

March 5, 2008



## **Improving K-12 Education: A Multidisciplinary Initiative at Stanford**

### **2008 REQUEST FOR PILOT PROJECT PROPOSALS: Release on March 5, 2008**

The Stanford University Initiative on Improving K-12 Education is pleased to announce the availability of funding for a set of new education pilot projects to begin during the Academic Year 2008-09.

**Proposals Due Date:** April 25, 2008

#### **Letter of Intent Required by April 9**

A one-page letter of intent to submit a proposal is required and due no later than April 9, 2008. Please include a title, brief summary of the intended project, and the names, Stanford affiliations and contact information for the faculty principal investigators.

Please submit your letter of intent to the K12 Initiative Director, Dr. Mary Kiely, by email at [mkiely@stanford.edu](mailto:mkiely@stanford.edu)

**New projects only – previously funded K12 pilot projects are not eligible for a second pilot grant.**

The application's budget form and other information on activities and current projects may be found on the Initiative's website at <http://k12.stanford.edu>

#### **About the Initiative**

Among the greatest challenges in the United States today is the need to improve our public education system. The failure to provide effective education to all of our children not only squanders a national resource—our children's potential—but also widens the gap between those who thrive and those who fail in society. At Stanford, we are working to address this challenge.

Through Stanford's Initiative on Improving K-12 Education, scholars from across the university—from the schools of business, law, medicine, engineering, Earth sciences, and humanities and sciences; the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center; and the Hoover Institution; are joining with experts in the School of Education to approach the problem from multiple perspectives. And they are partnering with practitioners and policymakers to forge innovative and practical solutions.

Stanford is committed to applying the broad expertise and resources of the university to identify and demonstrate strategies for making fundamental improvements in the way our nation educates its children.

**March 5, 2008**

These efforts target four key areas:

- 1) Teacher professional development, which may include a curriculum component,
- 2) School leadership and governance,
- 3) Policy research related to the above topics and,
- 4) Programs that extend Stanford resources and opportunities at Stanford to K-12 students from low income and under-resourced schools and communities.

### **Sparking New Collaborations and Solutions**

The K12 Initiative is one of five campus-wide multidisciplinary initiatives, sponsored by the Stanford Challenge, the others being human health, the environment and sustainability, the international initiative, and the arts initiative.

Across the disciplines on the Stanford campus today, there is significant faculty and student interest and activity in projects related to improving K–12 education. To harness this energy and to stimulate innovative approaches to the most pressing issues in K–12 education, Stanford has developed a K–12 education venture fund to provide seed grants to multidisciplinary teams of scholars pursuing promising and potentially transformative research and development projects.

The purpose of the pilot project awards is to encourage faculty throughout the Stanford campus to develop and engage in pre-college education efforts. Projects can be action projects with a research element and a well-planned evaluation strategy to document evidence of impact, or research work that bridges Stanford faculty in different Schools and Departments, and is of a type that is not easy to fund through more usual grant-funding mechanisms. The collaborative element among faculty is of vital importance, as is the new approach to addressing improvements for K-12 education.

This work is targeted at improving education in the United States, Projects that link an effort to other countries will be considered, but the Initiative will not consider a project aimed solely on work outside the United States.

Through a competitive proposal review process, the K12 Initiative awarded grants to 8 pilot projects on January 1, 2008.

For an overview of Initiative on Improving K-12 Education and to read summaries of the first set of pilot projects, please go to the K12 Initiative Website at <http://k12.stanford.edu>

### **2008 RFP Areas of Focus**

This 2008 RFP process seeks projects that inform and/or support improvement of the K12 education system in the United States.

To clarify, a few of the projects that we could imagine are:

- Programs for teachers to develop their disciplinary knowledge and discipline-related pedagogical knowledge by working with faculty and graduate students from their disciplinary area and from the School of Education;
- Research efforts that bring a variety of disciplinary perspectives and expertise to

**March 5, 2008**

- bear on an issue of educational policy or practice; and
- Collaborative work to build and advance effective K12 school and district leadership.

The K12 Faculty Steering Committee has developed a set of statements that describe the kind of work it values. These values will be used in the review and selection of projects to fund. Projects must reflect most, but not necessarily all of these values in order to be competitive. The lead principal investigators should address these values in their proposal, identifying the ones that are strengths of the work proposed, and also stating where their project is not aligned to one or more value, and why. The order in which the values are listed below does not signify any priority. We value work that:

**Has STANFORD FACULTY COLLABORATION:**

- Among faculty from different Schools and/or Departments, or
- Among faculty with different areas of expertise within the same School or Department.

