

LAUSD QEIA ALTERNATIVE APPLICATION GUIDE

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ALIGNED RESPONSE: The most direct response to the six questions is to make sure you have a 100% alignment among your school's: NEEDS (defined by your analysis of multiple indicators and assessment tools), the STRATEGIES/RESEARCH to address these needs, and your PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. Another important piece is EVALUATION. The best strategy you can have is a sound plan for measuring your progress using frequent examination of your results toward meeting your benchmarks and long term goals. When you add in how you ENGAGEMENT of all stakeholders in the school improvement process, you have the five-point *winning star formula* to get the grant (if you are drawn). If your plan is all implemented faithfully and correctly, meeting your API targets will take care of itself. You only need to exceed your API targets over the averaged three year period.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION:

Remember the three rules I stated at the QEIA grant meeting: "Give them what they want, how they want it, and when they want it."

What they want – You must answer the questions thoroughly, without exception. Incomplete narratives will be rejected. If you follow this guide, your responses will exceed the expectation.

How they want it – **12 POINT FONT** –They like ARIAL or Times New Roman. There is no page limit, but you want to shoot for 8-10 pages. You may use charts, graphs, tables, whenever appropriate to clarify information and visually depict longitudinal changes.

Margins – 1" all around, make sure you set up your document like this before you start writing. Documents appear better if you use a block justified format, this is a matter of preference.

Header and Footer - Please put your school name in the header area and the name of the district in the footer. Also insert page numbers, right corner.

When they want it – Your final draft and application forms are due to your local district by **March 19th** (also submit them electronically as the CDE wants them sent in both formats.) The central district must receive these in hard copy and electronically from the local districts by March 21st.

EDITING SCHEDULE: In order for me to review your document, make helpful comments, and get it back to you, please email your draft no later than March 13th. Do not fax it. The sooner you can send me something, the better. I can't do them all on the same day. Early birds will get the most time and attention. My target is to return your draft within 24 hours of my receipt. My email address is on the bottom of this document. **You may call me any time from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week.** As I may not always be able to return your call during school hours, please leave a number where I can reach you after school. Cell phone numbers seem to work best. If you have questions at any time in the process, do not hesitate to call me in the evening or on the weekends. Time is not our friend, so I will be available to you when ever possible.

Budgets – You will not be providing formal budgets, but as you are selecting your strategies you need to keep track of costs (and mention them as appropriate) so that your plan does not exceed the amount of funding you will receive. I would not consider adding bungalows because your facility is probably not eligible for such an addition.

REQUIRED FORMS:

Form 4 – School Application for QEIA Funding – SIGNED IN BLUE INK

This was in your QEIA meeting packet. Make certain it is complete and signed by the Principal and the School Site Council (or equivalent) Chair person. Check the box “alternative.” That’s it.

Form 6 - School Application for QEIA Funding Alternative Application Cover Page

This was in the packet. Indicate your school name and the name of the District. That’s it.

Drug-Free Workplace Certification – SIGNED IN BLUE INK - this was also in your packet

If you did not attend the District QEIA meeting on the 22nd, and do not have these forms, you will find them on the CDE website. See “Funding”, then “Available Funding” then click on the Quality Education Investment Act. Open the “application guidelines” and the forms are included at the end of the Request for Applications.

1. Provide the results of a current needs assessment conducted jointly by the district or chartering authority and the school site council, school-wide advisory group, or school support group whose members are self-selected and that conform to EC Section 52012.

Before you begin to answer this question give the reader some introductory background information including:

- The name of your school, grade span and total enrollment
- A brief description (3 sentences) about your community, income, demographics, etc. If there is any significant information about population changes or special socio-economic conditions, crime, etc, that are impacting student achievement, mention them here.
An example – you have a very high % of students in foster care which affects the level of home support for students.
- School demographics: ethnicity, number of ELs and Special Needs students
“The demographic of our school reflects a population that is ____% English Learners.
Our ethnic composition includes: ____% African American, ____% Asian, etc.
State how many students are classified as “socioeconomically disadvantaged, and the ____% of Special Needs students. Also list any special site programs such as Magnets.

If your school is under going construction or other special circumstances exist - any thing that impacts achievement including school safety/violence, etc. mention them here.

State that you are applying under the “alternative option” because the District determined you do not have the facilities to provide class size reduction as required by the QEIA legislation.

