



University of Pittsburgh

TO: Roslyn Wilson, Ed.D.
FROM: Stephen J. Bagnato
RE: Proposal for Pitt Coordination of WHSD Pre-K Counts Partnership
DATE: 10/26/06

I greatly appreciate the inquiry and initial discussions about my colleagues at the University of Pittsburgh and Children's Hospital of UPMC entering into a contractual agreement with Woodland Hills School District to provide overall coordination and planning for your new Pre-K Counts Partnership grant from the state. We are privileged to be considered for this innovative initiative; I believe that our expertise and success in past early childhood intervention model development projects and research ventures, such as the Heinz Early Childhood Initiative can add the necessary expertise that you need to make your school district/community partnership unique and successful.

In the following proposal, we outline the elements of our approach, aligning with the spirit and missions of your Pre-K Counts grant proposal to the state, which we have entitled:

The Early School Success Team:

A School-Community Partnership to Promote Resiliency & Early Learning at Pre-K and Kindergarten Transition for High-Risk Preschoolers and Their Families

Rationale:

- WHSD seeks help and expertise in forming and coordinating its Pre-K Counts Partnership.
- The Pre-K Counts initiative requires such expertise and experience particularly as relates to all aspects of coordinating a model program within a new initiative to meet emerging state PDE and DPW requirements.
- The University of Pittsburgh and Children's Hospital-UPMC have experience and skills in early childhood intervention programs, interagency team building, systems integration, and model program development.
- The Pitt coordination team would have the latitude and operational authority to make decisions regarding the promotion and refinement of the partnership model.

Philosophy

- Engage in a process of interagency team-building, collaboration, and consensus decision-making with community partners about creating a **prevention and promotion model** for young children;
- Pool human and operational resources of programs and partners to enhance mutual advantages;
- Create a “linked” school district/early childhood education network to promote programmatic effectiveness and child/family success;
- Blend the expertise of each partner in the initiative to make the “unsystem” for young children a true, and functional system.
- Emphasize the development of child, family, and programmatic competencies and the prevention of developmental and behavioral problems in pre-kindergarten which will foster an effective transition and the resiliency and success of children into Kindergarten and the early grades.
- Focus on promoting the use of "best practices" codified by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Division for Early Childhood of Council for Exceptional Children (DEC), and National Head Start Association.

Approach

- Establish an interagency "early school success team" (ESST) focusing on children in pre-K through third grade
- Compose the interagency team with interdisciplinary professionals in early childhood education, school psychology, behavioral health, and early intervention;
- Operationalize the concept of a "**COLT or collaborative leadership team**" to provide oversight, coordination, and integration of team functioning
- Require that all support services be applied in *natural settings*, such as classroom, home, and community.

Focus:

The Early School Success Team (ESST) model strives to promote pre-kindergarten growth, effective transition, and success in the early grades by encouraging the use of developmentally-appropriate and high quality practices in (a) early childhood education and intervention classrooms and home care arrangements; (b) in Title I and Kindergarten-3rd grade classrooms, and (c) in children and families. These goals will be accomplished through the following modes of collaboration among the partners:

1. Quality mentoring among partners to teachers, providers, and administrators in all settings towards Keystone Stars and NAEYC Standards

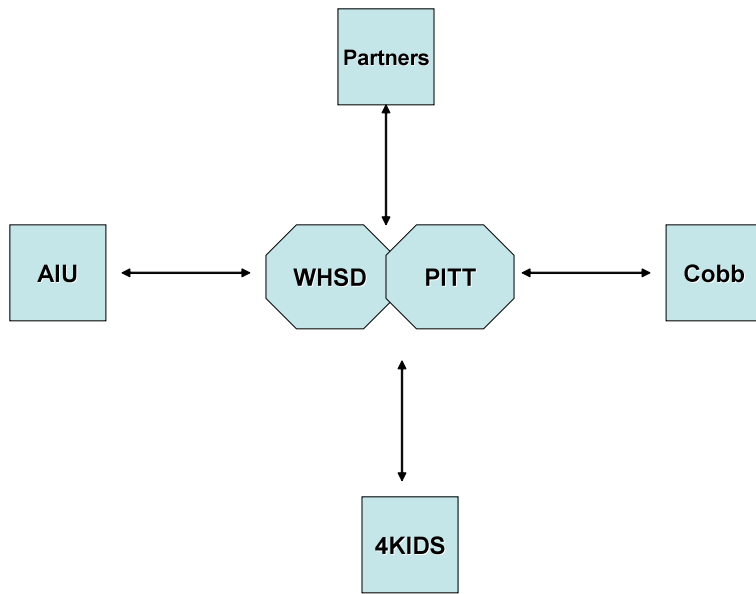
2. Transition supports and coaching to teachers and parents by the school psychologist in the natural community early childhood education settings
3. Development of transition materials and processes
4. Mentoring to “receiving” kindergarten teachers about developmentally-appropriate practices
5. Family consultation and support about early school success
6. Prevention and promotion strategies focusing on "resiliency skills" in young children at-risk (3-8 years): social behavior; early literacy skills; parent education and consultation, and integrated collaboration, mentoring, and planning with early care and education programs (especially Head Start, affiliated early care and education programs, and early intervention programs).

