/MLL to increase the number of students graduating in alignment to its vision.

Vision

Yonkers Public Schools is committed to inspire innovation and excellence by creating a foundation for success for all of our students, especially our Multilingual Learners (MLLs). We embrace our multilingualism to prepare all students in becoming multiliterate, college, career, and civic ready, and in becoming life-long learners

Goals

- Build leadership capacity through co-construction of a coherent, sustainable implementation and self-evaluation, plan to scale across the district and schools with support for
 - Developing, leading, monitoring, and implementing the *Yonkers Public Schools ELL/MLL Master Plan for Success* and Language Development Approach
 - Understanding and sustaining continuous improvement practices to inform and enhance programs, policies, and practices for ELLs/MLLs
- Examine, analyze, and develop high-quality examples and districtwide definitions for scaffolding, academic discourse, and academic writing
- Increase quality and quantity of grade-level, standards-based, and appropriate scaffolding and academic discourse in schools
- Align the *Yonkers Public Schools ELL/MLL Master Plan for Success* with current Yonkers initiatives

Outcomes

- Leaders throughout the system are supported to design a research and data informed school improvement plan aligned to the *Yonkers Public Schools ELL/MLL Master Plan for Success*
- Districtwide common definitions are used to assess the quality of instruction for ELLs/MLLs and generate improvement plans
- Leaders provide evidence that is based on sound educational theory and research and offer an explicit reasonable and sufficiently explained theory of action for their plans
- Leaders provide a description of the approaches to be employed for implementation including methods for gathering evidence of improvements and effectiveness that explains how implementation is adjusted and improved via feedback from continuous improvement cycles
- More Yonkers students graduate on time and attain the NY Seal of Biliteracy

Yonkers Public Schools Partnership with WestEd

This WestEd partnership provides Yonkers' leadership access to the professional learning and implementation support to effectively strengthen instructional practice for ELLs/MLLs. WestEd brings an in-depth, research-based approach with a wide range of experience and expertise.

WestEd is a large, national, nonprofit agency with a 50-year track record of delivering high-quality needs assessment services as well as sustained professional services to schools and districts that enable them to improve student achievement, enhance educator effectiveness, and strengthen school leadership. WestEd has the capacity to deliver high-quality services sustained over time that will lead to improved outcomes for English learners. For more than a decade, WestEd has been highly successful in addressing educational inequities for students in schools and districts around the country. WestEd's staff members are unique in combining experience as practitioners—teachers, school leaders, and district administrators—with a strong focus on understanding what works in education and bridging the gap between research and practice.

Operating Principles for Systemic Change

WestEd collaboration with *Yonkers Public Schools ELL/MLL Master Plan for Success* leading to a sustainable systemic change is driven by two sets of principles: four key operating principles for systemic change and six *Key Principles for ELL Instruction*. These four key operating principles, focused on strategic systemic change, guide our work: (1) comprehensive and collective professional learning, (2) effective implementation, (3) reciprocal accountability, and (4) growth mindsets at all levels. All four of these principles are necessary to ensure significant and sustainable school improvement.

The proposed professional learning and capacity building support is driven by these four key operating principles and is designed to build internal district capacity and enable systemic and sustainable change. WestEd will work in partnership with district to provide professional learning and serve as thought partners for District leadership whose aim is to strengthen existing systems at the district and school level that are critical for scaling the work and ensuring its sustainability.

1. *Comprehensive and Collective Professional Learning*

Our approach to professional learning is grounded in current understandings of the type of professional learning that leads to impact. Desimone (2009) defines a core set of five features of high-quality professional learning: *content focus, active learning, coherence, sufficient duration, and collective participation*. A **content focus** that emphasizes deep learning about the theories, research, and pedagogical approaches related to effective teaching and learning for ELs is critical for both improved teacher practice and improved student achievement (Lee, Deaktor, Enders, & Lambert, 2008; Penuel, Gallagher, & Moorthy, 2011; Vaughn et al., 2011). Learning is a social process, and therefore **active learning** — including reflecting with peers on successes and challenges, collaboratively planning lessons, or discussing evidence of learning in student work — is essential for learning to occur (Borko, 2004; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008). **Coherence** refers to the extent to which professional learning is aligned with local and state reform initiatives and policies, including teachers' knowledge and beliefs. Professional learning needs to be of **sufficient duration** — multi-year and many hours — to promote