KEY POINT: Make a very clear statement that this QEIA plan reflects the collaborative work of many people including: teachers, administrators, counselors, classified staff, students, parents, community members and local district personnel who have joined together to participate in a

comprehensive analysis of your school performance, culture and the influence of the community on your school. This collaboration produced this QEIA plan based on available data.

Go one step beyond and state that your needs analysis is a constant and “on-going” process that is driven by your vigilant attention to data that informs your instructional process.

You must describe the representation of your Site Council or equivalent:

How many teachers, administrators, parents, students, etc. (Conforms to EC 52012)

You are not providing sign-ins, so no names are required. If other site councils and decision making groups or advisories had input into the needs analysis please indicate that here. Who is on these other councils and how do they affect decision making?

KEY POINT: The question states, “...this assessment was conducted jointly by the district and the school site.”

Explain how the district provided data on several indicators to assist your needs assessment.

Talk about the support of your local district from your Title I Office, Directors, etc. who provide you valuable information on your school.

INDICATE AGAIN THAT, AS PART OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT, THE DISTRICT FACILITIES OFFICE PROVIDED A COMPREHENSIVE SITE ANALYSIS THAT DETERMINED YOU COULD NOT CREATE CLASS SIZE REDUCTION.

Needs Assessment:

When did this take place? What time frame? Was it done in connection with any other process, i.e. WASC, SAIT, HPSG, or any other grant application? This assessment would have to be very current, within the last year, and then updated based on any changes in demographics, enrollment, test scores, etc.

At the December Principal’s meeting you received a CD with your school data. This is a valuable tool for you to use.

Describe the “comprehensive assessment process.” Sources of data examined include:

- Surveys of parents, faculty, students, other community members
- Interviews and focus groups with the same groups
- Observations of classroom instruction and environments
- Examination of student work measured against standards-based rubrics
- Analysis and reporting of significant data on:
 - CST scores – show and explain any significant improvements or declines
 - CAHSEE pass rates for high schools – are there disparities among your subgroups?
 - API for the last three years – did you meet your targets? All or some?
 - Are there glaring disparities among any of your subgroups? Why?
 - AYP scores for the last three years – did you meet your targets? All or some?
 - Are you a P.I. school? What year?
 - CELDT or other language proficiency. What is your redesignation rate?
 - SAT/ACT – number of students taking exams and their average scores
 - AP courses – how many do you offer; enrollment; number of test takers and pass rates
 - Enrollment and pass rates of A-G courses and Honors classes
 - Graduation rates and drop out rates
 - College application rates

Significant crime data and gang problems affecting your school
Discipline information re: suspensions, expulsions, OTs
Attendance rate
Mobility factors

- Include information from your APS and attach it to your narrative
- If you have any unusual staffing issues, shortages, etc. mention those as well

KEY POINT: It is much easier for the reader to understand your data when you can provide two or three brief charts. I suggest you use charts for your CST scores, CAHSEE results, API scores for 3 years showing targets, met or not met, and for the subgroups.

Data Resources - After you have looked at the CD provided by the District:

1. 90% of this data should be in your SARC report for 2006
2. DataQuest, on the CDE website, allows you to search for any thing else you need
3. The District has a great tool that shows a three year comparison of several Student Performance Indicators –this will be useful to you. You can find it at:
<http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/achievement/>
4. www.GreatSchools.net has tons of data on your school and it is presented in wonderful color graphic formats that you can cut and paste. Highly recommended!

WHAT TO DO WITH ALL THE DATA:

Two points: The data does not lie. The data can be used to paint a picture of doom and gloom or to depict a school of promise. You want to be on the promise side.

As you cite each type of data or information you want to interpret it for the reader. You want to tell a story about your school, one that is supported by fact, not assumptions.

“Over the last three years the number of 9th grade students earning enough credits for 10th grade status has increased by ____%.” This is a result of our new Freshman Academy that focuses on helping students make the transition to high school. Additional funds will allow us to improve this academy with.....” Or

“We have serious concern over the high number of failures among our 9th grade students. ____% do not earn enough credits to become Sophomores. Our plan is to alter this situation with the use of a mandatory summer bridge program, more 9th grade counselors, interventions, etc.”

