

School Improvement Grants

# Application for Fiscal years 2015 and 2016 New Awards Competition

Section 1003(g) of the  
Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the No Child Left  
Behind Act of 2001

CFDA Number: 84.377A

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**State Name:** North Dakota



U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, D.C. 20202

OMB Number: 1810-0682  
Expiration Date: September 30, 2016

## Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 100 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (authorized under section 1003(g) of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by No Child Left Behind (ESEA). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number 1810-0682. Note: Please do not return the completed School Improvement Grant application to this address.

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

### **Purpose of the Program**

School Improvement Grants (SIG), authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by No Child Left Behind (Title I or ESEA), are grants to State educational agencies (SEAs) that SEAs use to make competitive subgrants to local educational agencies (LEAs) that demonstrate the greatest need for the funds and the strongest commitment to use the funds to provide adequate resources in order to raise substantially the achievement of students in their lowest-performing schools. The Department published final requirements for the SIG program in the *Federal Register* on October 28, 2010 (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-10-28/pdf/2010-27313.pdf>). In 2015, the Department revised the final requirements to implement language in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014, and the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, that allows LEAs to implement additional interventions, provides flexibility for rural LEAs, and extends the grant period from three to five years. The revisions to the requirements also reflect lessons learned from four years of SIG implementation. Finally, since the final requirements for the SIG program were published in 2010, 44 SEAs received approval to implement ESEA flexibility, pursuant to which they no longer identify Title I schools for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. To reflect this change, the revised requirements make an LEA with priority schools, which are generally a State's lowest-achieving Title I schools, and focus schools, which are generally the schools within a State with the largest achievement gaps, eligible to receive SIG funds. The SIG final requirements, published on February 9, 2015, are available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/02/09/2015-02570/final-requirements-school-improvement-grants-title-i-of-the-elementary-and-secondary-education-act>.

### **Availability of Funds**

The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, provided approximately \$506 million for School Improvement Grants in fiscal year (FY) 2015 and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 provided approximately \$450 million in FY 2016.

### **State and LEA Allocations**

Each State (including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico), the Bureau of Indian Education, and the outlying areas is eligible to apply to receive a SIG grant. The Department will allocate FY 2015 and FY 2016 SIG funds in proportion to the funds received in FY 2015 and FY 2016 by the States, the Bureau of Indian Education, and the outlying areas under Parts A, C, and D of Title I of the ESEA. An SEA must allocate at least 95 percent of its SIG funds directly to LEAs in accordance with the final requirements. The SEA may retain an amount not to exceed five percent of its allocation for State administration, evaluation, and technical assistance.

## SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### **Electronic Submission:**

The Department strongly prefers to receive an SEA's FY 2015/2016 SIG application electronically. The application should be sent as a Microsoft Word document, **not** as a PDF.

Each SEA should submit its FY 2015/2016 application to its individual State mailbox address at: [OSS.\[State\]@ed.gov](mailto:OSS.[State]@ed.gov)

In addition, the SEA must submit a paper copy of the cover page signed by the SEA's authorized representative to the address listed below under "Paper Submission."

### **Paper Submission:**

If an SEA is not able to submit its application electronically, it may submit the original and two copies of its SIG application to the following address:

Michael Wells, Group Leader  
Office of State Support, OESE  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3W103  
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Due to potential delays in government processing of mail sent through the U.S. Postal Service, SEAs are encouraged to use alternate carriers for paper submissions.

### **Application Deadline**

Applications are due no later than May 27, 2016.

### **For Further Information**

If you have any questions, please contact your OSS State contact or Michael Wells at (202) 453-6689 or by e-mail at [Michael.Wells@ed.gov](mailto:Michael.Wells@ed.gov). Additional technical assistance, including webinars for State staff, will be provided in the spring.

APPLICATION COVER SHEET  
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Legal Name of Applicant:<br>North Dakota<br>Department of Public Instruction  | Applicant's Mailing Address:<br>600 E Boulevard Avenue<br>Dept. 201<br>Bismarck, ND 58505-0440 |
| State Contact for the School Improvement Grant<br><br>Name: Stefanie Two Crow<br><br>Position and Office: Director, Federal Title Programs Office<br><br>Contact's Mailing Address:<br>600 E Boulevard Avenue<br>Dept. 201<br>Bismarck, ND 58505-0440<br><br>Telephone: 701-328-2287<br><br>Fax: 701-328-0203<br><br>Email address: stwocrow@nd.gov |  |
| Chief State School Officer (Printed Name):<br>Kirsten Baesler   | Telephone:<br>701-328-4570   |
| Signature of the Chief State School Officer:<br><br>X <i>Kirsten Baesler</i>  | Date:<br><br>5-23-16   |
| The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to comply with all requirements applicable to the School Improvement Grants program, including the assurances contained herein and the conditions that apply to any waivers that the State receives through this application.  |  |

## PART I: SEA REQUIREMENTS

The directions below indicate information an SEA must provide in its application for a School Improvement Grant. Where relevant, these directions distinguish between the information that must be provided by SEAs that have approved requests for ESEA flexibility and those that do not. For any section that is not applicable to a particular SEA, the SEA should write “Not Applicable.”

### A. ELIGIBLE SCHOOLS

**For SEAs not approved for ESEA Flexibility: Definition of Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools and Eligible Schools:** As part of its FY 2015/2016 application, an SEA must provide a list, by LEA, of each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III school in the State. In providing its list of schools, the SEA must indicate whether a school has been identified as a Tier I or Tier II school solely because it has had a graduation rate below 60 percent over a number of years.

Along with its list of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools, the SEA must provide the definition that it used to develop this list of schools. [North Dakota’s definition of persistently lowest-achieving schools](#) is publicly available on the NDDPI website and is identical to the definition that it used to develop the list of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools.

**Directions:** SEAs that generate new lists should create this table in Excel using the format shown below and attach the list to this application. An example of the table has been provided for guidance.

**EXAMPLE:**

| SCHOOLS ELIGIBLE FOR FY 2015/2016 SIG FUNDS |               |             |                 |        |         |          |           |                             |
|---|---------------|-------------|-----------------|--------|---------|----------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| LEA NAME                                    | LEA NCES ID # | SCHOOL NAME | SCHOOL NCES ID# | TIER I | TIER II | TIER III | GRAD RATE | NEWLY ELIGIBLE <sup>1</sup> |
| LEA 1                                       | ##            | HARRISON ES | ##              | X      |         |          |           |                             |
| LEA 1                                       | ##            | MADISON ES  | ##              | X      |         |          |           |                             |
| LEA 2                                       | ##            | TAYLOR MS   | ##              |        |         | X        |           | X                           |

<sup>1</sup> “Newly Eligible” refers to a school that was made eligible to receive SIG funds by the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016. A newly eligible school may be identified for Tier I or Tier II because it has not made adequate yearly progress for at least two consecutive years; is in the State’s lowest quintile of performance based on proficiency rates on State’s assessments; and is no higher achieving than the highest-achieving school identified by the SEA as a “persistently lowest-achieving school” or is a high school that has a graduation rate less than 60 percent over a number of years.

**For SEAs approved for ESEA flexibility: Eligible Schools List:** Each SEA should provide a link to the page on its Web site or a link to the specific page(s) in its approved ESEA flexibility request that includes a list of its current priority and focus schools. That list should clearly indicate which schools are SIG-eligible (*i.e.*, meet the definition of priority or focus school in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*).