lasting changes in thinking and internalization of new practices and approaches (Yoon et al., 2007). **Collective participation** occurs when teachers in the same school participate in the professional learning together, which promotes deeper collaboration, coherent discussions about teaching and learning, and shared responsibility (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Lewis, Perry, & Murata, 2006; Stoll & Louis, 2007).

2. Effective Implementation

While well-designed and expertly facilitated professional learning that is grounded in research is critical, it must be implemented effectively for its goals to be achieved. Research, along with our extensive experience working in schools, tells us that many school/district professional learning and improvement plans fail to achieve their goals because the plans were not fully or effectively implemented. Our approach to implementation is based on the work of Dean Fixsen and his colleagues at the National Implementation Research Network, who have identified the key stages of implementation that must be enacted to achieve the desired outcomes. According to Fixsen's research (2005), a majority of staff must implement evidence-based intervention on a daily basis (that is consistent with the research-based properties of the intervention design) for there to be any impact on student achievement. Schools that complete this full implementation effort, while following the program's guiding principles, will make powerful, systemwide improvements.

3. Reciprocal Accountability

The concept of "reciprocal accountability" builds on the understanding that dramatically and quickly improving student learning and systems that support student learning requires a communitywide effort in which all stakeholders – district leaders, principals, coaches, teachers, other school district staff, parents, and WestEd/UL as the partner – take individual and joint responsibility for successfully implementing the professional learning and implementation plan. All people involved must be held accountable for meeting high, clearly-defined expectations. At the same time, all stakeholders must be adequately supported to successfully meet expectations for performance. Too often, accountability operates punitively from the top down, but when accountability is reciprocal, all parties are responsible to each other and to achieving their common goals. In our partnership, all stakeholders must work together to identify expectations for performance for each group and individual. Everyone must be open to supporting others in their work and to accepting support when there is a gap between stated expectations and current performance (Bryk et al., 2010; Elmore, 2000; Futerneck, 2010).

4. Growth Mindsets at All Levels

Ensuring that there is a culture of growth mindset means that there is a ubiquitous mindset of believing that rapid and sustainable growth is possible for the school and its students. When a person has a growth mindset, she or he possess a belief that potential is not static, and that people and organizations can grow from effort, persistence, and practice (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007). In order to achieve the most desired outcomes for ELLs/MLLs, not only do students need to possess growth mindsets about their own abilities, so too do school boards, district leaders, school leaders, teachers, and parents. This shared belief is an essential first step in supporting schools to reach their rigorous goals and targets for school reform. WestEd supports schools in addressing the beliefs about what is possible if necessary, given this can be a key barrier to expected growth.

Guiding Principles for ELL-focused Teaching and Learning

WestEd’s proposed approach is anchored in the six *Key Principles for ELL Instruction* elaborated by the *Understanding Language* initiative at Stanford University¹. These principles are applicable to *any* instructional program for English language learners. No single principle is more important than any other, and all six need to be incorporated into planning and enacting planning for instruction, teaching and learning experiences, curriculum design, and assessment processes for ELLs/MLLs.

