



Illinois State Board of Education

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Jesse H. Ruiz
Chairman

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

November, 2010

TO: Eligible Applicants

FROM: Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Koch".

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): Children's Low-cost Laptop Program

General Information

Eligible Applicants: Eligible applicants are school districts with one or more schools serving any of grades 3 through 8 which:

- have 40 percent or more of its students eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program (42 USC 1751 et seq.);
- are in Academic Early Warning or Academic Watch status under Section 2-3.25d of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/2-3.25d]; and,
- have a significant percentage of the students in grades 3 through 8 with limited or no access to laptop computers for use in improving their educational opportunities.

Public university laboratory schools approved by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) pursuant to Section 18-8.05(K) of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/18-8.05(K)] and charter schools shall be eligible to apply on the same basis as school districts; see 105 ILCS 5/2-3.109a and 27A-11.5, respectively.

Eligibility shall be limited to entities having State-approved Technology Integration Plans.

Grant Award: Total funding of \$10 million for a two-year Children's Low-cost Laptop Program (i.e., fiscal years (FY) 2011 and 2012) is available through Build Illinois bond funds.

ISBE will administer the competition and selection process to meet the statutory requirements of Section 20 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes [[105 ILCS 65/20](#)].

Accordingly, ISBE will select applicants in such a way as to ensure that at least one-third of the participating students are located in the City of Chicago; at least one-third are located in the area that makes up the counties of DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, Will and that portion of Cook County located outside of the City of Chicago; and at least one-third are located in the remainder of the State. The number of grants to be awarded will not be determined until the application scoring and ranking process is completed; however for planning purposes,

applicants are advised that individual grant awards will be based upon a maximum *per student* allocation of \$750 over the two-year project.

Grant Period: The grant period will begin no sooner than January 1, 2011 and will extend from the execution date of the grant until June 30, 2011. Funding in the subsequent year will be contingent upon satisfactory progress and completion of a continuation application.

Application Deadline: Mail the original and three (3) copies to Kristy Harvell, Curriculum and Instruction Division, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, C-215, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001, to ensure receipt no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 17, 2010. Faxed copies or other electronic submissions will not be accepted. Do not submit proposals using folders, three-ring binders, etc. Incomplete or late proposals will not be eligible for consideration.

Bidders' Online Webinar: A bidders' webinar will be held November 30, from 11:00 am to 12:00 noon. Registration is available at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/585664032>.

Should the conditions of this RFP change as a result of the bidders' conference, the State Board of Education will post all changes on the Curriculum and Instruction webpage found at <http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/Default.htm>.

Contact Person: For more information on this RFP, contact Kathleen Barnhart, Curriculum and Instruction Division, (217) 557-7323, kbarnhar@isbe.net.

Background and Program Specifications

The Children's Low-cost Laptop Act [[105 ILCS 65/5](#)], authorizes a two-year pilot program designed to provide a low-cost laptop computer to each student, teacher, and relevant administrator in a participating school and implement the use of educational software and computer skills training at the elementary grade levels (i.e., grades 3 through 8) in order to improve academic achievement and other school performance measures. For the purpose of this program, a "low-cost laptop" means a portable personal computing device suitable for use among primary school-aged children, under \$400 in initial cost or with a financed cost of under \$250 per year. Schools will be selected pursuant to Section 20 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes [[105 ILCS 65/20](#)] whereby not more than 300 schools will be selected for participation in the program and at least one-third of the participating *students* will be located in the City of Chicago; at least one-third will be located in the area that makes up the counties of DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, Will and that portion of Cook County located outside of the City of Chicago; and at least one-third will be located in the remainder of the State. The full text of the Act may be found at <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=3132&ChapterID=17>.

The program focuses on schools that serve a substantial percentage of students from low-income families, are in Academic Early Warning or Academic Watch status as a result of low student achievement, and have limited access to laptop technology resources. The program is similar in scope to the Technology Immersion Pilot Program (TIPP), which was funded from 2006 to August 31, 2010 and has now expired. The Children's Low-cost Laptop Program is also a pilot project that is, by statute, scheduled to expire on August 31, 2012. The scope of the Children's Low-cost Laptop Program is also similar to that of TIPP with the exceptions of grade levels served and the equipment acquisition process. Applicants may in response to this RFP elect to apply on behalf of an entire school or for a particular grade or classroom or classrooms.