**For all SEAs: Awards not renewed, or otherwise terminated:** All SEAs are required to list any LEAs with one or more schools for which funding under previously awarded SIG grants will not be renewed for the 2016-2017 school year. For each such school, note the date of nonrenewal or termination, reason for nonrenewal or termination, the amount of unused remaining funds, and explain how the SEA or LEA plans to use those funds. **If all schools have been renewed, please indicate not applicable (“N/A”) in the chart:**

| LEA NAME                                | SCHOOL NAME | DATE OF NONRENEWAL OR TERMINATION | REASON FOR NONRENEWAL OR TERMINATION | DESCRIPTION OF HOW REMAINING FUNDS WERE OR WILL BE USED | AMOUNT OF REMAINING FUNDS |
|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| N/A                                     | N/A         | N/A                               | N/A                                  | N/A   | N/A                       |
|   |             |                                   |                                      |   |                           |
|   |             |                                   |                                      |   |                           |
|   |             |                                   |                                      |   |                           |
| <b>TOTAL AMOUNT OF REMAINING FUNDS:</b> |             |                                   |                                      |   | N/A                       |

**B. STATE-DETERMINED MODEL (OPTIONAL)**

An SEA may submit one State-determined model for the Secretary’s review and approval. Submission of a state-determined model is not required. An SEA that previously submitted, and received approval for, a State-determined model need not re-submit that model. (*Check applicable box below*)

SEA is submitting a State-determined model for review and approval. (Please attach to the application.)

SEA is not submitting a State-determined model.

To be approved, a State-determined model must meet the definition of whole-school reform model:

A whole-school reform model is a model that is designed to:

- (a) Improve student academic achievement or attainment;
- (b) Be implemented for all students in a school; and
- (c) Address, at a minimum and in a comprehensive and coordinated manner, each of the following:
  1. School leadership
  2. Teaching and learning in at least one full academic content area (including professional learning for educators).
  3. Student non-academic support.
  4. Family and community engagement.

**C. EVALUATION CRITERIA: An SEA must provide the criteria it will use to evaluate the information below in an LEA's application for a School Improvement Grant.**

The actions listed in this section are ones that an LEA must take to receive a School Improvement Grant. Accordingly, the SEA must describe, with specificity, the criteria the SEA will use to evaluate an LEA's application with respect to these criteria.

If applicable, the SEA should attach an LEA application review rubric that it will use to evaluate each of the actions listed below. If a rubric is attached, provide relevant page numbers below and a description if needed. If a rubric is not attached, provide a description of the evaluation criteria to be used.

*Check here if an LEA application review rubric is attached.*

- (1) The LEA has analyzed the needs of each Tier I and Tier II school, or each priority and focus school, as applicable, identified in the LEA's application and has selected an intervention for each school that is designed to meet the specific needs of the school, based on a needs analysis that, among other things, analyzes the school improvement needs identified by families and the community, and takes into consideration family and community input in selecting the intervention for each school.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.  
Provide page number(s) in rubric: 3*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.  
Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

- (2) The LEA has designed and will implement interventions consistent with the SIG requirements.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.  
Provide page number(s) in rubric: 3*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.  
Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

- (3) The LEA has demonstrated it will use the School Improvement Grants funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each school it commits to serve in order to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention on the first day of the first school year of full implementation.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.  
Provide page number(s) in rubric: 4*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.  
Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

- (4) The LEA has demonstrated how it has, or will, recruit, screen, and select external providers, if

applicable, to ensure their quality, and regularly review and hold accountable such providers for their performance.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide page number(s) in rubric: 4*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

(5) The LEA has demonstrated how it will align other resources with the selected intervention.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide page number(s) in rubric: 5*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

(6) The LEA has demonstrated how it will modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable it to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide page number(s) in rubric: 5*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

(7) The LEA has demonstrated how it will provide effective oversight and support for implementation of the selected intervention for each school that it proposes to serve, such as by creating an LEA turnaround office.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide page number(s) in rubric: 5*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

(8) The LEA has demonstrated how it will meaningfully engage families and the community in the implementation of the selected intervention on an ongoing basis.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide page number(s) in rubric: 6*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

(9) The LEA has described how it will sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide page number(s) in rubric: 6*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

- (10) The LEA has demonstrated how, to the extent practicable, in accordance with its selected SIG intervention model(s), it will implement one or more evidence-based strategies.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide page number in rubric: 6*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

- (11) The LEA has demonstrated that it has the capacity to use school improvement funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each Tier I and Tier II school, or each priority and focus school, as applicable, identified in the LEA's application in order to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention in each of those schools.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide page number(s) in rubric: 4*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

- (12) For an LEA eligible for services under subpart 1 or 2 of part B of Title VI of the ESEA (Rural Education Assistance Program) that proposes to modify one element of the turnaround or transformation model, the LEA has described how it will meet the intent and purpose of that element.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide page number(s) in rubric: 8*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

- (13) An LEA that proposes to use SIG funds to implement, in partnership with a whole school reform model developer, an evidence-based, whole-school reform model in a school, must demonstrate that (a) the evidence supporting the model includes a sample population or setting similar to that of the school to be served; and (b) it has partnered with a whole school reform model developer that meets the definition of "whole school reform model developer" in the SIG requirements.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.*

*Provide page number(s) in rubric: 8*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.  
Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

(14) For an LEA that proposes to use SIG funds to implement the restart model in one or more eligible schools, the LEA has demonstrated that it will conduct a rigorous review process, as described in the final requirements, of the charter school operator, charter management organization (CMO), or education management organization (EMO) that it has selected to operate or manage the school or schools.

*The evaluation criteria for this action are included in the LEA application rubric.  
Provide page number(s) in rubric:*

*The evaluation criteria for this action are not included in the LEA application rubric.  
Provide description of evaluation criteria:*

**Please Note:** Under North Dakota state law, charter schools, CMO, and EMO are not legal.

**D. LEA BUDGETS: In addition to the evaluation criteria listed in Section C, the SEA must describe how it will evaluate an LEA's budget and application.**

The SEA must describe how it will review each LEA's budget, including a description of the processes the SEA will use to determine if it is appropriate to award an amount different than that requested in the LEA's budget request.

The NDDPI will implement a carefully defined SEA grant review process that includes highly qualified and trained SEA grant reviewers. Similarly, the LEA SIG application will require districts demonstrate planning, capacity, and alignment with SEA guidelines for SIG funds in their grant plan and narrative. The NDDPI Office of Federal Title Programs issues Grant Awards to LEAs upon approval of the LEA SIG application for allowable activities aligned to amounts approved in order to carry out the proposed activities for the grant award period.

**SEA Grant Review**

The following elements will ensure the SEA grant review process carefully analyzes an LEA's budget and application with respect to defined metrics for quality and success.

**Expert SEA grant reviewers.** The reviewers for all LEA SIG applications will be NDDPI program staff who are well experienced as educators and are highly knowledgeable in the school and district improvement process, as well as with federal Title I and SIG regulations. The NDDPI will review each LEA SIG application to ensure that it has requested adequate resources to support each Tier I and Tier II school and their identified intervention model. The budget and detailed budget narrative, in conjunction with the application, will be analyzed to ensure that the LEA has the resources and capacity to fully implement the selected intervention in each selected school according to the timelines outlined in the SIG.

**Pre-proposal LEA training.** The NDDPI Office of Federal Title Programs is planning to provide training in the summer of 2016 to Tier I and/or Tier II schools, as applicable, that are eligible for the 2015/2016 SIG funds. At this training, eligible schools will be provided with the application, guidance, and other resources to help them apply for SIG 2015/2016 funding, if they so choose. We will provide detailed training to LEA staff on the

process and allowable activities pertaining to the pre-implementation and implementation process.

**Grant reviewer training.** NDDPI SEA staff who will be reading, critiquing, and scoring the 2015/2016 SIG applications will also receive training on the requirements and components unique to the 2015/2016 process.

**Scoring rubric.** The LEA grant scoring process will be guided by a defined scoring rubric that targets the review of each LEA's budget as it relates to LEA goals, pre-implementation and implementation activities, coordinated resources, and timeline.