1. **Instruction focuses on providing ELLs with opportunities to engage in discipline-specific practices which are designed to build conceptual understanding and language competence in tandem.** Learning is a social process that requires teachers to intentionally design learning opportunities that integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening with the practices of each discipline.
2. **Instruction leverages ELLs’ home language(s), cultural assets, and prior knowledge.** ELLs’ home language(s) and culture(s) are regarded as assets and are used by the teacher in bridging prior knowledge to new knowledge, and in making content meaningful and comprehensible.
3. **Standards-aligned instruction for ELLs is rigorous, grade-level appropriate, and provides deliberate and appropriate scaffolds.** Instruction that is rigorous and standards-aligned reflects the key shifts in new college-and career-ready standards. Such shifts require that teachers provide students with opportunities to describe their reasoning, share explanations, make conjectures, justify conclusions, argue from evidence, and negotiate meaning from complex texts. Students with developing levels of English proficiency will require instruction that carefully supports their understanding and use of emerging language as they participate in these activities.
4. **Instruction moves ELLs forward by taking into account their English proficiency level(s) and prior schooling experiences.** ELLs within a single classroom can be heterogeneous in terms of home language(s) proficiency, proficiency in English, literacy levels in English and student's home language(s), previous experiences in schools, and time in the U.S. Teachers must be attentive to these differences and design instruction accordingly.
5. **Instruction fosters ELLs’ autonomy by equipping them with the strategies necessary to comprehend and use language in a variety of academic settings.** ELLs must learn to use a broad repertoire of strategies to construct meaning from academic talk and complex text, to participate in academic discussions, and to express themselves in writing across a variety of academic situations. Tasks must be designed to ultimately foster student independence.
6. **Diagnostic tools and formative assessment practices are employed to measure students’ content knowledge, academic language competence, and participation in disciplinary practices.** These assessment practices allow teachers to monitor students’ learning so that they may adjust instruction accordingly, provide students with timely and useful feedback, and encourage students to reflect on their own thinking and learning.

¹These principles are derived from the 2012 *Understanding Language* Conference at Stanford University, which our project managers as well as senior staff in WestEd co-authored foundational papers for, and helped to convene and lead. These principles explicitly relate to teaching and learning of 21st century college-and career-ready standards in English language arts & disciplinary literacy; mathematics; and science. (See: <https://ell.stanford.edu/content/six-key-principles-ell-instruction>)

Key Activities

Defining High-Quality Instruction for ELLs/MLLs (October)

Using NYSED Program Quality Review tools and processes, WestEd and YPS District Leadership will facilitate the ELL/MLL Shadowing Protocol, a process to examine student learning opportunities. YPS Administrators will individually complete an ELL/MLL shadowing process, participate in a debrief session, and collectively develop priority areas of focus for on-going professional learning. As a follow-up to this session, site administrators will participate in a professional learning session to define components of high-quality instruction in preparation for collaborative instructional walkthroughs.

These collaborative shadowing/walkthrough processes and protocols will:

- Refine Yonkers' common understanding of guiding principles for high-quality, grade-level and standards-based instruction.
- Cultivate a shared responsibility and accountability of required instructional and systemic shifts.
- Identify priority areas to define and illustrate (ex., scaffolding, academic discourse, and academic writing).
- Determine and articulate, indicators, milestones, and a monitoring process to assess impact in academic literacy and language development.

Proposed Project Timeline for Implementation Activities

The collaborative work will begin in Fall 2019. WestEd staff will meet with the district's Leadership Team to establish a monitoring process for the qualitative and quantitative data collection for this initiative and structures and process for problem solving, how progress will be shared, and how results will be used to drive decision making and support increased implementation. All participants will engage in inquiry into the instructional practices and systems practice in order to identify strengths, problems of practice, and questions so that improvement is accelerated and sustained over time.

The following timeline outlines the stages of the proposed collaborative work. The timeline includes the stage, time frame, themes attended to within each strand of work, focused inquiry questions, and intended outcomes and benchmarks. All proposed benchmarks, appropriate metrics, and responsible parties will be finalized in collaboration between WestEd and Yonkers Public Schools' Leadership Team.

