



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Memo

To: Jeannine Durkin, Acting Superintendent
From: Lisa Van Thiel, Early Childhood Coordinator
RE: Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative
Date: February 27, 2019

Lowell Public Schools Early Childhood Department received notification of an award for the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative Fund Code 515. Grantees had to demonstrate their capacity to build collaboration between public school districts and private providers to implement classroom level funding systems that support local alignment, high quality, and accessible preschool programs. The grant is funded to foster:

- A commitment to preschool expansion and quality alignment birth to grade three to improve student outcomes.
- Effective structures for local collaboration, program monitoring, and ongoing continuous quality improvement.
- Expansion to full-day preschool programming based on documented need, which in Lowell includes maintaining classrooms opened through the Preschool Expansion Grant.
- Exploration with community partners of cost-efficient program designs and sustainable funding sources inclusive of public funding through Chapter 70, state vouchers, and Head Start Funding.

In Lowell, we will be partnering with three agencies: Little Sprouts, Community Teamwork Inc. and UTEC. Our goal is to sustain some of the support services funded currently through the Preschool Expansion Grant including the following:

- Maintain full-day preschool classrooms created through Preschool Expansion Grant funding. As part of sustainability planning, partners encourage Lowell Public Schools to take on two full-day classrooms in the fall of 2019.
- Provide CPPI classrooms with access to a Speech and Language Pathologist, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, trauma support, and technical assistance around supporting children with disabilities.

- Ensure screening, progress monitoring and assessments of children through ongoing use of classroom data.
- Increase linkages between home and school by boosting family engagement in learning at home, in school, and in the community.
- Provide all preschool classrooms with support to promote child learning through intentional instruction.
- Offer community-wide professional development and coaching to support curriculum alignment for all preschool age children.
- Maintain and increase the number of teachers with Bachelor's degrees in center-based care and ensure salaries are comparable with Public School teachers.

Funds are included to hire two staff for the following positions:

- **Data Analyst/EC Enrollment and Outreach Specialist** to provide families with information on choosing early childhood programs and outreach to families. This position will be funded through the PEG from now until August and CPPI moving forward (job description attached).
- **Assistant Early Childhood Coordinator** to provide grant management and support services to Lowell Public Schools and CPPI preschool classrooms in Lowell as part of a strategic plan to improve school readiness. The position previously existed in the Early Childhood Department. Jim Hall was asked to review and research this position. An updated job description was sent to Mr. Hall to present to the union (job description attached). It was determined that the salary range should be consistent with District Support and be \$89,617 per year and number of work days set at 215 consistent with that of the Early Childhood Coordinator. This position will augment the loss of the District Support Specialist staff in FY 2018 and it is critical to ensuring Lowell Public Schools capacity to provide CPPI and district services required by the grant and IDEA.*

In our second year, Lowell will be eligible for \$625,000.00 of funding and looks forward to collaborating with Little Sprouts and Community Teamwork Inc. to maintain current Preschool Expansion classrooms and expand preschool services provided at UTEC.

*Currently, a percentage of the Early Childhood Coordinator's salary is paid in part through funds from the Preschool Expansion Grant which ends August 30, 2019. Given the elimination of this funding and changes to the Early Childhood Coordinator's roles and responsibilities to include serving dual roles as district- wide coordinator and also as the administrator of the Cardinal O'Connell Early Learning Center, \$72,360.00 of the coordinator's salary will be included as part of the FY20 Budget.