**Cross-referencing during grant scoring.** The reviewers will also cross-reference the proposed pre-implementation activities with the district's detailed timeline to ensure that the LEA does not begin utilizing 2015/2016 SIG funds for the pre-implementation activities until the SEA has awarded the LEA a SIG grant. The reviewers will also cross-reference the narrative response and the timeline with the proposed budget to ensure alignment of all proposed activities. This step also assists in the determination of whether the activities are reasonable and necessary to implement the proposed SIG reform initiatives. "Pre-implementation" enables an LEA to prepare for full implementation of a school intervention model at the start of the school year.

**Tier I focus.** The NDDPI will focus on Tier I schools. However, if no Tier I schools apply for SIG funds or if funds remain after awards are made to successful applicants, then the NDDPI will complete this process with Tier II schools. The NDDPI SEA staff will review each LEA's application, budget, and detailed budget narrative to ensure that the LEA has sufficient funds to implement their selected intervention model and activities are allowable.

### **LEA Grant Application and Process**

The LEA grant application has been specifically designed to guide districts through the process of carefully aligning their budget with their grant plan and SIG requirements.

**LEA grant requirements.** In the LEA SIG application, the LEA must specifically describe its capacity to use these funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each of the schools identified in order to implement, fully and effectively, the required activities of the school intervention model it has selected.

**Allowable activities.** LEA staff will be provided with a list of allowable activities from the USDE guidance. The LEA SIG application has a specific section where the district is required to describe, in detail, the activities to be conducted during the pre-implementation and/or implementation phase that will better enable them to begin implementing their SIG reform initiatives at the start of the school year, upon SIG funds approval. Reviewers will be able to review and cross-reference the narrative question, the detailed timeline, the budget, and the budget narrative to ensure alignment of all activities, to ensure that the activities take place during the pre-implementation phase, and to ensure that they are reasonable and necessary to enable the LEA to begin full implementation of their SIG application for the subsequent school year.

**LEA demonstrated capacity.** The NDDPI staff will communicate with LEA staff to resolve all issues, offer assistance, and ensure that approval of an LEA application is only granted to LEAs that have demonstrated the resources, capacity, and support necessary to implement their selected intervention model. The LEA's budget must include sufficient funds to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively in each Tier I and Tier II school, as applicable.

\*Please note that an SEA may make a SIG award to an LEA for up to five years for a particular school, of which the LEA may use one school year for planning and other pre-implementation activities and up to two school years for activities related to sustaining reforms following at least three years of full intervention implementation. The LEA budget should address the entire grant period. An LEA may not receive more than five years of SIG funding for a particular school.

**E. TIMELINE: An SEA must describe its process and timeline for approving LEA applications.**

The SEA grant review and approval process includes multiple LEA trainings in April and August, and final review and approval in September 2016. As announced by the U.S. Department of Education, schools and districts currently identified for improvement under NCLB are frozen and will remain status quo in improvement for the 2016-2017 transition year.

**April 2016.** The NDDPI conducted three regional workshops where schools and districts identified for improvement were provided with a timeline of required activities and information on improvement sanctions. Schools were informed of their responsibilities and provided with resources regarding:

- Parent notification
- Professional development
- School choice
- Supplemental educational service
- Other corrective action sanctions
- Guidance on writing a school improvement plan
- Additional funding opportunities are also addressed at this workshop

**August 2016.** The NDDPI will hold specific training for schools identified as Tier I for the FY2015/2016 SIG funding. The training will inform schools of their Tier I identification and provide an overview of the SIG process and requirements. These Tier 1 schools will be provided with the LEA application for SIG funds. In addition, detailed information will be provided on

- Seven SIG intervention models
- SIG application scoring rubric
- Required reports
- NDDPI accountability systems for LEA implementation of school level intervention models

**September 2016.** The NDDPI will review and approve LEA applications for Tier I schools so that these schools are clearly given first priority for the SIG funding. The NDDPI will focus on Tier I schools. However, if no Tier I schools apply for SIG funds or if funds remain after awards are made to successful application, then the NDDPI will complete this process with Tier II schools. The Tier I applications will be reviewed and approved in September 2016.

**North Dakota FY 2015/2016 SIG Timeline**

| Process   | Date                   |
|---|------------------------|
| NDDPI submits 2015/2016 SIG application to USDE   | May 2016               |
| NDDPI conducts training for Tier I schools on 2015/2016 LEA SIG application                     | August 2016            |
| NDDPI provides technical assistance for completing applications and ensuring capacity as needed | August /September 2016 |
| Tier I LEA SIG applications due to NDDPI  | September 2016         |
| NDDPI reviews Tier I applications   | September 2016         |

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| NDDPI awards Tier I grants   | October 2016          |
| Tier I schools begin pre-implementation year   | October 2016          |
| Tier I schools implement approved applications   | October 2016          |
| If funds remain after Tier I school have been granted awards, NDDPI will conduct training for Tier II schools on the 2015/2016 LEA SIG application | October 2016          |
| NDDPI provides technical assistance for completing applications and ensuring capacity as needed  | October/November 2016 |
| Tier II LEA SIG applications due to NDDPI  | November 2016         |
| NDDPI reviews Tier II applications   | November 2016         |
| NDDPI awards Tier II grants  | December 2016         |
| Tier II schools begin pre-implementation year  | December 2016         |
| Tier II schools implement approved applications  | December 2016         |

The NDDPI will first review and score LEA applications for Tier I schools, as these schools have priority for funding. As previously described, the NDDPI will utilize experienced SEA program staff to review, critique, and score the LEA SIG.

**Initial Review of Application by NDDPI Staff**

**Compliance review.** Upon receipt of an LEA’s Tier I application, Office of Federal Title Programs staff will review the application to determine if all of the required elements are included and identify any areas that are not fully explained.

**Technical assistance.** If this occurs, the Office of Federal Title Programs staff will contact the LEA to request the needed element and/or provide technical assistance. If all required materials are included, the application will receive a full review.

**Full Review by NDDPI Staff**

**Reviewer calibration.** A reviewer training will be conducted prior to the full application review to discuss each element on the rubric, consider the examples given in the scoring ranges, and practice scoring with several applications in order to achieve a level of reliability among reviewers.

**Multiple reviews.** Each application submitted for SIG funding will be read and scored by three NDDPI program staff. Upon completion, the three scores will be averaged to determine a final score.

**Final rankings.** Once all applications have been read and scored, they will be ranked in priority order according to total points received. A determination will then be made as to how many applications can be approved based on the funding available.

**Grant Awards**

To initiate the grant awards, the NDPPPI will conduct the following steps:

- Notify LEAs as to the approved amount
- Obtain necessary signatures on the grant award
- Provide information on reporting requirements
- Notify those LEAs whose SIG application scores too low
- Provide compiled reviewer rubric scores and comments for the LEA’s records.

**F. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION: An SEA must include the information below.**

- (1) Describe the SEA’s process for reviewing an LEA’s annual goals for student achievement to ensure

they are rigorous, relevant, and attainable for its Tier I and Tier II schools, or for its priority and focus schools, as applicable, and describe how the SEA will determine whether to renew an LEA’s School Improvement Grant with respect to one or more Tier I or Tier II schools, or one or more priority or focus schools, in an LEA that is not meeting those goals and making progress on the leading indicators in section III of the final requirements.

The NDDPI will utilize an ongoing, multi-tiered, detailed review process to ensure the SIG grantee is on the right track during the school, to analyze year-end outcomes, and to determine whether an LEA’s SIG grant will be renewed. This process includes annual LEA SIG applications, SEA technical assistance, ongoing SIG progress monitoring, and a cumulative renewal determination.

