



New York State *Bridges to Academic Success Initiative* 2013 – 2016

Project Information May, 2013

1. *Goal of the Bridges-NYSEIB Initiative*

***Bridges to Academic Success* is a program for recently arrived immigrant 9th graders with low home language literacy, in which students are sheltered for the majority of the school day and taught by an interdisciplinary team of Bridges-trained teachers. The New York State initiative is funded by the SED through CUNY-NYSEIB.**

The main goal of this three-year initiative is to provide direct support to selected NYS school districts to plan for and implement their own *Bridges* programs. During Year 1 teachers will learn the principles and practices of *Bridges* through professional development sessions and on-site support, using models from the *Bridges* Curriculum, which has been in development over the last two years, and which will continue to be revised in AY 2013-2014. Participating districts will begin the implementation of a pilot program in the fall of 2014, with the full *Bridges* curriculum, and will implement a “mature” program in AY 2015- 2016. *Bridges* will continue to offer professional development sessions and on-site support during these two years. School districts will be encouraged to adapt the *Bridges* program to meet the needs of their particular environments and student populations, as necessary.

A description of our overall plan and activities for the three years follows.

2. *Year 1 (July 2013 – June 2014): Foundations*

Activities in Year 1 include orientation to the philosophy, methods, and resources of *Bridges*, as well as programmatic and instructional support. Implementation of a successful program for *Bridges* students requires both a highly trained teaching staff and a series of administrative accommodations. A *Bridges* team will be formed at each participating high school (one in each district), comprised ideally of a teacher in each of the following subject areas: Science, Social Studies, Math, English Language Arts (and ESL or Language/Literacy). A guidance counselor will also be part of the team. An experienced ESL, ELA or literacy teacher at each school will be selected to serve as a co-Team Leader and, ultimately, become a teacher-trainer for his/her team. We recommend that a school administrator also serve as co-Team Leader responsible for student placement, scheduling, and other administrative tasks. Project activities to support the teams will include a series of professional development sessions, teleconferencing, and on-site coaching visits. Schools may also opt to implement an initial (model) class in mid-year (February) to practice using some of the *Bridges* materials and methods that will be taught in the PD sessions.

Table 1 below provides an overview of the PD session topics and timing in Year 1. The sessions include across-schools PD sessions as well as within-schools onsite sessions. Each school will have



eight (8) full-day sessions, in total, over the course of the first academic year, the timing of which is approximate at this point: six of these will be across-schools sessions (i.e. with all schools attending the session, which will take place in Rochester) and two will be onsite sessions at each school (these are double-starred** in the table below). Stipends for teacher attendance at Saturday PDs will be provided by the project. PD attendees will be given ‘assignments’ as follow-up for each session; therefore, between sessions there will be teleconferencing meetings, as needed, to discuss the work being done at individual schools.

Table 1. Professional Development Sessions, Year 1 (2013-2014)

Session	Timing	Activities
1	End of Aug., 2013	Introduction to <i>Bridges</i> Principles and Practices
2**	Fall, 2013	<i>Bridges</i> Program Development: Onsite Visit to Each School District
3	Fall, 2013	<i>Bridges</i> Teacher & Team Leader Training Part I
4	Fall/ Winter, 2013	<i>Bridges</i> Teacher Training Part II: Introduction to the <i>Bridges</i> Method, the <i>Bridges</i> Curriculum and Lesson Planning
5	Winter, 2014	<i>Bridges</i> Teacher Training, Part III: Working with the <i>Bridges</i> Curriculum
6	Spring, 2014	<i>Bridges</i> Teacher Training, Part IV: Working with the <i>Bridges</i> Curriculum
7**	Spring, 2014	Spring Follow up: Onsite <i>Bridges</i> Program Development and Teacher Training
8	Spring, 2014	<i>Bridges</i> Teacher Training, Part V: Year 1 Review & Planning for Next Year

3. Year 2: Pilot Implementation and Continued Training

In Year 2, participating schools will receive continuing support as they pilot their own *Bridges* programs (Cohort 1).

