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**Slough Local School Improvement Fund**

**1. Background**

A key requirement of the ‘school led system’ is for teaching school alliances and local authorities to work together to identify local school improvement priorities and to match these with the expertise and potential capacity for support within local schools. This is in turn relies on the basic premise that schools are willing to help other schools so that the whole system improves – and are willing to share responsibility for so doing.

A significant barrier to this is the declining level of school funding and the consequent lack of capacity in schools to release staff. Slough Schools Forum has allocated £150,000 from the under-spend in the former Cambridge Education school improvement budget. Spread over two years this provides £75,000 each year to support local school improvement work. The funds are held by the Slough Teaching School Alliance on behalf of the Slough schools’ community and can be accessed through a simple application and assessment process.

**2. What can the fund be used for?**

***a) Direct school-to-school support.***

*For example…*School A has an identified need, and school B has experience and expertise in that field. School B agrees to support School A, and applies for funding to backfill its staffing costs and any other expenses occurred. For example, School B agrees to provide 3 days equivalent of support over the course of a term; the fund backfills School B for 3 days at an agreed day rate. School A receives the support but does not have to use its own budget to pay for it. The improvement priorities and expected outcomes are agreed between School A and School B, with an evaluation of impact after the support has ended.

***b) Focused support work to a group of schools***

*For example (i)…*There is a common improvement priority identified across a number of schools, A, B, C, D and E. School F is known to have expertise and experience in this particular field. School F is approached and agrees to provide 5 days equivalent of support to those schools; the ‘package’ consists of a mixture of training events for the schools together and individual ‘consultancy-style’ support. Several members of staff from School F are involved. School F receives funding based on an agreed day rate.

*For example (i)…*There is a common improvement priority which has been identified across a number of schools. The schools agree to work together to develop a common strategy, and apply for funding for senior leadership release to facilitate this.

***c) Use of designated local leaders (SLEs, NLEs, Lead Practitioners etc)***

*For example…*School A has a very good Specialist Leader of Education with a track record of impact. School A agrees to release that SLE for 4 days to support schools in a particular improvement priority and receives funding to cover the release. Deployment of the SLE to specific schools is agreed according to identified needs and priorities, those schools receive the support without incurring costs.

**3. How will applications to the fund be assessed?**

The funding is limited, and there is a need to prioritise and ensure equity with regard to access and distribution. Representatives of the local authority and the Slough Teaching School Alliance (the panel) will meet regularly to:

* Develop and maintain a ‘map’ and database of recognised experience, expertise and potential capacity for support in local schools.
* Share, map and prioritise school improvement needs.
* Approve funding applications according to a set of simple but clear criteria.
* Monitor the allocation of funding to ensure equitable access and distribution.

**4. Accountability**

The funding comes from centrally retained DSG. Slough Local Authority and Slough Teaching School Alliance are jointly responsible to Schools’ Forum – and hence to the Slough community of schools - for the fair and equitable allocation of funding and for demonstrating overall impact. Individual schools providing support are responsible for demonstrating the impact of the work carried out and this will be overseen by the Senior Education Liaison Officer (representing the local authority and STSA). Success criteria and key indicators will be agreed in advance and a simple evaluation framework will be used.

**5. Funding eligibility**

Applications to the local school improvement fund should:

* clearly address one or more local improvement priorities;
* be of a scale and nature that brings about sustainable improvement;
* set out a clear rationale for why the support is necessary, and describe what activities will be undertaken;
* be supported by evidence that demonstrates why the proposed activities are expected to lead to improved outcomes.

The examples in ‘Section 2: What can the fund be used for?’ give an idea of the kinds and scale of activities that can be supported by the fund. Activities that can be funded include, but are not limited to, those which:

* deliver improvements in teaching, learning and leadership within a school or group of schools, *or*
* provide effective evidence-based professional development for groups of staff, *or*
* are specifically focused on raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils or vulnerable groups.

The local school improvement fund is intended to stimulate the development of school-to-school support amongst Slough schools. The funds are intended to ensure that schools providing support cover the basic cost of having staff out of school. To simplify the allocation of funds standardised backfill rates agreed by Slough Local Authority and Slough Teaching School Alliance will apply at three different levels on a full day or half-day basis:

* NLE, experienced Headteacher - £250 per day
* LLE, experienced senior leader - £250 per day
* SLE, experienced middle leader - £200 per day

**6. Assessment criteria**

Applications will be assessed against the criteria sent out as an appendix to this document – Appendix 1.

**7. How to apply**

Schools wishing to **apply** to the local school improvement fund should complete the attached form and return it to: rachel.cross@slough.gov.uk

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**Slough Local School Improvement Fund**

**Application for support and funding - Part One**

***This application should be completed by the school requesting the support.***

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| School requesting support |  |
| Contact (name) |  |
| Contact (phone and email) |  |

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| 1. Who is going to receive the support?  |
| *Give details - an individual school? A group of schools? A particular group of teachers?* |
| 2. Why is the support needed? |
| *Include research based evidence* |
| 3. What is the support intended to achieve? |
| *What are the overall aims of the support?* |
| *What are the specific expected outcomes of the support?* |
| 4. What activities are planned? |
| *What do you propose to do? Over what timescale?* |
| 5. How will the improvement outcomes be sustained? |
| *How will you plan for the impact of the support to be sustained?* |

**Slough Local School Improvement Fund**

**Application for support and funding - Part Two**

***Suggested providers and funding – to be completed by school and agreed by STSA and SBC panel.***

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| 6. Possible providers of support, further comments/notes |
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| **7. Proposed funding** |
| **Supporting staff** | **Number of days** |  | **Total backfill** |
| **NLE, Headteacher** |  |  |  |
| **LLE, Senior Leader**Agreed rate: £250 per day |  |  |  |
| **SLE, Middle Leader**Agreed rate: £200 per day |  |  |  |
| **Total A** |  |  |  |
| **Other funding requests** |  |  |  |

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| **8. Item/details** | **Cost**  |
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| **Total B** |  |
| ***Total funding request A + B*** |  |

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**For completion by STSA/SBC**

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| --- | --- |
| Project bid successful | Reason: |
| Project bid unsuccessful | **Reason:** |
| Breakdown of funding agreed |  |
| Project Lead notified of outcome | **Date:** |
| Development and Review Plan sent | **Date:** |
| Development and Review Plan received | **Date:** |
| Project Evaluation Received | **Date:** |

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| --- |
| **Now return this form to:** |
| **Rachel Cross****Senior Education Liaison Officer – email:** **rachel.cross@slough.gov.uk** |