**Annual LEA SIG applications.** Each year, all eligible Tier I and Tier II SIG grantees will be required to submit the LEA SIG application *Title I Application for Additional Program Improvement Funding-SIG for Tier I/Tier II Schools SFN 52823* (Appendix C). The LEA SIG application will specifically review the progress that each Tier I and Tier II school has made toward the requirements outlined in the model that they selected to implement and outline any budget adjustments for the subsequent school year. These reports are collectively reviewed to ensure that, annually, improvements are being made and the school is progressing forward in a productive manner. The LEA applications will require detailed description including:

- Ongoing needs assessment
- LEA goals and objectives
- Progress towards their goals
- Activities
- Interventions
- Timeline
- Budget necessary to carry out and/or continue the proposed activities

**SEA technical assistance.** The NDDPI Division of Student Support & Innovation assigns all schools in Tiers I and Tier II a contact person for technical assistance and support throughout the school year. The Office of Federal Title Programs director will be responsible for reviewing all reports for the schools under their purview, in coordination with the LEA SIG application review process and Division of Student Support and Innovation school support contacts. The Office of Federal Title Programs will also provide progress monitoring through written correspondence, conference calls, and site visits.

| Critical Element    | SIG Monitoring Process  | Status |
|---------------------|---|--------|
| Application Process | <p>The NDDPI ensures its application process is carried out consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools will submit the SIG application, <i>Title I Application for Additional Program Improvement Funding – SIG for Tier I and Tier II Schools SFN 52823</i>.</li> <li>• Schools will provide results, including an update of the progress of implementation for that year of SIG.</li> <li>• Schools will provide an implementation plan for updates of any implementation plan changes for subsequent year.</li> </ul> |        |
| Implementation      | The NDDPI ensures the SIG intervention models are being implemented consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program.  |        |

|                      |   |  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Technical Assistance | <p>The NDDPI ensures technical assistance is provided to its LEAs consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and evaluate the actions an LEA has taken, as outlined in its approved SIG application, to recruit, select and provide oversight to external providers to ensure their quality.</li> <li>• Monitor and evaluate the actions the LEA has taken, as outlined in its approved SIG application, to sustain the reforms after the funding period ends and provide technical assistance to LEAs on how they can sustain progress in the absence of SIG funding.</li> <li>• Report the specific school-level data required of the final SIG requirements, including baseline data for the year prior to SIG implementation.</li> </ul> |  |
| Monitoring           | <p>The NDDPI ensures monitoring of schools is conducted consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program, including a quarterly review of the timeline in the SIG Application to ensure that the application is being implemented as written. The Office of Federal Title Programs will also provide progress monitoring through written correspondence, conference calls, and site visits.</p>  |  |
| Data Collection      | <p>The NDDPI ensures data are being collected consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools will provide data when SIG implementation begins.</li> <li>• Submit data for each Tier I or Tier II school that implements one of the school intervention models and is served with SIG funds.</li> <li>• Submit baseline data for the school year prior to the implementation of the SIG intervention models and for each subsequent year that the school implements the model.</li> </ul>   |  |
| Fiscal               | <p>The NDDPI ensures LEAs and schools are using funds consistent with the final requirements of the SIG program.</p>  |  |

**Cumulative renewal determination.** The results of this review will determine the continuation of funds for the second year and subsequent school years. In addition, if an LEA cannot demonstrate compliance with the selected model components, progress toward goals, timeliness, or if the NDDPI determines that the LEA has proven lack of capacity to implement the plan, the SIG funding will be terminated and the funds will be redistributed to other eligible Tier I and II schools. The same process will be used to determine if Tier I and Tier II SIG grantees will receive continued funding for the third year, not to exceed 5 years of funding.

- (2) Describe the SEA’s process for renewing the SIG award of an LEA that received SIG funds for a school year of planning and other pre-implementation activities for a school, including the SEA’s process for reviewing the performance of the school against the LEA’s approved application to determine whether the LEA will be able to fully implement its chosen intervention for the school beginning the first day of the following school year.

In accordance with the SIG guidance, LEAs with schools in Tier I will have first priority for SIG funding. If there are funds remaining, LEAs with schools in Tier II will be eligible to apply for funding. The same application and scoring rubric will be utilized to fund LEAs with Tier II schools. Funding for Tier I and Tier II schools is determined on an annual basis. If funds remain for the subsequent year, after all Tier I applications have been

processed, then Tier II schools will be invited to submit an application for SIG funding. Each year, all eligible Tier I and Tier II SIG grantees will be required to submit the LEA SIG application *Title I Application for Additional Program Improvement Funding-SIG for Tier I/Tier II Schools SFN 52823* (Appendix C).

- (3) Describe how the SEA will monitor, including the frequency and type of monitoring (*e.g.*, on-site, desk, self-reported) each LEA that receives a School Improvement Grant to ensure that it is implementing a school intervention model fully and effectively in the Tier I and Tier II schools, or priority and focus schools, as applicable, the LEA is approved to serve.

The Office of Federal Title Programs contact person will be responsible for providing technical assistance, answering questions, reviewing the SIG applications, reviewing reports, scoring rubrics, and all other responsibilities associated with the SIG for the schools under their purview. The Office of Federal Title Programs will also provide progress monitoring through written correspondence, conference calls, and site visits which is regular and ongoing throughout the grant award period.

#### **The SEA. . .**

- Sets reporting dates and benchmarks for periodic monitoring
- Reviews the school transformation team's
  - Meeting agendas and minutes
  - Progress with implementation timeline
  - Progress with school-specific interventions
  - Reviews financial reports
- Enters reviewer comments on progress reports
- Collects data across schools in the state
- Generates reports
- Captures information for project evaluation

#### **The LEA. . .**

- Designates internal partner (LEA staff) and/or external partner (partner organization staff) to coach school transformation teams
- Reviews the school transformation team's
  - Meeting agendas and minutes
  - Progress with implementation timeline
  - Progress with school-specific interventions
  - Progress with financial reporting
- Data mines across transformation schools in the district
- Reviews progress reports before they are submitted
- Reviews SEA reviewer comments

#### **The School Team. . .**

- Documents and tracks progress (over the grant period) toward
  - Needs assessment
  - Implementation timeline
  - Meeting agenda and minutes
  - Collects information for project evaluation
- Plans transformation team meetings with agendas and minutes

- Assesses, plans, and tracks progress with implementation
- Links to resources relative to each implementation intervention
- Generates a variety of reports, including documenting progress made toward goals
- Dialogues with coaches
- Electronically submits reports to the SEA

All SIG grantees are required to complete the *Title I Application for Additional Program Improvement Funding-SIG for Tier I/Tier II Schools SFN 52823* in which the district/school outlines progress made toward their goals and interventions. This application as well as the achievement data will clearly demonstrate whether or not the SIG grantees are meeting their goals and will be used to determine if continuous funding is approved.

Finally, in North Dakota, we believe the amount of oversight each LEA will need will vary significantly across the state. Many districts, in particular larger school districts, have a stronger internal support system and greater access to resources to help them implement the SIG model in their Tier I and Tier II schools. However, smaller districts, such as those with limited resources, substantial barriers, or districts considered “at risk”, may need significant oversight to ensure the SIG model interventions are implemented with fidelity.

The NDDPI will develop tiered levels of intervention to target our technical assistance, monitoring, and oversight to meet the needs of all participating LEAs while ensuring SIG model interventions are met.

- (4) Describe how the SEA will prioritize School Improvement Grants to LEAs if the SEA does not have sufficient school improvement funds to serve all eligible schools for which each LEA applies.

The NDDPI will review and approve LEA applications for Tier I schools first so these schools are clearly given first priority for the SIG funding. The NDDPI will focus on Tier I schools. However, if no Tier I schools apply for SIG funds or if funds remain after awards are granted to successful applications, then the NDDPI will complete this same process with Tier II schools.

