

## MDCPS LETTERS OF SUPPORT GUIDANCE

### THIS DOCUMENT PROVIDES GUIDANCE FOR EXTERNAL AGENCIES REQUESTING TO PARTNER WITH MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, INCLUSIVE OF DISTRICT, REGION, AND SCHOOL SITE, FOR PROGRAM AND RESEARCH GRANT APPLICATIONS.

#### PURPOSE OF A LETTER OF SUPPORT:

- To indicate M-DCPS support for a proposal by an applicant to a funder under a specific grant program.
- In order to ensure the strongest level of support and commitment for the proposed project, external agency staff must work closely with appropriate District staff during project design and development stages to ensure full understanding of proposed project and expectations. Specific detail about roles and responsibilities for both the District and external agency must be discussed and detailed in the letter of support.

#### TIMELINE FOR PROCESSING

- **Upon release of the RFP and the decision to apply:**  
Please advise Grants Administration and the program staff responsible for working with your institution of your intent to apply, the grant deadline, your institution's internal deadline, whether the proposal will include in-kind services or a sub-award for the District, and the date by which you require the signed letter of support. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the District as early in the process as possible.
- **1 month prior to deadline for receipt of signed letter:**  
Secure approval from the M-DCPS program administrator for the letter of support. (See documentation required below.)
- **2 weeks prior to deadline for receipt of signed letter:**  
Send a reminder asking about the status. From the time the letter has been reviewed and forwarded for signature, it may take up to five (5) business days for the letter to be signed.

#### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Please provide the following with your request for a letter of support:

- **Executive Summary:**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Paragraph: Name of applicant; name of funder, name of funder's program, CFDA number (for federal grants), funder's purpose, project's goal and objectives, deadline for submission to funder, deadline for receipt of letter in PDF format from M-DCPS, and the name, phone number and e-mail address of the individual(s) to whom the PDF of the signed letter should be e-mailed.

- The rest of the Executive Summary should summarize the proposal with enough depth for the District to make an informed decision as to whether or not it should support the proposal. Elements which must be covered include but are not limited to:
  - Target population;
  - Participant selection; and
  - Research involved, methodology, whether randomization is required or not.
  - M-DCPS roles and responsibilities. Please be specific. “M-DCPS will assist with recruitment” is too vague, particularly if the expectation is that teachers will take time out of the school day (or after-school) for any grant-related activities.
  - If a sub-award is budgeted for M-DCPS, please provide narrative details (i.e., stipends for # teachers, for # days of professional development and the purpose of the professional development).
- **Budget**
  - Sub-Awards: Please provide a budget that covers all costs required for M-DCPS to fulfill its roles and responsibilities. If the budget includes funds for District staff salaries, please also budget for the corresponding fringe benefits as a separate line item within the District’s sub-award. Also include indirect costs as a separate line item. Refer to the **Fringe Calculator** for the most current fringe benefits and indirect cost rates at <http://grants.dadeschools.net/usefulforms.asp>
  - In-Kind: The District tracks sub-awards as well as in-kind services. Please provide a budget that details the in-kind services the District will receive through the grant (i.e., if the applicant will pay stipends directly to teachers, please detail the number of teachers, the amount of the stipends, the number of days on which professional development will be offered and the total amount of in-kind services. Please do not schedule professional development on during instructional time or during Teacher Planning Days without prior written consent from Curriculum and Instruction.)
- **Letter of Support**  
Key elements are described on the next page. A sample letter is available on website.

**Drafting your Letter of Support**

The letter of support should include:

- Recipient’s name, title and business mailing address.
- Salutation: Please include the appropriate Prefix (Dr., Hon., Mr., Ms., Mrs.).
- Opening Paragraph  
The opening sentence should be comparable to the sample sentence below:

Miami-Dade County Public Schools is pleased to provide this letter in support of the proposal by [University of Earth] to the [National Science Foundation] under its [Discovery K-12] program. The proposed project, entitled [Communicating Science] is designed to [prepare college-bound students for a career in media and communications focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects]. Add a sentence stating why the proposed project is important (e.g., why there is a need for preparing students for STEM careers and how the project will attain that end).

- 2nd paragraph: Describe the project (i.e., target population, participant selection, expected outcomes, key activities. If applicable, encapsulate the proposed research.) **FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS**, please include the following sentence in the second paragraph:  
Once the grant is awarded, [Applicant Name] will submit a Research Review Application to the District’s Research Review Committee (RRC) as established by the School Board of Miami-Dade County.

NOTE: For research grants that impact an individual school or cluster of schools, prior approval by the school Principal and Region will be obtained. However, given the lag time from grant application to final award and possible changes in administration at school sites, the research program may need to be vetted again with the Principal and Region to insure participation.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph: Detail M-DCPS roles & responsibilities.
- 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph: Provide a budget narrative as it applies to an M-DCPS sub-award or quantify the value of any in-kind services such as stipends paid directly to teachers, hardware and/or supplies provided to schools, etc.
- 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph: Include any other information that is pertinent to the project and possible reviewers/program staff at the intended agency. Check with M-DCPS staff for current demographic data for District and targeted schools; include as appropriate.
- 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph: Closing paragraph which re-affirms support (i.e., based on past collaborations) and include language about enthusiasm for proposed project and commitment from M-DCPS to facilitate the referral of participants and implementation of program.
- Signature line:  
**Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools**  
Leave at least 1 inch above the bottom margin (2” from bottom) for notations after the signature.

## **TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Page Limit: 2 pages, single-sided
- 12-point font; Arial; 1.5” margin at the top with 1” margins on the other 3 sides; single-spaced.