As in Year 1, teachers will be asked to review and provide feedback on portions of the *Bridges* Curriculum. Year Three will begin with a two-day planning institute in August, 2014 for school teams, to prepare for student recruitment, gathering and preparing resources, and preparing, reviewing and distributing intake and other diagnostic materials. (Any new teachers will also receive a pared-down introductory session based on the August 2013 session.)

Direct program support will include help in the set-up of the *Bridges* Program at each school at the beginning of the school year. This will be followed by the continuation (from Year 1) of *Bridges* teacher training activities, entailing six Saturday PD sessions for the purpose of supporting *Bridges* teachers as they implement the *Bridges* Curriculum and the Teachers’ Guide in their classrooms. These PD sessions will be supported by follow-up onsite and virtual curriculum planning and coaching to provide help with the development and implementation of lessons, activities and methods described in the Teachers’ Guide, observations and feedback, reflections and revisions. Model teaching will also include practice with elements of the *Bridges* Curriculum and teacher reviews and recommendations for changes. Teacher and *Bridges* staff recommendations for more general changes in the *Bridges* Program for Year 3 will be discussed at the end of the year.



4. Year 3 (July 2015 – June 2016) Full implementation, building sustainability capacity and documentation

Year Four will entail full-fledged implementation of the program in each school, utilizing the *Bridges* Curriculum and Teachers' Guide and a full battery of diagnostic and assessment materials. During this year, schools will select a new cohort of students (Cohort 2) for their *Bridges* classes and also plan for or provide Cohort 1 with follow-up services as they proceed through "regular" ninth grade classes.

We will also begin planning for the sustainability of *Bridges* programs in the three participating districts. We will train *Bridges* team leaders to serve as teacher-trainers for new *Bridges* teams in the future, through Saturday "teacher-training" workshop. We will also offer support to District personnel for project dissemination, through a one-day workshop in June, 2016, to provide them with the information and tools necessary to disseminate their district's program to other high schools.

5. Selection Criteria

We will be selecting three school districts to participate in the program, based upon which districts:
a) have the most need; b) appear to be in the best position to support this work:

Program participation requirements

1. Three-year commitment on the part of district and school administration to accomplishing the project's goals and to providing necessary support and resources;
2. Commitment to building a school culture that is sensitive to the needs of ELLS;
3. Commitment to an initial sheltered year for targeted SIFE students (for academic subjects);
4. Development of a *Bridges* team consisting of a math teacher, science teacher, ELA or ESL teacher, and guidance counselor, with optional literacy and/or native language teachers;
5. Release time for team members for:
 1. monthly team meetings in Year 1
 2. weekly team meetings in Years 2 and 3
6. For AY 2013-2014, commitment, on part of school team members, to attending one full-day PD in August, and five Saturday PDs (dates to be determined) during the school year.
7. Travel funds to Rochester for whole-group PDs (6 per year).

Recommended for program participation:

1. School district support for ELL training for Bridges team members with no prior training in teaching ELLs;
2. Provisions for outreach to families and community;
3. Provisions for extended (after school, Saturday, summer) activities for Bridges students;
4. Provision for follow-up services for students after exiting program.



6. Contributions

By Bridges Initiative:

- The Bridges curriculum (in current draft forms)
- Two onsite PD visits in Year 1
- Six day-long, whole-group PD sessions each year
- Teacher stipends for whole-group PD sessions each year
- Ongoing PD support via videoconferencing, Internet and email
- PD materials

By New York State Education Department:

- Guidance on policy issues, such as compliance and credit issues, as necessary

By School District:

- Planning/PD release time for Bridges team members -- monthly in Year 1, weekly in Years 2 & 3
- Travel funds for four team members to six whole-group PD sessions in Rochester each year
- Training for participating content area teachers in fundamentals of teaching ESL students (e.g. SIOP, college coursework) as necessary