The NDDPI has created a rigorous scoring rubric which is directly aligned to the LEA SIG application. This scoring rubric is included in the state application for SIG funding (see Appendix C). The scoring rubric is based on a points system and will be used to prioritize which LEAs will receive funding to support their Tier I and/or Tier II schools.

- (5) For SEAs not approved for ESEA flexibility, describe the criteria, if any, which the SEA intends to use to prioritize among Tier III schools.

The NDDPI has created a rigorous scoring rubric directly aligned to the LEA SIG application (Appendix C). Schools in Tiers I and II will use the same application to apply for funding. Schools in Tiers I and II will receive priority for SIG funding. The scoring rubric will be used within the NDDPI to review the applications. Each school will receive a score based on the rubric. The scoring rubric will determine which schools receive funding. Using this method is fair and equitable and rewards those schools that are implementing strategies aligned with the SIG priorities. The NDDPI will focus on Tier I schools. However, if no Tier I schools apply for SIG funds or if funds remain after awards are granted to successful application, then the NDDPI will complete this same process with Tier II schools. The NDDPI SEA staff will review each LEA’s application, budget, and detailed budget narrative to ensure the LEA has sufficient funds to implement its selected intervention model and activities are allowable. With the addition of the state determined model, the NDDPI believes there will be

significant interest by Tier I schools. It is very realistic that Tier III schools will not receive SIG funding. For these schools, the NDDPI will continue to offer technical assistance, monitoring, and oversight to ensure improvement regulations are met and schools continue initiatives to strive for increased student achievement.

- (6) For SEAs not approved for ESEA flexibility, describe the SEA's process for reviewing the goals an LEA establishes for its Tier III schools (subject to approval by the SEA) to ensure they are rigorous, relevant, and attainable and how the SEA will determine whether to renew an LEA's School Improvement Grant with respect to one or more Tier III schools in the LEA that are not meeting those goals.

The NDDPI will focus on Tier I schools. However, if no Tier I schools apply for SIG funds or if funds remain after awards are granted to successful application, then the NDDPI will complete this same process with Tier II schools. The NDDPI SEA staff will review each LEA's applications, budget, and detailed budget narrative to ensure the LEA has sufficient funds to implement their selected intervention model and activities are allowable.

#### **G. ASSURANCES: The SEA must provide the assurances set forth below.**

By submitting this application for new awards, the SEA assures that it will do or has done the following (check each box):

- Comply with the final requirements and ensure that each LEA carries out its responsibilities outlined in the final requirements.
- Consult with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in this application.
- Award each approved LEA a School Improvement Grant in an amount that is of sufficient size and scope to implement the selected intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school, or each priority or focus school, as applicable, that the SEA approves the LEA to serve.
- Award each School Improvement Grant to an LEA based on an individual review of each application and a case-by-case determination of the amount needed to plan for implementation, as applicable, to fully implement a model, and sustain the model, as applicable, rather than make grant awards based on a formula.
- Monitor and evaluate the actions an LEA has taken, as outlined in its approved SIG application, to recruit, select and provide oversight to external providers, including charter school operators and CMOs, to ensure their quality and regularly review and hold accountable such providers for their performance.
- Monitor and evaluate the actions the LEA has taken, as outlined in its approved SIG application, to sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.
- If a school implementing the restart model becomes a charter school LEA, hold the charter school operator or CMO accountable, or ensure that the charter school authorizer holds the respective entity accountable, for meeting the final requirements. **Please Note:** ND has a state law that it is not legal to open charter schools.
- Post on its Web site, within 30 days of awarding School Improvement Grants, all final LEA applications and a summary of the grants that includes the following information: name and NCES identification number of each LEA awarded a grant; amount of each LEA's grant; name and NCES identification number of each school to be

served; and type of intervention to be implemented in each Tier I and Tier II school or priority and focus school, as applicable. An SEA must post all LEA applications, including those of applicants that did not receive awards, as well as applications to serve Tier III schools. Additionally, if an LEA amends an application, the SEA will post the amended application.

Report the specific school-level data required in section III of the final SIG requirements, including baseline data for the year prior to SIG implementation.

If the SEA intends to provide services directly to any schools in the absence of a takeover, seek and obtain approval from the LEA to have the SEA provide the services directly prior to providing services.

**Not Applicable:** In the state of North Dakota, the NDDPI does not have legal authority to take over a school. The North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) does not grant authority for a school takeover by the NDDPI. Therefore, the State of North Dakota will not provide services directly to any schools.

Prior to submitting its School Improvement Grant application, provide all LEAs in the State that are eligible to receive School Improvement Grants with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on its waiver request(s) and attach a copy of that notice as well as copies of any comments received from LEAs to this application. The SEA also assures that it has provided notice and information regarding the waiver request(s) described below, if applicable, to the public in the manner in which the SEA customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its Web site) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice.

#### **H. SEA RESERVATION: The SEA may reserve an amount not to exceed five percent of its School Improvement Grant for administration, evaluation, and technical assistance expenses.**

The SEA must briefly describe the activities related to administration, evaluation, and technical assistance (*e.g.* funding staff positions, supporting statewide support, etc.) that the SEA plans to conduct with any State-level funds it chooses to reserve from its School Improvement Grants allocation.

The NDDPI will reserve an amount not to exceed five percent of our School Improvement Grant for administration, evaluation, and technical assistance expenditures. The activities to be supported with these funds fall into the categories outlined below. The NDDPI does have both sufficient funds and sufficient staff to carry out the many activities listed in this section. As a rural state, we must offer a variety of mechanisms to connect with the field. We collaborate and work as a team to ensure we meet schools' needs as best as possible. The NDDPI, Office of Federal Title Programs, has established a comprehensive multi-tiered system of support that is in place to provide assistance to SIG schools as indicated in this section.

##### Administration and Evaluation

North Dakota receives minimal funding, approximately \$50,000, which will be used for the following:

- o Salary for Federal Title Programs director and SIG coordinator time
- o Travel to Tier I and Tier II schools
- o Costs to provide technical assistance and monitoring
- o NDDPI has established a partnership with the School Improvement Network (SINet); therefore, contracted services may be used to provide additional supports for coaching, resources, monitoring, and evaluation service to meet SIG requirements and state determined model.

## Technical Assistance

The NDDPI, Office of Federal Title Programs, has multiple ways of providing statewide technical assistance and sharing effective strategies for schools and districts identified for improvement. The following summarizes our key initiatives:

- Extensive Website

The NDDPI, Office of Federal Title Programs, has developed an extensive website ([www.nd.gov/dpi/SchoolStaff/FTP/TitleI/PI/](http://www.nd.gov/dpi/SchoolStaff/FTP/TitleI/PI/)) for schools and districts identified for improvement. This site contains a variety of resources including a link to all district and school Adequate Yearly Progress reports, information on reports due throughout the year, information, and application forms on additional funds available for schools in improvement, templates and sample reports, and resources and handouts from prior trainings. SIG funds pay a small portion of salary for Office of Federal Title Programs staff to develop SIG resources and guidance for our website.

- Assigned NDDPI Division Liaison

The NDDPI, Division of Student Support and Innovation, assigns all schools a contact person for technical assistance and support throughout the school year. The Office of Federal Title Programs director will be responsible for reviewing all reports for the schools under their purview, in coordination with the SEA SIG application review process and Division of Student Support and Innovation school support contacts. This ongoing, multi-tiered, detailed review process ensures the SIG grantee is on the right track during the school and when closing out at the end of the program year. The liaisons keep in close contact with their assigned schools by gathering information, answering questions on program improvement issues, acting as a guidance coach, and tracking a school's needs and efforts in a very comprehensive manner. The Office of Federal Title Programs will also provide progress monitoring through written correspondence, conference calls, and site visits. The Office of Federal Title Programs staff keep a daily time and effort log and are paid from various funding sources. Time that NDDPI staff spends providing technical assistance to SIG schools will be coded to SIG administrative funds.

