Needs Assessment

Briefly provide evidence of need for each of the services that will be funded through this project application. Describe the method(s) used to conduct the needs assessment (e.g. surveys, interviews, document reviews, etc.) and the data and information analyzed (e.g. CELLA, FCAT,Florida Standards Assessment, ELL demographic data) to determine the need for supplementary services. The description must also include an analysis of which programs, services, and activities were successful in the previous grant, which ones were not, and new programs that the LEA will implement with this grant for the 2015-2016 school year as a result of the previous year's outcomes. Summarize results and list proposed needs in order of priority.

Response:

The School District of Osceola County serves approximately 14, 595 English Language Learners (ELLs), which constitutes about 24% of the entire K-12 student population. The majority of these students are of Hispanic origin. In order to determine areas of need, 2014-15 CELLA data on English proficiency levels, the FCAT SSS data for ELLs, and disaggregated AYP reports for ELLs were analyzed. CELLA results indicate the need to increase the percentage of ELLs who have attained English proficiency and who are making progress in learning English. Also, FCAT SSS results indicate the need to increase the number of current and former ELLs achieving at Level 3 or above in FCAT Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science. In addition to data analysis, the Multicultural ESOL Department in Osceola County Public Schools conducted a series of surveys among administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals and parents to determine areas of need in providing supplementary services to English Language Learners (ELLs). Our biggest challenge is to ensure that our ELL students attain English proficiency, develop high levels of academic attainment in English, meet the same challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards as all children are expected to meet, as well as, achieve at high levels in the core academic subjects. Based on data analysis and survey results, the District identified five major areas of need that will be targeted during the 2015-2016 school year.

Need 1: Increase English Language Proficiency levels

The rate of English language acquisition for ELLs needs to improve in the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

Evidence: Based on data analysis of the last two years, although the listening/speaking levels of students showed a significant increase in language proficiency, they did not attain enough fluency to effectively communicate in the classroom setting. In reading skills, scores show that on average, grades K-12 students (except sixth graders) demonstrated lower levels of reading proficiency. In writing, scores show that on average, students demonstrated lower levels of proficiency in writing than in the previous academic year.

Rationale: Although the District met AMAO 1 and 2, it is evident from CELLA results that ELLs need additional support in developing English language proficiency.

Need 2: Increase Dual Language Instruction to Develop Biliteracy

Research findings show that students who participate in dual language instruction reach higher levels of academic achievement than their counterparts who do not participate in the program. Because of program success, the 50/50 model needs to be expanded to other schools at the elementary level (including PreK) and continue its implementation at the middle school levels.

Evidence: Based on data analysis of the last two years, Osceola dual language students outperformed native English speakers (who did not participate in the program) in reading, writing, science, and math.

Rationale: By expanding the offering of the 50/50 model, we are providing students the opportunity to become bilingual and biliterate and be prepared for college and career readiness in our global economy.

Need 3: Increase Academic Achievement Levels

The percentage of ELLs scoring at or above grade level on statewide English Language Arts, science, and mathematics assessments by subgroup need to increase significantly to reduce the achievement gap.

Evidence: Based on the district's 2013-14 AYP report provided by the State, in 2014 only 14% of ELLs performed at or above grade level in reading, and 20% in mathematics. FCAT Science results show that although the percentage of Osceola ELL students scoring Achievement Level 3 and above on FCAT-SSS Science in Grades 5 and 8 increased from an average of 8% to 11%, they are still struggling in reaching science grade level achievement standards.

Rationale: ELLs performance in reading and math need to increase significantly to meet the state 2017-2018 established targets (72% in reading, and 74% in math). Florida's State Board of Education Strategic Plan 2012-2018 (approved October, 2012)

Need 4: Provide teachers and paraprofessionals with additional Professional Development Support

Dual language and ESOL teachers need to receive specific training (beyond META) to offer adequate instruction to ELLs. Paraprofessionals need additional training on ways to support instruction to meet the academic needs of ELLs.

Evidence: Based on survey results, dual language and ESOL teachers expressed the need for additional professional development in areas such as the newly adopted WIDA standards, the Next Generation Science standards, differentiated instruction, cross-cultural understanding, and best practices to help ELLs improve their English language proficiency and academic achievement. Teachers at the elementary, middle and high school levels need specific training on sheltered instruction and how to use a content-based approach to support language development when teaching content (science, math, social studies) to ELLs. Paraprofessionals need training on working cooperatively with teachers through the use of effective tools that will support classroom instruction for ELLs.

Rationale: By providing appropriate training specific to the needs of each group, ELL students will be able to receive more adequate instruction to meet their specific educational needs.

Need 5: Increase Parent Involvement in their children's education

Parental involvement in their children's education needs to improve in order for parents to better meet the educational needs of their children.

Evidence: Based on the results of the survey conducted by the district Bilingual Parent Outreach Liaison and completed by the parents of ELL students, parents expressed the need for improving communication with parents/families and increase the level of community involvement by offering a variety of cultural activities. They also express the need to learn more about the school system requirements and obtain a better understanding of what is expected of their children.

Rationale: Based on research findings from the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, when schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.