“Our middle school has shown dramatic increases in our English/Language Arts scores. This is due to our focus on _____ and use of _____.” However, we still have ____% of students scoring “far below basic” and we need additional funds in order to provide these students with

When you weave your data into an interpretive narrative it will engage the reader and make them see that you really do understand your school’s needs and that you have done your homework in terms of looking at multiple indicators of success and failure.

Make sure that you explain how all this data was shared with your Site Council in a way that was user friendly and understandable. This process of “sharing data” will be embedded in your QEIA plan for school improvement. You will establish your “baseline” data and build from there as you evaluate your success implementing your QEIA programs. Data is your new best friend.

2. Provide a description of the specific activities proposed in lieu of the regular program requirements to improve pupil academic achievement (which must enhance or expand the activities described in their existing action plans) and how these activities will provide a higher level of pupil academic achievement than the standard program requirements.

Please use the data in your response to #1 to directly justify your identification of needs and how the strategies you will describe here will address those needs. This is where most grant applications fail – they lack the clear connection.

We are fortunate not to have a page limit, so if you want to use a chart format that is fine. Limit your focus for this QEIA grant to three or four, at the most, top priority needs. We all know that we can't fix every thing at the same time, and if you want to maximize your results you need to narrow your focus and avoid a shot gun approach to school reform.

Make mention of how your plan supports current LAUSD initiatives for high schools and middle schools in the areas of curriculum and instruction.

Open this section with a statement like: “The analysis of our school data has indicated several areas of need. However, we recognize that the most effective way to achieve our goals is to have a razor sharp focus on a few critical areas. We believe channeling our energy, time, staff and resources into these strategies will best benefit improving achievement for our students.

State that the strategies you are selecting “are above and beyond our current regular program and are targeted at our areas and students of greatest need.” Keep in mind that they want you to improve attendance and graduation rates, so address how you will do that.

State your three or four needs with the strategies below them (if you use narrative style, or next to them, if you go with a chart.)

Focus #1 – (just an example)

As the data indicates, many of our students are scoring FBB, or BB on test scores and failing core courses.

We will (notice the word WILL – never use the words we HOPE, or SHOULD, or COULD) provide a systematic approach for early identification of these students and a program for personalized support and prescriptive interventions.

Our strategies to accomplish this include:

This program will required the addition of _____staff members who will _____
Estimated cost per year for additional staffing will be _____

OUR MEASURABLE GOAL FOR THIS STRATEGY IS TO -----.

Put some numbers or percentages that can be used to measure your success. This is very powerful and absolutely necessary. It shows you have really thought out the process and have specific outcomes in mind that will improve student achievement. If you can't come up with a measurable goal then your strategy is probably too warm and fuzzy and not appropriate. Statements like: "We will provide all students with support services" is totally nebulous and meaningless. Tell me what that will look like, how many students will benefit, how many staff members will be involved, how is it better than what you have now. This is the meat of your grant proposal.

"We will increase parent involvement." Tell me how, exactly what are you going to do, what strategies, what new communication tools will you use, how will you get them to become involved in their student's education. What is your target? State something like: "To have 99% participation of parents in annual student-led conferences."

KEY POINT:

You want to be concise and to the point. The data says this, and so we have decided the best approach to the problem is this strategy. You can state that you have researched the effectiveness of this approach in operation at other schools similar to yours and that you have gathered substantial research as to the effectiveness of this strategy. You will cite the aligned supporting research in the Question 4 response.

Make statements like: "We will begin a Summer Bridge Program in July, 2007, that will provide intense instruction in Math and E/LA for students identified by grades, test scores and teacher recommendations, to be at-risk. Class size will be limited to 15 to 1....." Or "We will increase the number of counselors from our current 900 to 1 to 300 to 1." Or

"We will implement a Twilight Program that will address the needs of students who are failing and demonstrating severe behavioral problems. The program will run from 10:00 – 2:00 with a class size of 12 to 1. Staffing will include: ___ teachers, a designated counselor, etc. etc." Estimated cost for this program will be: \$ _____ a year.

Keep in mind you will need to figure out where you will locate these specialized programs. Some schools have made arrangements with their on-site Continuation schools.

To shrink class size you might consider better use of your Adult School program for students needing to repeat classes. Also, consider dual enrollments at your Occupational Centers (students have to be 16) or your local Community Colleges.