- Office of Federal Title Programs SIG Expert

As part of each LEA's SIG application, the NDDPI creates a detailed timeline of activities based on information submitted in each Tier I and Tier II approved application. The Office of Federal Title Programs creates an activity chart outlining the Tier I and Tier II initiatives in chronological order. The Office of Federal Title Programs then provides a program staff assigned to the school to assist with the oversight of each Tier I and Tier II school's SIG program. The program staff conducts regular communication through conference calls, written correspondence, webinars, and site visits with staff from each SIG school to discuss the status of the timeline of activities. The SIG expert is required to submit a written summary of the call and status of the activity chart to the Office of Federal Title Programs. These contacts are conducted on a regular basis to ensure the outlined activities have been conducted as indicated in the SIG application and to ensure timely assistance is provided.

- Monthly Research Report

The Division of Student Support and Innovation generates and distributes a monthly report which summarizes newly released research/resources on educational issues relevant to North Dakota schools. The monthly Research/Resource Report (RRR) is disseminated electronically to all principals, administrators, and Title I teachers and staff in schools identified for improvement.

- Sharing of Effective Strategies

The NDDPI frequently contracts with exemplary educators within the state or educational entities to create resources for North Dakota schools and districts. We believe it is critical to highlight what has been proven to be effective in other schools and districts across North Dakota.

The NDDPI requested assistance from the North Central Comprehensive Center (NCCC) in highlighting and documenting seven schools in the state of North Dakota that have made substantial improvement in their student achievement scores. Interviews with seven school administrators were conducted by the NCCC to gather information on the specific strategies each school employed to improve student achievement. A summary capturing the most important processes and initiatives was created for each school. All seven summaries were compiled into one document and shared statewide to disseminate effective practices.

- AdvancED Accreditation and Federal Title Reporting

The NDDPI requires statewide accreditation through a web-based tool, AdvancED. In order to streamline reporting the Office of Federal Title Programs supports consistency in plans and reduction in burden of paperwork through streamlining reports utilizing the AdvancED ASSIST tool to provide information regarding the schools needs assessment, programming, goals, activities, and plans to meet Title I schoolwide requirements and program improvement plans. The reports within the tool meet multiple reporting for state and federal programs including statewide accreditation, ND approval process, Title I schoolwide plans, and program improvement plans.

- School Improvement Network

School turnaround experts emphasize the importance of utilizing “skilled outside assistance to mount a comprehensive, sustained turnaround initiative” (Calkins, Guenther, Belfiore, & Lash, 2007. The Turnaround Challenge, p. 5, 2007). The NDDPI has partnered with the School Improvement Network (SINet) as an external partner to support NDDPI’s SIG implementation with impactful and expert services and resources. This partnership provides an opportunity for SIG schools to contract services to support the state determined model and SIG federal requirements which includes intensive support, coaching, professional development, evidence-based instructional strategies, data review/appraisals, and ongoing technical assistance. The SINet offers a Turnaround Success Model, a proven blended school turnaround framework designed to support struggling schools. This system wide turnaround model combines the effectiveness and richness of on-demand digital tools with the transformational power of professional learning communities (PLCs) and on-site coaching.

School Improvement will assign two resources to assist each school through the turnaround process.

1. Partner Success Manager – Partner Success Manager (PSM) will manage the project for each school and assist with the documentation and reports needed for ongoing needs analysis, pre-implementation planning, progress monitoring, mid-course corrections, required reporting, and overall project implementation.
2. Turnaround Coach – Turnaround Coach will provide focused and expert coaching for leaders and teachers, working with designated staff on recommended strategies in both on-site and online coaching sessions.

SINet will provide virtual and onsite-specific classroom professional learning. Each school will have a customized service delivery schedule that includes coaching and consultation with ongoing feedback and recommendations for extended learning and collaboration utilizing evidence-based and on-

demand professional learning resources. These resources include the Edivate professional learning system, virtual coaching for individual schools, actionable feedback, and recommendations for implementation of instructional strategies and materials, as needed.

- Department Sponsored Conferences

The NDDPI sponsors several conferences each year. Each spring, regional trainings are held for schools and districts in improvement to disseminate key information regarding the school improvement requirements and to share effective strategies for making progress. In the fall, a statewide conference is held for educators to promote effective evidence-based strategies designed to raise achievement. The NDDPI sponsors SIG Webinar presentations specifically designed to provide technical assistance and guidance to Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools. Numerous other trainings, via conference call or Webinars, are also offered each year to share and disseminate information statewide. Time that staff spends providing technical assistance to SIG schools will be coded to SIG administrative funds.

- Webinar Trainings

To further expand the number of training opportunities available to Title I personnel, the Office of Federal Title Programs periodically conducts Webinar trainings on relevant Title I issues. This form of training is very beneficial because the trainings are short (one hour), easy to access, and participants don't have to be away from their building. In addition, each training is recorded for viewing at times convenient for school personnel. All trainings the NDDPI will hold for the Tier I and Tier II schools will be conducted through Webinar trainings. SEA SIG funds will be used to provide statewide technical assistance for these key initiatives.

**I. WAIVERS: SEAs are invited to request waivers of the requirements set forth below. An SEA must check the corresponding box(es) to indicate which waiver(s) it is requesting.**

NDDPI requests a waiver of the requirements it has indicated below. The SEA believes the requested waiver(s) will increase its ability to implement the SIG program effectively in eligible schools in the State in order to improve the quality of instruction and raise the academic achievement of students in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools or in its priority and focus schools, as applicable, or will allow any LEA in the State that receives a School Improvement Grant to use those funds in accordance with the final requirements for School Improvement Grants and the LEA's application for a grant.

**Part 1: Waivers Available to All States**

**Waiver 1: Period of availability of FY 2015 funds waiver**

Note: This waiver only applies to FY 2015 funds for the purpose of making three- to five-year awards to eligible LEAs.

In order to extend the period of availability beyond September 30, 2017, waive section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. § 1225(b)) to extend the period of availability of FY 2015 school improvement funds for the SEA and all of its LEAs to September 30, 2021.

**Waiver 2: Period of availability of FY 2016 funds waiver**

Note: This waiver only applies to FY 2016 funds for the purpose of making three- to five-year awards to eligible LEAs.

In order to extend the period of availability beyond September 30, 2018, waive section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. § 1225(b)) to extend the period of availability of FY 2016 school

improvement funds for the SEA and all of its LEAs to September 30, 2021.

## **Part 2: Waivers Available Only to States Not Approved for ESEA Flexibility**

### **Waiver 1: Tier II waiver**

In order to enable the State to generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools for its FY 2015/2016 competition, waive paragraph (a)(2) of the definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools” in Section I.A.3 of the SIG final requirements and incorporation of that definition in identifying Tier II schools under Section I.A.1(b) of those requirements to permit the State to include, in the pool of secondary schools from which it determines those that are the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the State, secondary schools participating under Title I, Part A of the ESEA that have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) for at least two consecutive years or are in the State’s lowest quintile of performance based on proficiency rates on the State’s assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics combined.

#### Assurance

The State assures that it will include in the pool of schools from which it identifies its Tier II schools all Title I secondary schools not identified in Tier I that either (1) have not made AYP for at least two consecutive years; or (2) are in the State’s lowest quintile of performance based on proficiency rates on the State’s assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics combined. Within that pool, the State assures that it will identify as Tier II schools the persistently lowest-achieving schools in accordance with its approved definition. The State is attaching the list of schools and their level of achievement (as determined under paragraph (b) of the definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools”) that would be identified as Tier II schools without the waiver and those that would be identified with the waiver. The State assures that it will ensure that any LEA that chooses to use SIG funds in a Title I secondary school that becomes an eligible Tier II school based on this waiver will comply with the SIG final requirements for serving that school.