Activities

Briefly list and describe each of the LEA's major proposed programs, services, and activities and include how they are aligned with the needs assessment, state content standards, student achievement standards, and state assessments. If applicable, indicate how the included activities are scientifically research based. Also, describe how the activities will enable districts to close the achievement gap and meet all Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs). Please refer to the SALA website for more information on AMAOs: http://www.fldoe.org/aala/amao.asp

Response: The School District of Osceola County mission is "education which inspires all to their highest potential." Based on this mission, the district will use Title III funds to supplement and enhance programs and services for ELL students to prepare them to succeed academically. Proposed activities (based on identified needs) are aligned with state's academic standards, student academic achievement standards, and state assessments. Selected activities are based on scientific research-based best practices that have proven effective and contribute in closing the achievement gap for ELL students. These include:

1.English Language Proficiency Development– In order to meet identified needs under Need #1, Title III funds will be used to support English language acquisition of all ELL students. These include:

•Continue supporting 43 Title III Bilingual Paraprofessionals to assist teachers during classroom instruction to meet the language needs of ELLs and target best practices and strategies to support classroom instruction (See Budget Function 5100, Object 100). These paraprofessionals are beyond the META Consent requirements.

•Schools where data indicate low academic performance of ELLs, a Title III Specialist will be assigned to provide support to ESOL teachers by coaching, mentoring, and modeling best practices (See Function 6300, Object 100).

•Provide supplementary classroom resources to support English language development, such as picture dictionaries, flashcards, phonic books, workbooks, and eBooks (See Function 5100 Object 510).

These activities will provide the support ELLs need by offering challenges at different stages of language acquisition to ensure language proficiency development.

2.Dual Language Instruction Support- In order to meet Need #2 and continue the successful implementation of programs that are effective in improving academic achievement, the district will:

•Support the existing Dual Language schools and expand it to other schools including PreK. This is a priority for the district. The dual language program (50/50 model) has been highly effective in meeting the linguistic and academic needs of ELLs.

•Implement a new initiative: the Seal of Biliteracy, which will reward students who can demonstrate biliteracy skills by the end of high school.

•Support with title III funds a Title III Resource Specialist who will coordinate and provide support to the schools and teachers in ensuring that a quality dual language program is implemented with fidelity (Function 6300, Object 100).

•Supplemental instructional resources will be purchased to help increase the English proficiency of ELLs. These resources will include supplemental classroom materials in Spanish and libraries with appropriate content that will reinforce the acquisition of vocabulary and background knowledge during the academic year as well as during the summer. (Function 5100, Object 510).

2. English Language Academic Achievement – In order to meet identified Need #3, Title III funds will be used to support research-based supplementary programs.

•For the elementary level (grades K-5) paraprofessionals will continue to provide instructional support using the Language Arts & Science NGSS program. This is a research-based supplemental resource that supports classroom instruction in language arts while integrating STEM into the curriculum. Each lesson sequence is correlated to an NGSS standard and integrates CCSS ELA standards (modified to the Language Arts Florida standards) (See Function 5100, Object 510).

•For grades 6-8, continue to use supplemental technology software such as the Reading Web and online eBooks will be used. By using the Rourke Reading Web, students engage in research based reading practice activities while interacting with short passages in preparation for later reading of the books.

•For the high school students, continue to use eRead and Report will be provided as a tool to increase academic achievement in reading (both fiction and non-fiction books). (See Function 5100, Objects 510,622,642)). After reading, students will engage in vocabulary building and comprehension skills. The student's progress will be automatically recorded for future reference.

•Overtime and extended contracts will be covered under Title III funds for paraprofessionals/tutors for summer school at targeted schools (Function 5100, Object 120). These bilingual paraprofessionals will work with students in the computer labs in order to ensure that ELLs students are receiving comprehensible input and the support and guidance necessary for them to excel not only on the listening speaking but also in the areas of reading and writing.

•Title III Resource Specialists will present model lessons integrating language and content. Extended contracts will be provided (See Function 6300 Object 120).

4. Professional Development Support-In order to meet Need #4, as well as the district goal of implementing professional development aligned with state standards to enhance student achievement and professional growth, supplemental professional development opportunities will be offered to teachers and paraprofessionals to expand their knowledge and expertise on proven best practices. There will be two institutes:

• A one-day Dual Language and Sheltered instruction Institute

• A one-day training for paraprofessionals on best practices to support teachers of ELLs.

In addition, Title III Resource Specialist will provide professional development throughout the school year (Function 6300, Object 100) See Professional Development Section for details.

5. Parental Involvement Support- In order to meet Need #5, the Multicultural ESOL Department will implement meaningful parent and community involvement activities designed to assist parents in providing support to assist their children in improving their levels of English proficiency and academic achievement. Title III funds will be used to support and expand the supplemental bilingual parent outreach activities offered by the district. Communication will be improved with parents/families by offering more opportunities for interaction during cultural family activities and workshops on to better understanding of what is expected of their children.

The Department will also disseminate grade appropriate tips for parents to try with their children at home via a bilingual newsletter. The Title I Bilingual/Community Liaison will work with the district Bilingual Parent Outreach Liaison to provide and implement services that will support parent literacy. Overtime-extended contract for adult literacy teachers will be covered to provide literacy classes to parents for ELL students and strategies as presented in the Key to Your Child's Success (available in English and Spanish) to help parents understand the Florida educational system (Function 5400, Object 120).

The Multicultural ESOL Director (funded by the school district) will oversee and coordinate the implementation of all grant activities and expenditures. Through the support of the Title III Resource Specialist, the Title I Parent Outreach Liaison, the Bilingual/Community Liaison, and the Title III paraprofessionals, all proposed activities will be implemented.