**Builds CAPACITY at Stanford (the project exhibits several of these strategies)**

- Engages Stanford resources (involvement of Stanford students, faculty, facilities, technology, existing centers or institutes).
- Shows efforts to obtain available external grant funding for the work.
- Supports and fosters undergraduate and graduate student involvement in K-12 education, for instance programs that engage Stanford students to work directly with K12 students.
- Builds ongoing partnerships between Stanford and K-12 schools, school districts, and other educational institutions.
- Builds multidisciplinary linkages across Stanford Schools and Departments.
- Improves the effectiveness of outreach work associated with research projects and centers at Stanford.

**Uses EVIDENCE:**

- Program of work is based on sound theory and evidence.
- Includes a meaningful evaluation plan and mechanisms for improvement.

**Demonstrates IMPACT:**

- Has potential for significant impact on K-12 schools, teachers, and/or students.
- Links to broader national efforts to improve K-12 education.
- Meets an identified need in K-12 education: either in improving core academics, education policy or education leadership.

**Demonstrates REALISM:**

- Considers the reality of schools and the constraints under which teachers and other educational practitioners work.
- Understands the dynamics of the learning situation, including how children learn and effective teaching strategies.

**March 5, 2008**

- Demonstrates effective partnerships to support and sustain any intended work with schools or districts.

Addresses **EQUITY**:

- Demonstrates potential to improve the success rate of students from underperforming groups.
- Targets underperforming groups (low income, underserved ethnic minorities) or underperforming schools and districts

Can move to **SCALE**:

- Has elements that can eventually lead to larger scale use of the project results and outcomes.
- Results in products, knowledge, or strategies that will be useful for wider distribution beyond the project partnership.

It is fully the intent of this RFP process to identify and support projects that will have the potential for a long and productive lifespan. The expectation is that successful projects could be linked to funds raised through the Stanford Challenge, and therefore become substantial in scale.

Selected pilot projects (up to 7 awards) will be funded from \$20,000 to \$70,000 per project to conduct initial work. We anticipate that projects selected for funding in this cycle will compete for larger grants in 2009-10 (\$100K per project) - up to 5 projects may be selected for continuation. This funding may be renewable in subsequent years, if the project can demonstrate through its evaluation efforts that it is doing effective work.

### **Proposal Guidelines**

The lead PIs must be eligible by the current requirements for principal investigators at Stanford, and all Co-PIs must have an affiliation with Stanford University. However, we also welcome and encourage collaboration with K-12 schools, districts, and other educational agencies outside Stanford.

Support is for direct costs only and may be requested for personnel (including administrative staffing, and undergraduate, graduate, or post-doctoral students, research assistants or associates, PI release time, faculty summer salary) or for project administration, teacher stipends, supplies, small equipment, evaluation costs, and travel. Support for a conference or workshop is also acceptable, if part of the larger program of work.

The proposal should include:

- A cover page that includes the project title, the names, Stanford department or school, and contact information for the PIs, and a 250- word abstract
- A project narrative that includes: (1) the project rationale and description of the work plan and goals, including a sense of how the project could continue into a second year and beyond; (2) a statement about how the project will be evaluated, by whom, and the expected outcomes; (3) information on the nature

**March 5, 2008**

of any collaboration intended, whether internal to Stanford or with outside organizations and (4) a detailed statement that explains the ways in which the project is consistent with the value statements cited in this RFP, previously.

### **Proposal Length**

The proposal should not exceed 7 narrative pages of 1.5 line spacing, 1-inch margins, and 12-point font. Beyond the 7 narrative pages please include:

- A project budget on the K12 Initiative Budget Form available to download at <http://k12.stanford.edu> (note that there will be no indirect costs applied to this project – and it will be considered university research)
- A list of the faculty PIs and key individuals involved and their affiliations, with a brief description of the expertise that each will bring to the project, and their expected roles in the project.
- A list of any published research cited in the proposal – no more than one page.

Proposal exceeding the page limits above may be returned to the principal investigators.

**Proposals are due on April 25, 2008** and will be reviewed by the Initiative's Steering Committee, with the help of a peer review panel. Funding decisions will be announced in mid-June 2008 and funds will be made available beginning on September 1, 2008 - subject to any needed approvals for non-medical human subjects data collection. The project funds can be used through August 31, 2009.

**Proposals and questions should be sent to:** Dr. Mary Kiely at [mkiely@stanford.edu](mailto:mkiely@stanford.edu)

Also, please feel free to contact any of the members of the K-12 Initiative Faculty Steering Committee for additional background information:

Kenji Hakuta, Co-Chair (School of Education)  
Helen Quinn, Co-Chair (SLAC)  
Pam Grossman (School of Education)  
Eric Hanushek (Hoover Institution)  
Craig Heller (Department of Biology)  
Rosemary Knight (School of Earth Sciences)  
Bill Koski (School of Law)  
Andrea Lunsford (Department of English)  
Paul Oyer (School of Business)  
Eric Roberts (Department of Computer Science, School of Engineering)  
Sheri Sheppard (School of Engineering – on Leave AY 2007-08)  
Guadalupe Valdés (School of Education)  
Marilyn Winkleby (School of Medicine)