### **Waiver 2: n-size waiver**

In order to enable the State to generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools for its FY 2015/2016 competition, waive the definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools” in Section I.A.3 of the SIG final requirements and the use of that definition in Section I.A.1(a) and (b) of those requirements to permit the State to exclude, from the pool of schools from which it identifies the persistently lowest-achieving schools for Tier I and Tier II, any school in which the total number of students in the “all students” group in the grades assessed is less than [Please indicate number].

#### Assurance

The State assures that it determined whether it needs to identify five percent of schools or five schools in each tier prior to excluding small schools below its “minimum n.” The State is attaching, and will post on its Web site, a list of the schools in each tier that it will exclude under this waiver and the number of students in each school on which that determination is based. The State will include its “minimum n” in its definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools.” In addition, the State will include in its list of Tier III schools any schools excluded from the pool of schools from which it identified the persistently lowest-achieving schools in accordance with this waiver.

**Waiver 3: School improvement timeline waiver**

**Note: An SEA that requested and received the school improvement timeline waiver for the FY 2014 competition and wishes to also receive the waiver for the FY 2015/2016 competition must request the waiver again in this application.**

**Schools that started implementation of a SIG model in the 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016 school years cannot request this waiver to “start over” their school improvement timeline again.**

Waive section 1116(b)(12) of the ESEA to permit LEAs to allow their Tier I or Tier II title I participating schools that will fully implement a SIG model beginning in the 2016–2017 school year to “start over” in the school improvement timeline.

Assurances

The State assures that it will permit an LEA to implement this waiver only if the LEA receives a School Improvement Grant and requests the waiver in its application as part of a plan to implement a SIG model beginning in the 2016–2017 school year in a school that the SEA has approved it to serve. As such, the LEA may only implement the waiver in Tier I and Tier II schools, as applicable, included in its application.

The State assures that, if it is granted this waiver, it will submit to the U.S. Department of Education a report that sets forth the name and NCES District Identification Number for each LEA implementing a waiver.

**Waiver 4: Schoolwide program waiver**

**Note: An SEA that requested and received the schoolwide program waiver for the FY 2014 competition and wishes to also receive the waiver for the FY 2015/2016 competition must request the waiver again in this application.**

Waive the 40 percent poverty eligibility threshold in section 1114(a)(1) of the ESEA to permit LEAs to implement a schoolwide program in a Tier I or Tier II Title I participating school that does not meet the poverty threshold and is fully implementing one of the seven school intervention models.

Assurances

The State assures that it will permit an LEA to implement this waiver only if the LEA receives a School Improvement Grant and requests to implement the waiver in its application. As such, the LEA may only implement the waiver in Tier I and Tier II schools, as applicable, included in its application.

The State assures that, if it is granted this waiver, it will submit to the U.S. Department of Education a report that sets forth the name and NCES District Identification Number for each LEA implementing a waiver.

## **PART II: LEA APPLICATION**

An SEA must develop an LEA application form that it will use to make subgrants of School Improvement Grant funds to eligible LEAs. SEAs should attach their LEA application.

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### **LEA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

The LEA application form that the SEA uses must contain, at a minimum, the information set forth below. An SEA may include other information that it deems necessary in order to award school improvement funds to its LEAs.

**A. SCHOOLS TO BE SERVED: An LEA must include the following information with respect to the schools it will serve with a School Improvement Grant.**

An LEA must identify each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III school, or each priority and focus school, as applicable, the LEA commits to serve and identify the model that the LEA will use in each Tier I and Tier II school, or in each priority and focus school, as applicable.

The models the LEA may include are: (1) turnaround; (2) restart; (3) closure; (4) transformation; (5) state-determined model, if approved; (6) evidence-based whole school reform model; and (7) early learning model.

Example (LEAs in an SEA approved for ESEA flexibility):

| SCHOOL NAME           | NCES ID # | PRIORITY | FOCUS (if applicable) <sup>2</sup> | INTERVENTION           |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Priority School ES #1 | xxxxx     | X        |                                    | turnaround             |
| Priority School HS #1 | xxxxx     | X        |                                    | state-determined model |
| Priority School MS #1 | xxxxx     | X        |                                    | transformation         |
| Priority School ES #2 | xxxxx     | X        |                                    | turnaround             |

Example (LEAs in an SEA not approved for ESEA flexibility):

| SCHOOL NAME   | NCES ID # | TIER I | TIER II | TIER III | INTERVENTION (TIER I AND II only) |
|---------------|-----------|--------|---------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Tier I ES #1  | xxxxx     | X      |         |          | turnaround                        |
| Tier I ES #2  | xxxxx     |        | X       |          | early learning model              |
| Tier I MS #1  | xxxxx     | X      |         |          | transformation                    |
| Tier II HS #1 | xxxxx     | X      |         |          | state-determined model            |

<sup>2</sup>An LEA in which one or more priority schools are located must serve all of these schools before it may serve one or more focus schools.

**B. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION: An LEA must include the following information in its application for a School Improvement Grant.**

- (1) For each Tier I and Tier II school, or each priority and focus school, that the LEA commits to serve, the LEA must demonstrate that the LEA has analyzed the needs of each school, such as instructional programs, school leadership and school infrastructure, based on a needs analysis that, among other things, analyzes the needs identified by families and the community, and selected interventions for each school aligned to the needs each school has identified.
- (2) For each Tier I and Tier II school, or each priority and focus school, that the LEA commits to serve, the LEA must demonstrate that it has taken into consideration family and community input in selecting the intervention.
- (3) The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to design and implement a plan consistent with the final requirements of the turnaround model, restart model, school closure, transformation model, evidence-based whole school reform model, early learning model, or state-determined model.
- (4) The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to determine its capacity to provide adequate resources and related support to each Tier I and Tier II school, or each priority and focus school, identified in the LEA's application in order to implement, fully and effectively, the required activities of the school intervention model it has selected on the first day of the first school year of full

implementation.

- (5) The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to recruit, screen, and select external providers, if applicable, to ensure their quality, and regularly review and hold accountable such providers for their performance.
- (6) The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to align other resources (for example, Title I funding) with the selected intervention.
- (7) The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable it to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively.
- (8) The LEA must describe how it will provide effective oversight and support for implementation of the selected intervention for each school it proposes to serve (for example, by creating an LEA turnaround office).
- (9) The LEA must describe how it will meaningfully engage families and the community in the implementation of the selected intervention on an ongoing basis.
- (10) The LEA must describe how it will sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.
- (11) The LEA must describe how it will implement, to the extent practicable, in accordance with its selected SIG intervention model(s), one or more evidence-based strategies.
- (12) The LEA must describe how it will monitor each Tier I and Tier II school, or each priority and focus school, that receives school improvement funds including by
  - a. Establishing annual goals for student achievement on the State's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics; and,
  - b. Measuring progress on the leading indicators as defined in the final requirements.
- (13) An LEA must hold the charter school operator, CMO, EMO, or other external provider accountable for meeting these requirements, if applicable.
- (14) For an LEA that intends to use the first year of its School Improvement Grants award for planning and other pre-implementation activities for an eligible school, the LEA must include a description of the activities, the timeline for implementing those activities, and a description of how those activities will lead to successful implementation of the selected intervention.
- (15) For an LEA eligible for services under subpart 1 or 2 of part B of Title VI of the ESEA (Rural Education Assistance Program) that chooses to modify one element of the turnaround or transformation model, the LEA must describe how it will meet the intent and purpose of that element.
- (16) For an LEA that applies to implement an evidence-based, whole-school reform model in one or more eligible schools, the LEA must describe how it will
  - a. Implement a model with evidence of effectiveness that includes a sample population or setting similar to the population or setting of the school to be served; and
  - b. Partner with a whole school reform model developer, as defined in the SIG requirements.