Under the Children's Low-cost Laptop Program, school districts bear the responsibility for equipment purchases rather than receiving laptop computers from the State as was the case

with the predecessor program. As such, applicants are advised that all purchases must be aligned to the district's State-approved Technology Integration Plan and require prior approval from ISBE as part of an executed grant agreement.

To assist applicants with proposal preparation, further information regarding the TIPP is available in the final evaluation reports found at the links listed below.

- Metis Associates Year One Report - April 2008
http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/elearning/pdf/tipp_yr1_rpt.pdf
- Metis Associates Year Two Report - June 2008
http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/elearning/pdf/tipp_yr2_rpt.pdf

Proposed programs must focus on the pedagogical shift for teachers and students in their daily teaching and learning practices. As part of the proposal, applicants are required to submit evidence of the district's readiness for teachers to implement instructional change that optimizes teachable moments, explores content in greater depth, and relates to real-world and real-time issues and problems. Real-time issues and problems should engage teachers and students in teaching and learning activities which allow students to use critical and analytical thinking skills, synthesize data, and find and present information in useful ways.

Instructional Change Plan

Applicants are required to submit an Instructional Change Plan as part of their proposals detailing how they plan to implement a pedagogical shift for teachers and students. The section below summarizes the major elements to be considered in the development of the Instructional Change Plan. Specific requirements, however, are outlined later in the RFP in the *Proposal Narrative Requirements* section.

- **District Readiness**

The following factors should be considered when determining the school district's readiness to successfully implement a Low-cost Laptop Program. Attachment 6 and Attachment 7 must be used to document district readiness.

- ♦ Building and network infrastructure that support the district's need to ensure the equipment runs effectively and efficiently with sufficient bandwidth. Recipients may be required to upgrade their electrical or other capacity or to make other in-kind contributions as a condition of program participation.
- ♦ Identification of specific participating teachers and the methods used to involve teacher participants in the planning and proposal writing process.
- ♦ Evidence, derived from use of the tools on the Illinois Data Portal located at <https://ddip/lth5.k12.il.us> or other research-based tools developed to measure technology proficiency, that participating teachers possess basic technology skills.
- ♦ Established track record of using data to plan and implement technology initiatives.

- ***Surveys of Stakeholders***

Applicants must survey stakeholders, including teachers, parents, students, and administrative staff to determine the level of support and need for the proposed project. Survey results and conclusions must be included in the Instructional Change Plan as outlined in the *Proposal Narrative Requirements* section.

- ***Observation of Technology Integration***

Applicants must specify named staff members responsible for completing the observations and describe their capacity to implement the proposed observation plan in the proposal. Grant recipients will be required to incorporate classroom observation of all participating teachers to measure levels of technology integration into classroom instruction.

- ***Instructional Change Plan and Budget Implementation Fidelity***

Applicants should describe a plan for monitoring the implementation of all the proposed grant activities and approved expenditures using the tools and other appropriate instruments on the Illinois Data Portal and the Illinois State Board of Education website, as well as other research-based tools. Proposals must identify those staff members who will be specifically charged with monitoring implementation activities if awarded the grant and clearly describe their capacity to conduct the work given competing workload requirements. In writing the Instructional Change Plan, applicants should consider how staff members will communicate grant goals to major stakeholders, monitor participation in quality professional development, and comply with the state evaluation process.

- ***Instructional Improvement Sustainability***

Applicants should describe how the additional requirements, activities and technology of the program will align to the current improvement strategies included in the district's State-approved Technology Integration Plan. In addition, proposals should include detailed descriptions of how improvement strategies of the State-approved Technology Integration Plan align and support those strategies outlined in the District or School Improvement Plan(s). Proposals should provide evidence demonstrating the current progress toward accomplishing stated goals in the District plans as well as demonstrate how project goals are aligned and sufficiently integrated with the Low-cost Laptop Program proposal.

Program Evaluation and Reporting Requirements

Evaluation

In an effort to measure the effect of the program, the school board of each participating school will be required to submit an annual progress report for each year that the school is participating in the pilot project to ISBE. To assist districts in meeting this statutory requirement, grant recipients will participate in a statewide evaluation conducted by an independent external evaluator. Data collection will include, but is not limited to, the elements listed below. Further information will be provided to actual grant recipients.

- Performance on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT);
- School costs;
- Attendance rates;

- Teacher performance and retention;
- Parental involvement in education;
- Community support for the school; and
- Student technology proficiency.