Timeline, Activities, Themes, and Benchmarks

Title	Time Frame	Themes and Inquiry Questions	Intended Outcomes & Benchmarks
Defining High-Quality Instruction for ELLs/MLLs (October)	Fall 2019 (October) 4 full face-to-face days 2 two-hour virtual sessions	<p>Themes</p> <p>Understanding student learning opportunities and defining high-quality, rigorous grade-level instruction for ELL/MLLs. Identifying supports needed to promote impact. Understanding the expectations and demands of CR-Part 154 and the <i>Blueprint for English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner Success</i></p> <p>Inquiry Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What quantitative and qualitative data can be collected and analyzed to inform current practices?</i> • <i>What are the pedagogical shifts that are most important for all learners with a specific focus on ELLs/MLLs?</i> • <i>What kinds of teaching and learning experiences are learners including ELLs/MLLs currently engaged in, and what strengths can we leverage in planning professional learning opportunities?</i> • <i>What systems are needed to promote high quality teaching and learning for all learners with a specific focus on ELLs/MLLs districtwide?</i> 	<p>District and principals deepen their understanding of high-quality, standards-based instruction for all learners with specific focus on ELLs/MLLs regarding appropriate scaffolding and academic discourse in culturally and linguistically responsive classroom contexts needed for learning to thrive.</p> <p>WestEd and district staff have a clear understanding of where schools are in terms of providing ELLs/MLLs with a high-quality instructional program.</p> <p>Develop understanding of the tools and resources to support implementation of continuous improvement cycles.</p>

Proposed Personnel

Project Lead: Melissa Lambert, WestEd Engagement Manager

Melissa Lambert is an Engagement Manager of English Learner Services. She provides support and leadership assistance to build systemic capacity to improve educational programs for all students, particularly culturally and linguistically diverse students and English learners. She specializes in strengthening and implementing instructional systems, providing technical assistance and instructional guidance for state education agencies, districts, and schools centered on high-quality instructional practices that lead to sustainable systemic, equitable, and positive outcomes for all learners. Her work includes developing professional learning sessions, capacity development, and supporting planning for policy-aligned, English learner strategic plans.

Maria Santos will serve as leadership content and capacity developer. She is recently retired from WestEd and will work as a temporary employee on this project. During her tenure at WestEd as Director, she provided management, oversight, and leadership to senior engagement managers and school and district facilitators. Santos also developed and implemented English Learner signature services and advised on the CSAP structures and processes to achieve impact and quality objectives. She is also the Co-chair and Senior Advisor for Leadership at Understanding Language, Stanford University. The project focuses on helping English Language Learners (ELL) meet the rigor of the new College and Career Standards. From 2010-2014, she served as Deputy Superintendent for Instruction, Leadership and Equity-in-Action for the Oakland Unified School District. Prior to 2010, she was the Senior Instructional Manager and Superintendent for the Office of ELLs at the New York City Department of Education. Santos spent 20 years in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). As Associate Superintendent, she supervised the development of major instructional improvement initiatives and gained SFUSD the recognition as an Exemplary Site by the U.S. Department of Education's National Award for Professional Development. Santos holds a M.S. in Educational Administration from San Francisco State University.

Costs for the Proposed Professional Learning and Support Services

The fixed price cost for the proposed Scope of Work (2019–2020) is \$27,000 which includes all related WestEd staff and services described above and outlined below.

For the sessions and coaching, WestEd will provide:

- Facilitators for onsite and virtual sessions
- All WestEd services, travel expenses, and staff time to design and facilitate sessions as described above
- Facilitation of virtual sessions using Zoom videoconferencing
- Facilitators for coaching for principals
- Feedback on implementation findings for leadership using Zoom videoconferencing

The district will need to provide:

- Participant time for professional development activities and Focused Application Tasks (FoATs)
- Locations for professional development sessions
- Basic supplies, printing of materials, and presentation equipment for professional development sessions
- Logistics support and organization for recruiting and organizing participants for the professional

development

- Any catering services offered staff

After reviewing the proposal, if you decide the proposed scope and timeframe should be altered, we would be happy to make modifications. If the proposal meets with your approval, please send an approved purchase order or contact our office and we can send a contract for services. Our proposal is valid for 60 days from this date.

We appreciate the confidence you have in our organization and look forward to partnering with Yonkers Public Schools on the upcoming project. If you have questions about our proposal, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Melissa A. Lambert, WestEd