

PART III – REQUIRED PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. **Signed Assurances** – Applicant districts should submit a set of written assurances, with a Superintendent sign-off, regarding the following.
 - a. Upon receipt of a preliminary planning grant, the district will assemble and convene a group of key stakeholders to meet throughout the summer to develop an initial plan regarding the creation of one or more Readiness Advantage or Readiness Alliance Schools, either as a new school or as a conversion of an existing school.
 - b. At the end of the preliminary planning process, the district will identify one or more schools that it is considering for participation in the Readiness Schools initiative, as well as any partners that will be involved in the establishment of the school. (This is not a binding decision and may be amended based on information gathered during the preliminary planning process.)
 - c. The district and its partners, as applicable, will draft and submit an initial plan to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education by September 15, 2009. (*See components below.)
 - d. If, at the end of project period, the group has not developed an initial plan, the district will submit a written explanation of the associated reasons and submit an official withdrawal notification from the preliminary planning process.
 - e. The district will state the willingness of district and school personnel to participate actively in larger Department efforts to assess and evaluate this pilot project and to further understand the process of school innovation.
2. **Overview of Preliminary Planning Activities** – Applicant districts should provide a description of the district's approach to preliminary planning activities that will be conducted during the summer in order to develop an initial plan.

The description should include, but not be limited to: the groups and people who will be involved in the preliminary planning process (both school and district leadership and, as applicable, external partners); a timeline that summarizes the activities and dates; and a budget narrative describing expenses related to the preliminary planning activities.

*** The initial plan to be submitted by September 15, 2009 should include the following:**

1. the district's vision and specific goals for establishing a Readiness Alliance or Readiness Advantage School or Schools. Include the district's rationale for considering conversion in each identified school or establishment of a new school, including specific issues, challenges, or needs that can be addressed or improved by establishing a Readiness School;
2. a description of how the Readiness Schools initiative fits into the district's larger plan for improving school performance and student achievement in the district;
3. a statement signifying the district's intent to convert one or more schools into a Readiness School(s), or create a new school or schools, and facilitate the implementation of the five identified areas of autonomy;
4. a description of the school's readiness and capacity to convert into a Readiness School, or in the case of a new school, the district's readiness and capacity to establish a new Readiness School. Include information about the school's leadership and conditions that make it suited to use effectively additional autonomy. Include any evidence or information available on staff, teacher, parent, and/or community interest in the Readiness Schools initiative;
5. if applicable, a description of the proposed partnership that will serve as the foundation of the Readiness Alliance School. If the partnership builds upon an existing relationship, include information about the nature of the relationship and the types of services and/or activities provided by the partner institution/organization;

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6. to the extent practicable, a description of the specific ways the proposed Readiness School will seek flexibility and autonomy with respect to curriculum, budget, staffing, school schedule and calendar, and school district policies. Include information about any special academic themes the Readiness School will feature; additional programs, services, and training opportunities for students, teachers, and families; specific staffing policies the school will seek; flexibility regarding specific district programs or policies that the school will seek; and the budgetary flexibility needed to support these changes;
7. a description of the goals and objectives of the school that the autonomies will help the school accomplish. Include a description of potential barriers that the current school structure presents to meeting the goals. Highlight specific areas of the school's current improvement plan that would be addressed by increased autonomy with respect to curriculum, budget, staffing, school schedule and calendar, and school district policies; and
8. to the extent practicable, a description of the process that will be used to promote subsequent design and implementation activities related to the establishment of the Readiness School. Include information on the people and groups that will be involved; primary areas of focus in the comprehensive design and implementation process; and a timeline of major activities expected during the 2009-2010 school year.