Utilization of the Illinois Data Portal

Grant recipients will be required to utilize the Illinois Data Portal located at <https://ddip/lth5.k12.il.us> to export and report on their project implementation and outcomes. Assessment and evaluation tools available on the portal include measures for student, educator, and school proficiency and effectiveness. Further information regarding required reporting will be provided to grant recipients.

NOTE: Previous Grant Recipients

Previous grant recipients must include a description of their participation in competitive ISBE grant programs designed specifically for targeting academic improvement, educator effectiveness and educational technology integration for the past five (5) years. Competitive grant programs which should be discussed include educational technology programs and school improvement programs. These descriptions must include:

- Name of the ISBE program;
- Number of school, teacher, and student participants;
- Data collected that demonstrated progress toward the project goals; and,
- Lessons learned for managing grant projects to achieve targeted goals effectively.

Fiscal Information

Funding for the Children's Laptop Program comes from the Build Illinois Bond Fund. It is anticipated that the program will receive \$10 million in total funding for the two-year program, with approximately \$9 million distributed to selected school districts as competitive grants.

Grant funding under this program must be used in accordance with the purposes set forth in Section 15(b) of the Act and listed below as allowable expenditures. Selected grantees will purchase equipment directly from vendors using funds provided through this initiative. Grantees may select the technology vendor which best meets the needs of the participating schools; however, the funding amount requested under this RFP for low-cost laptops must be under \$400 per unit in initial costs or under \$250 per year as a financed cost.

Allowable Expenditures

Applicants may request grant funds to support the following activities:

- To purchase low-cost laptop computers;
- To support network infrastructure for wireless access points, cables, and routers for the program low-cost laptop computers; and
- To replace low-cost laptop components for the program low-cost laptops, including batteries, power cords, or other software and hardware.

Applicants may also request grant funds to pay teacher stipends and substitute recovery costs for certified teaching professionals from participating schools to attend ISBE-sponsored professional development activities. ISBE-sponsored professional development activities will include technology use as well as strategies' training to integrate technology use into teaching practices and support transformative instruction.

It is the intention of ISBE to approve projects and budgets for a two-year period including time remaining in FY 2011 and for FY 2012. Funding in the second year will be contingent upon the availability of funds for the program and evidence presented in continuation proposals and through the statewide evaluation that the projects have been implemented in accordance with the approved grant agreements and that the recipients continue to need additional State resources in order to maintain comprehensive technology-based learning programs. A district that has received two years of grant support from the Children's Low-cost Laptop Program may subsequently apply as a new applicant if future program funding becomes available.

Proposal Narrative Requirements

Instructional Change Plan

Applicants must provide the following information in the order presented below to complete the Proposal Narrative section of the proposal. The collective responses to the prompts below will comprise the Instructional Change Plan. Applicants are advised to review the scoring rubric in Appendix A before developing the Proposal Narrative – Instructional Change Plan.

1. Indicate the school(s) and grade level(s) chosen to participate in the project and the rationale for the selection. The rationale should address the school's eligibility, and the need for the project, which must at least detail:
 - a. the educational resources currently available to the school and how those resources would be improved through the use of laptops and other related technologies;
 - b. the current academic achievement and technology proficiency of students; and,
 - c. the identification process for participating teachers and evidence that teacher representation was part of the Instructional Change Plan creation.
2. Indicate the number of teachers and/or administrators who will be involved in the project and their roles. If any personnel other than the classroom teacher will be receiving equipment, then describe how each individual will support the work of the classroom teacher or conduct efforts aimed at alleviating the deficiencies identified in the Instructional Change Plan. Describe the monitoring process that will be put in place to ensure project goals are met. Include results from stakeholder surveys to show level of support and need for proposed project.
3. Provide a detailed description of how the Children's Low-cost Laptop Program, particularly the use of wireless laptop computers and other technologies, will help alleviate the deficiencies identified in Item 1 above. Discuss the goals and specific strategies related to curriculum and instruction and professional development that will be used by teachers and administrators, respectively, to improve the school and students' academic outcomes.