Other strategies: Computer assisted instruction, on-line courses, zero and 7th periods, Peer tutoring, etc.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Certainly you will include more professional development for your plan, but not just more of the same. You want to identify **specific instructional strategies** that are known to improve learning for low achievers and diverse learners. Go beyond SDAIE, what else is out there? **DON'T FORGET THE LINK – HOW DOES THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LINE UP WITH YOUR NEEDS AND IDENTIFIED STRATEGIES?** It all must be like ducks in a row.

Consider training teachers to develop skills in: project based learning, scaffolding, use of differentiated assessment tools to demonstrate mastery, collaborative lesson design,

interdisciplinary instruction, team teaching, Advisories, in-class and after-school prescriptive interventions, etc. Paraprofessionals and teachers will have to complete 40 hours of professional development a year, (this includes shortened days, etc.)

If you intend to hire an outside provider for professional development, have them give you data on their results in schools like yours and report that here.

If you are going to bring “outside” experts in to work in classrooms or be mentors, you need to provide them with professional development on working with students.

You may decide to use more on-site teacher coaches who will actually provide demonstrations, and in classroom coaching for your teachers. Factor in that cost, describe what they will do, how many teachers will they work with each week, etc. Why do you need this? Do you have a large number of new teachers? Does a student work analysis indicate teachers are not providing standards-based instruction? Do teachers need training in test preparation skills that are embedded in their daily curriculum?

A word of caution: If you are selecting computer assisted instructional packages and equipment, (i.e. Carnegie Math carts) then build into your plan lots of professional development time for teachers to become adept in using the software and hardware so you can get some results.

Avoid generalizations like: “We will implement a high quality, standards based curriculum.” You should already be doing that. Again, what does that mean? How does that look in a classroom, how do you evidence that it is taking place? How will you measure the results?

High schools and middle schools that are already implementing SLCs and career focused academies certainly can explain the benefit of these models and how you intend to scale up these groupings. The Office of School Redesign has abundant information on research around these concepts (research is cited in the annual Federal SLC grant application.) The SB 1X office is also gathering more research information for you.

Middle Schools: Take a look at your “Taking Center Stage” pages 254-256 for a very good bibliography linked to middle school reform strategies.

Timeline:

A safe assumption will be that you do not intend to implement all of your strategies and professional development simultaneously. So indicate your roll out time line for each strategy; if you are growing the program from year to year, how many grades, or students will be added each year.

THE EVALUATION:

It would strengthen your application to describe how you intend to monitor your QEIA plan. What are you going to do, that you don’t do now, or you will do better, to make sure you are getting some results. Answer the questions:

- What criteria and indicators will you be watching related to your strategies?

- What is your base line data going into the plan connected to the strategy or group of students?
- How often will you be assessing your progress?
- Who will be in charge of gathering, analyzing and reporting this information to the administration, teachers and Site Council?
- What district support will you rely on for your evaluation method? What is available, keep it simple and use things that are readily accessible to you.

3. Provide evidence that the proposal is based on reliable data and is based on school improvement research that meets current and confirmed standards of scientifically based practices per EC Section 44757.5(j).

Do not select strategies that you “hope” or “think” might work. Only select those that have a significant body of research behind them. The CDE has made it clear that they want to see sufficient evidence that the strategies are proven to be effective.

If you want to use a chart approach, it could look like this:

Student Needs	Strategy	Research
Student interventions to increase course pass rates from 9 th to 10 th grades and reduce early drop out rates	Freshman Transition, Bridge programs; Personalized counseling and advisories; Creation of Houses, SLCs or academies @300 students; Aligned interventions and after-school supports	SLCs improve student attitudes and behavior (Cotton, 2000) Close relationships with teachers and mentors reduces feelings of alienation (Klonsky, 1995; Blum & Rinehart, 1997) Close relationships with teachers improves GPA, reduces drop out rates (Little, 1993) Disadvantaged students benefit most from smaller groupings, SLCs (Noguera, 2002; Lee & Smith, 1993)
More students need to take A-G courses and be better prepared for college entrance exams	Make A-G courses available to all students; provide tutoring for students; provide SAT/ACT exam prep with classes and on-line support	Low income students could attend 4 year colleges at the same rates as middle income if 1) they received at least minimal academic preparation; 2) took entrance exams, and 3) submitted applications for admission and financial aid. (Carnevale, 1999)

You will have to attach a bibliography to your application for references that you cite. The above sources are from the annual District-wide SLC grant application.