Major Proposal Elements:

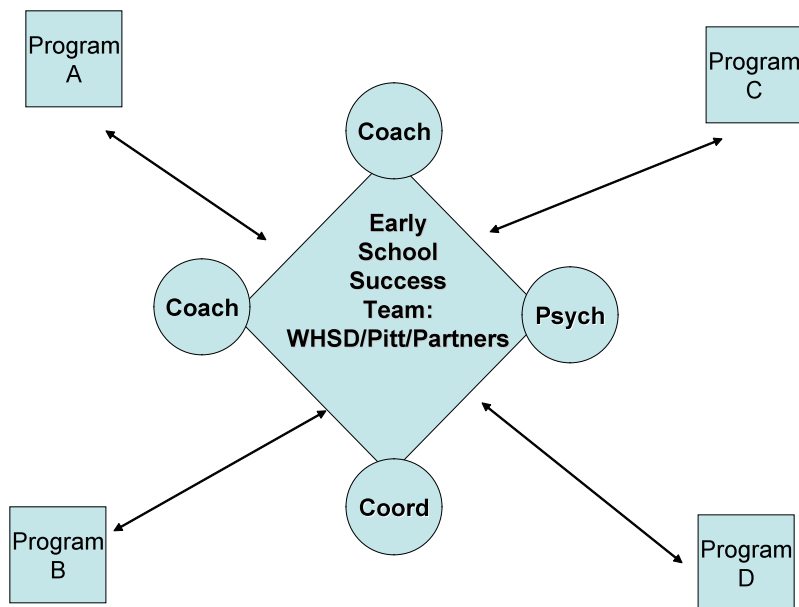
1. Subcontract with Pitt to provide a Pre-K Counts Coordinator and PA Certified School Psychologist, and mentor consultants who will form a team to function in the coordination, planning, consultation, and coaching/mentoring roles;
2. Schedule meeting with Dr. Wilson to review the current proposal and to suggest modifications and to review the budget and allocations;
3. Establish a series of meetings among currently-identified community partners to review the existing proposal and to modify it so as to ensure systems integration, creativity, and a true sense of collaboration;
4. Reach consensus on the establishment of a WHSD Pre-K Counts Collaborative Leadership Team (COLT) and its members;
5. Identify members and establish meetings for the WHSD Pre-K Counts Management and Oversight Board.
6. Refine the ***Early School Success Team*** model;
7. Begin full implementation in January, 2007

The Operation of the Early School Success Team (ESST) Model

The Collaborative Leadership Team (COLT) for the WHSD Pre-K Counts Partnership model consists of the Woodland Hills School District representatives and the Pitt team providing the central direction, coordination, coaching, and support functions for the initiative and for the ESST. Integrated mentoring and coaching are also provided by representatives from 4KIDS in Braddock, Pat Cobb’s ECE programs, and Allegheny Intermediate Unit’s Early Childhood and Family Support Services. The figure below depicts these integrated relationships among partners on the COLT



The main operational vehicle of the WHSD Pre-K Counts Partnership model is the Early School Success Team; the ESST is composed of interdisciplinary partners from each of the agencies who will deliver an array of mentoring, coaching, on-site support, and coordination activities and services to children, teachers/providers, parents, and administrators. The “on-site”, in-vivo supports will occur through the actions of a *mobile team* composed of specialists in early childhood, early intervention, and school psychology. The integrated focus of the ESST is prevention and promotion to foster resiliency and early school success competencies in children, teachers, parents, and to enhance the quality of both pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs.



Responsibilities and Deliverables of the University Partnership Contract:

- Facilitate a practical and functional understanding and agreement of the ESST partnership model and elements by all partners through consensus decision-making procedures;
- Meet regularly with Dr. Wilson and a "WHSD Pre-K Counts Management and Oversight Group" (to be identified) to ensure continuity and agreement with process;
- Monitor implementation of PA Early Learning Standards and curricula in all partnership sites;
- Function as a liaison for the SPECS for Pre-K Counts evaluation research;
- Regular visits to partners for individual meetings to strength and expand the collaborations;
- Define a unique identity for marketing the name and features of the WHSD Partnership Model
- Use the ESST model to provide "on-site" support in the classroom settings of partners to teachers, children, and parents
- Identify 2-3 interagency partner representatives to augment the ESST (through specific funding) and to provide ongoing mentoring and coaching to partners and programs
- Hire a consultant to provide extra quality mentoring and coaching as needed
- Propose new partnership elements that will further the systems integration and creativity of the model (e.g., behavioral support consultation, inclusion mentoring, links with Title I and Kindergarten programs in WHSD, alignment of Pre-K and K curricula and standards, use of DI approaches for some children);

- Identify new partners to strengthen the partnership model;
- Promote the selection and use of common assessment/curriculum materials;
- Foster the development of Kindergarten transition materials and strategies;
- Work seamlessly with state Keystone Stars administrators to provide coaching and mentoring in partnership sites regarding meeting progressive KS levels;
- Represent the WHSD partnership at all state Leadership and management meetings;
- Work with WHSD staff to submit monthly/quarterly reports to the State;
- Function as an associate for Dr. Wilson to maintain regularly communication with the State