4. Describe the school's current technology inventory and technology instructional integration. Explain how those resources have limited student and teacher opportunities to have everyday access to technology in and out of the classroom. Indicate the anticipated changes that will occur as a result of the everyday use of laptops by teachers and students in and out of the classroom. Provide evidence that the teachers and administrators are willing to work in the new ways necessary to ensure successful implementation of the Children's Low-cost Laptop Program as a way to mitigate identified deficiencies. Also, describe whether staff knowledgeable about technology support and high-speed Internet services will be available to assist teachers and administrators.
5. Review the State-approved Technology Integration Plan and describe how the Children's Low-cost Laptop Program will complement and positively contribute to other improvement initiatives outlined in the State-approved Technology Integration Plan, District Improvement Plan, and/or School Improvement Plans. Include a description of how the activities in the Low-cost Laptop Program also support strategies outlined in the current State-approved Technology Integration Plan.
6. Describe any limitations the school currently has with respect to using wireless laptop technology (e.g., antiquated servers that will not support wireless networking; not enough wireless access points; switches, routers, and software are out of date; lack of Internet filtering software). Information provided here should align to information provided in Attachment 6.
7. Discuss the in-kind contributions to be made to the project including resources for infrastructure, additional equipment and technology support services. Describe needed in-kind contributions to continue technology integration and teacher technology professional development after funding for the Low-cost Laptop Program ends.
8. Provide the current research supporting the project design outlined in the Instructional Change Plan and the likelihood the proposed project strategies and activities will result in student academic improvement.
9. Describe other local assessments that will be used to measure student academic achievement and how this data will guide instructional decision-making at the classroom level. Include your plans for integrating data collected through the Illinois Data Portal into the district's current assessment system.
10. Describe current teacher technology proficiency and technology integration skills. Provide a professional development plan of proposed strategies and activities for the two-year project to address the development of participating teacher skills.
11. Previous grant recipients must include a description of their participation in competitive ISBE grant programs designed specifically for targeting academic improvement, educator effectiveness, and educational technology integration for the past five (5) years. Competitive grant programs which should be discussed include educational technology programs and school improvement programs. These descriptions must include:
 - a. Name of the ISBE program;
 - b. Number of school, teacher, and student participants;
 - c. Data collected that demonstrated progress toward the project goals; and,

- d. Lessons learned for managing grant projects to achieve targeted goals effectively.

Proposal Format

Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please use the following as a checklist in assembling your completed proposal. Please ensure that all pages requiring original signature(s) are signed by the appropriate individual(s). Incomplete or late proposals will not be eligible for consideration. Applicants will not be allowed to correct deficiencies and resubmit their application for consideration.

- ___ **1. Cover Page (Attachment 1):** Must be signed by the school district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal.
- ___ **2. Proposal Narrative:** Provide information as enumerated in the *Narrative Requirements - Instructional Change Plan* section.
- ___ **3. State-approved Technology Integration Plan:** Each applicant must include a copy of its State-approved Technology Integration Plan approval letter from the Illinois State Board of Education that clearly identifies the approval and expiration date of the plan.
- ___ **4. Commitment Form (Attachment 2):** Must be signed by the participating teachers and administrators.
- ___ **5. Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 3):** Must be submitted on the form provided and signed by the district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal. The payment schedule should be based on the projected date of expenditures. Supplies, equipment, contracted services, and professional development should be requested in the month for which the expenditure is anticipated.
- ___ **6. Budget Narrative (Attachment 4):** Must include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Budget Summary. Must include subcontract information, if applicable (see item 7 of the document titled "Certification and Assurances and Standard Terms of the Grant," Attachment 8).
- ___ **7. Instructional Change Plan Committee Member Information Sheet (Attachment 5):** Must be signed by the school district superintendent and Instructional Change Plan Committee Chair.
- ___ **8. Infrastructure Readiness Checklist (Attachment 6):** Must be signed by the appropriate authorized school district official(s).
- ___ **9. Student and Personnel Readiness Rubric (Attachment 7):** Must be signed by the authorized school district official(s).
- ___ **10. Certifications and Assurances (Attachments 8 and 9):** Each applicant is required to submit the certification forms attached ("Certification and Assurances, and Standard Terms of the Grant" and "Program-Specific Terms of the Grant"). These must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its contents.

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

Each proposal submitted will be evaluated in accordance with the rubric presented in Appendix A by impartial panelists with experience in integrating technology into classroom instruction in order to increase academic achievement of students. The panelists will carefully consider the extent to which an applicant has provided evidence that the proposed program is of sufficient quality and scope to carry out the purposes of the Low-cost Laptop Program effectively. Educators working with a district that submits a response to the RFP will NOT be considered as a review panelist.