If you choose to construct a narrative for this question, then you would state your school need, the responding strategy, and then cite some research (at two or three references) that would support potential success of this strategy in your school.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOME RESOURCES:

Cotton, Kathleen. "New Small Learning Communities: Findings from Recent Literature." Portland: Northwest Regional Educational Lab, 2001. Available on line

This is, by far, the best resource for research references around SLCs

Visher, Mary G., Emanuel, David, and Teitelbaum, Peter: "Key High School Reform Strategies" An Overview of Research Findings"

This is an excellent resource that deals with many different school reform strategies.

Husband, Jennifer and Beese, Stacy: "Review of Selected High School Reform Strategies". Paper Prepared for the Aspen Program on Education Workshop on High School Transformation, 2001.

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education "An Overview of Smaller Learning Communities in High Schools." U.S. Dept. of Education, 2001

Breaking Ranks: A Framework for Secondary Reform

Aiming High – 2002, CDE – has excellent references for reform strategies (work book)

WEBSITES FOR REFORM INFORMATION AND REFERENCES:

Jobs for the Future – www.jff.org

Annenberg Institute for School Reform – www.whannenberg.org

NWREL or NCREL – www.nwrel.org www.nwcrel.org

WestEd – www.wested.org

School Redesign Network at Stanford University – www.schoolredesign.net

The National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform- www.mgforum.org

MIDDLE SCHOOL REFORM:

Taking Center Stage. California Dept. of Education

Felner, R.D. Jackson, A.W. et al "The impact of school reform on the middle years: Longitudinal study of a network engaged in Turning Points –based comprehensive school transformation." *Phi Delta Kappan* 78 (7): 528-50, 1997

George, P.S., & Lounsbury, J.H. 2000. "Making big schools feel small: Multi-age grouping, looping and schools-within-a school." Westerville, OH: National Middle School Association

Mertens, S.B. & Flowers, N. 2003 "Middle school practices improve student achievement in high poverty schools." *Middle School Journal* 35 (1) 33-43

Williamson, R., and J.H. Johnston, "Challenging Orthodoxy: An Emerging Agenda for Middle Level Reform," *Middle School Journal*, March, 1999, pages 10-17.

The various middle school associations' web sites have listings of current research as well.

4. Explain how the school proposes to exceed the API growth target for the school averaged over the first three years of full funding and annually thereafter.

The first year of partial funding is considered a planning year. You are talking about the next three years. Your response is that with the proper implementation of your strategies, and careful monitoring of their effectiveness, you will impact achievement to raise your API scores. Your growth targets will **be met and exceeded** based on the increased focus on successful teaching strategies to improve learning, frequent monitoring of results, and positive personal interaction with students and their families. Consistency in the use of the state approved standards-based curriculum and instructional materials will improve test results.

In addition, your extra attention to SNYPs (Students Not Yet Proficient) will help elevate students from the FBB and BBB levels of scoring. Attention given to "closing the achievement gap" between subgroups, (restate how you intend to do that) will result in higher scores. If you are going to implement a test preparation program, target certain low scoring students with interventions, etc. then you will mention that again here.

The answer is no mystery. If you have done an accurate needs analysis, selected appropriate strategies, and monitor their implementation for effectiveness, your API should rise consistently, year after year. Dealing with student's attitudes about the seriousness of test taking is another challenge you might want to mention. How can you do that?

5. Explain how schools will involve stakeholders, district, school, parents and external entities in the planning, implementation, and monitoring process.

I am certain you have answered this many times in all of your various plans. Some generic ideas you can include:

Parent/guardian homework support classes; home visits; after school and evening meetings for parents; Booster Clubs; Freshman Orientations at the feeder middle schools; training programs to develop parent/community leaders; parent centers on campus; parent ESL classes; Family literacy programs; student-led conferences; use of multi-media for improved communication – telephone calling machines, the school website, telephone trees, newsletters, marquees, flyers, etc.; parent education for college admissions and financial aid; College Fairs open to parents; more bilingual staff members to communicate with parents; translators at all meetings; allow parents to monitor student performance on-line; parent-school contracts; rapid response communication on attendance and academic progress; agenda books to track homework; volunteering at school and participation in school site councils and on committees.

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