Analysis

Oregon Department of Education

Education Innovation and Research Early Phase Grant

Analyst: Doug Wilson

Request: Approval to apply for a five year $4.0 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education to enable the use of data to make instructional decisions to improve academic and behavioral outcomes of students in rural elementary schools.

Recommendation: Approve the request.

Analysis: The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) is seeking approval to apply for a five year $4.0 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education. If awarded, ODE will work with the University of Kansas's Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) Education Center and "rural" elementary schools in Oregon. The intent of the grant is to link more effective use of student academic, attendance, disciplinary, and behavioral data through a web-based tool with appropriate decisions regarding instruction and behavioral supports for all students; but especially for high-needs and at-risk students. These students are often English language learners, students with disabilities, and students living in poverty. The SWIFT center has developed the DataWall tool which is web-based and draws existing data and information from numerous sources in the school, and integrates this data into a single location. Without DataWall, a teacher or counselor would have to extract information from a variety of sources spending much more time. With the integrated information from DataWall, a Team-Initiated Problem Solving (TIPS) approach would be undertaken to address the needs of the individual student. TIPS involves defining the area of student need, developing goals for the student, designing solutions, monitoring the student performance, and evaluating the progress made by the student. One issue of concern may be the privacy of student data included in DataWall application. ODE staff asserted that all this data is now available at the student level, and there are sufficient security protocols are built into DataWall so only the appropriate staff will have access.

In the first year of the grant, the joint DataWall/TIPS effort will be piloted in two districts -- Redmond and Sisters. The University of Kansas (UofK) staff have already been working with Redmond over the past few years using earlier versions of DataWall, and this grant will allow for further development. Over the next three years of the grant years, up to another 40 "rural" elementary schools will be brought on board. Of the total $4.0 million grant, $3.5 million is proposed to pass-through to the UofK who will provide or contract for the programming of the DataWall application for each school, technical assistance for the schools, and evaluation of the project. The UofK will also contract with staff at the University of Oregon to assist districts with the TIPS process. The remaining $0.5 million will be for grants to schools to pay for staff overtime or for substitute teachers, and for the costs of ODE relating to the grant.

The application is due by April 13th. There is an in-kind match requirement of 10% which is proposed to be met by work currently underway between the Redmond schools and UofK.