Total possible points are 100 and are divided as follows:

- Up to 50 points for the quality of the plan;
- Up to 30 points for need of the project; and, and
- Up to 20 points for the evaluation plan of project.

Following the notification of grant awards, an applicant may request copies of reviewer comments by providing a written request to Kristy Harvell, Curriculum and Instruction Division, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, C-215, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001.

Rubric - Review and Approval of Proposals

Proposals shall be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

I. Quality of the Plan (50 points)

Indicator	Not in place, not addressed, or inadequate to meet project goals	Weak or Unclear, many revisions needed to meet project goals	Average, important elements are missing or need revision to meet project goals	Strong, few revisions needed to meet project goals	Exemplary, no revisions needed to meet project goals
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A. The proposal indicates how the prevalence of personal laptop computers and other technological resources can be used to mitigate the problems identified.					
B. The proposal discusses specific strategies that will be used by teachers and administrators, respectively, to improve the schools' and students' outcomes with respect to the specific problems noted and provides a plan for aligning these strategies to the State-approved technology integration plan.					
The plan indicates how low-cost laptop computers and other technologies will improve student achievement.					
The plan links the personal computing technology to relevant curriculum maps, school improvement plans, and district improvement plans.					
The narrative, attachments and budget demonstrates alignment to the needs identified in the State-approved Technology Integration Plan and the budget proposed to implement that plan.					

Indicator	Not in place, not addressed, or inadequate to meet project goals	Weak or Unclear, many revisions needed to meet project goals	Average, important elements are missing or need revision to meet project goals	Strong, few revisions needed to meet project goals	Exemplary, no revisions needed to meet project goals
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
C. The proposal demonstrates that the teachers and administrators responsible for the classrooms to be served are amenable to the kinds of changes in their work that will occur if a greater reliance on technology is made possible.					
The proposal identifies specific participating teachers and administrators.					
The plan demonstrates district readiness through the use of the Illinois Data Portal or other research-based tools.					
The plan provides evidence of the technology proficiency level of administrative and teaching staff.					
The plan demonstrates the district commitment of in-kind contributions of sufficient direction and amount to support successful project implementation.					
D. The proposal links the plan for the use of personal computing technology to other school improvement initiatives relevant to the schools to be served.					
The plan describes the district's past use of data to plan and implement technology initiatives.					
The plan demonstrates evidence of State-approved Technology Integration Plan implementation, including student Internet safety and technology use policies.					

II. Need (30 points)

Indicator	Not in place, not addressed, or inadequate to meet project goals	Weak or Unclear, many revisions needed to meet project goals	Average, important elements are missing or need revision to meet project goals	Strong, few revisions needed to meet project goals	Exemplary, no revisions needed to meet project goals
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A. The proposal demonstrates that the schools to be served currently have inadequate access to technological resources that can be used directly by students and teachers.					
The narrative, attachments and budgets describe limited student access to and use of hardware and software resources.					
The narrative, attachments and budgets describe limited teacher and administrator access to and use of hardware and software resources.					
The narrative, attachments and budgets describe limited district access to and use of hardware and software resources.					
The proposal outlines building and network infrastructure of sufficient capacity to ensure project equipment runs effectively.					
B. The proposal discusses other initiatives and strategies that have not been as effective as hoped in improving students' performance over time.					
The proposal describes initiatives and strategies that have not been as effective as hoped in improving students' performance over time.					
The proposal describes evidence of past ISBE grant implementation and clearly shows the success level of past program implementation in improving student performance.					

III. Evaluation Plan (20 points)

Indicator	Not in place, not addressed, or inadequate to meet project goals	Weak or Unclear, many revisions needed to meet project goals	Average, important elements are missing or need revision to meet project goals	Strong, few revisions needed to meet project goals	Exemplary, no revisions needed to meet project goals
	(2)	(4)	(6)	(8)	(10)
<p>A. The proposal identifies how and by whom each of the data elements implicit in the reporting requirement of Section 25 of the Act will be collected and how each of the applicable comparisons will be made.</p>					
<p>The proposal demonstrates activities and strategies for monitoring and supporting the implementation fidelity of the project, and includes identified staff members' capacity to complete tasks effectively.</p>					
<p>The plan demonstrates that proposed strategies and activities for the project have a high likelihood of meeting data collection and reporting requirements of the project leading to sustained implementation.</p>					