- (17) For an LEA that applies to implement the restart model in one or more eligible schools, the LEA must describe the rigorous review process (as described in the final requirements) it has conducted or will conduct of the charter school operator, CMO, or EMO that it has selected or will select to operate or manage the school or schools.
- (18) The LEA must include a timeline delineating the steps it will take to implement the selected intervention in each school identified in the LEA’s application.
- (19) For each Tier III school the LEA commits to serve, the LEA must identify the services the school will receive or the activities the school will implement.
- (20) The LEA must describe the goals it has established (subject to approval by the SEA) in order to hold accountable its Tier III schools that receive school improvement funds.

**C. BUDGET: An LEA must include a budget that indicates the amount of school improvement funds the LEA will use each year in each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III school, or each priority and focus school, it commits to serve.**

The LEA must provide a budget that indicates the amount of school improvement funds the LEA will use in each school it proposes to serve and the funds it will use to —

- Conduct LEA-level activities designed to support implementation of the selected school intervention models in the LEA’s Tier I and Tier II schools, or priority and focus schools; and
- Support school improvement activities, at the school or LEA level, for each Tier III school identified in the LEA’s application (SEAs without ESEA flexibility only).

Note: An LEA’s budget should cover all of the years of full implementation and be of sufficient size and scope to implement the selected school intervention model in each Tier I, Tier II, priority, or focus school the LEA commits to serve. Any funding for activities during the pre-implementation period must be included in the first year of the LEA’s budget plan. Additionally, an LEA’s budget may include up to one full academic year for planning activities and up to two years to support sustainability activities. An LEA may not receive more than five years of SIG funding to serve a single school.

An LEA’s budget for each year may not exceed the number of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools, or the number of priority and focus schools, it commits to serve multiplied by \$2,000,000.

**Example: LEA Proposing a Planning Year for One or More Schools**

| <b>LEA XX BUDGET</b>  |                                 |  |  |  |  |                         |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--|-------------------------|
|                       | <b>Year 1 Budget (Planning)</b> | <b>Year 2 Budget (Full implementation)</b> | <b>Year 3 Budget (Full implementation)</b> | <b>Year 4 Budget (Full implementation)</b> | <b>Year 5 Budget (Sustainability Activities)</b> | <b>Five- Year Total</b> |
| <b>Priority ES #1</b> | \$150,000                       | \$1,156,000                                | \$1,200,000                                | \$1,100,000                                | \$750,000  | <b>\$4,356,000</b>      |
| <b>Priority ES #2</b> | \$119,250                       | \$890,500                                  | \$795,000                                  | \$750,000                                  | \$500,750  | <b>\$3,055,500</b>      |
| <b>Priority HS #1</b> | \$300,000                       | \$1,295,750                                | \$1,600,000                                | \$1,400,000                                | \$650,000  | <b>\$5,245,750</b>      |
| <b>Focus MS #1</b>    | \$410,000                       | \$1,470,000                                | \$1,775,000                                | \$1,550,400                                | \$550,000  | <b>\$5,755,400</b>      |

|                             |                  |                    |                    |                     |                    |                     |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <b>LEA-level Activities</b> |                  |                    | \$150,000          | \$150,000           | \$100,000          | <b>\$400,000</b>    |
| <b>Total Budget</b>         | <b>\$879,250</b> | <b>\$4,812,250</b> | <b>\$5,520,000</b> | <b>\$4,950, 400</b> | <b>\$2,550,750</b> | <b>\$18,812,650</b> |

**Example: LEA Proposing to Implement a Model in One or More Schools on the First Day of the Upcoming School Year**

| <b>LEA XX BUDGET</b>        |                           |                                     |  |  |  |  |                        |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|------------------------|
|                             | <b>Year 1 Budget</b>      |                                     | <b>Year 2 Budget (Full implementation)</b> | <b>Year 3 Budget (Full implementation)</b> | <b>Year 4 Budget (Sustainability Activities)</b> | <b>Year 5 Budget (Sustainability Activities)</b> | <b>Five-Year Total</b> |
|                             | <b>Pre-implementation</b> | <b>Year 1 (Full Implementation)</b> |  |  |  |  |                        |
| <b>Tier I ES #1</b>         | \$257,000                 | \$1,156,000                         | \$1,325,000                                | \$1,200,000                                | \$650,000  | \$450,000  | <b>\$5,038,000</b>     |
| <b>Tier I ES #2</b>         | \$125,500                 | \$890,500                           | \$846,500                                  | \$795,000                                  | \$150,000  | \$100,000  | <b>\$2,907,500</b>     |
| <b>Tier I MS #1</b>         | \$304,250                 | \$1,295,750                         | \$1,600,000                                | \$1,600,000                                | \$450,000  | \$300,000  | <b>\$5,550,000</b>     |
| <b>Tier II HS #1</b>        | \$530,000                 | \$1,470,000                         | \$1,960,000                                | \$1,775,000                                | \$800,000  | \$550,000  | <b>\$7,085,000</b>     |
| <b>LEA-level Activities</b> | \$250,000                 |                                     | \$250,000                                  | \$250,000                                  | \$150,000  | \$100,000  | <b>\$1,000,000</b>     |
| <b>Total Budget</b>         | <b>\$6,279,000</b>        |                                     | <b>\$5,981,500</b>                         | <b>\$5,620,000</b>                         | <b>\$2,200,000</b>                               | <b>\$1,500,000</b>                               | <b>\$21,580,500</b>    |

**Note:** An LEA may fill out both charts if it is applying for a planning year for some, but not all, of the schools it proposes to serve.

**D. ASSURANCES:** An LEA must include the following assurances in its application for a School Improvement Grant.

The LEA must assure that it will—

- (1) Use its School Improvement Grant to implement fully and effectively an intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school, or each priority and focus school, that the LEA commits to serve consistent with the final requirements.
- (2) Establish annual goals for student achievement on the State’s assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics and measure progress on the leading indicators in section III of the final requirements in order to monitor each Tier I and Tier II school, or priority and focus school, that it serves with school improvement funds, and establish goals (approved by the SEA) to hold accountable its Tier III schools that receive school improvement funds.
- (3) Report to the SEA the school-level data required under section III of the final requirements, including baseline data for the year prior to SIG implementation.
- (4) Ensure that each Tier I and Tier II school, or each priority and focus school, that it commits to serve receives all of the State and local funds it would receive in the absence of the school improvement funds and that those resources are aligned with the interventions.

**E. WAIVERS:** If an SEA not approved for ESEA flexibility has requested any waivers of requirements applicable to the LEA’s School Improvement Grant, an LEA must indicate which of those waivers it intends to implement.

The LEA must check each waiver that the LEA will implement. If the LEA does not intend to implement the waiver with respect to each applicable school, the LEA must indicate for which schools it will implement the waiver. **NOTE:** Only LEAs in SEAs not approved for ESEA flexibility may request the following waivers.

- “Starting over” in the school improvement timeline for Tier I and Tier II Title I participating schools implementing a SIG model.
- Implementing a school-wide program in a Tier I or Tier II Title I participating school that does not meet the 40 percent poverty eligibility threshold.

# Continuation Awards Application for Fiscal Year (FY) 2015/2016 School Improvement Grants (SIG) Program

In the table below, list the schools that will receive continuation awards using FY 2015 and/or FY 2016 SIG funds. If no continuation awards will be made with FY 2015 and/or FY 2016 funds, indicate not applicable (“N/A”) in the chart:

| LEA NAME  | SCHOOL NAME | YEAR SCHOOL BEGAN SIG IMPLEMENTATION | PROJECTED AMOUNT OF FY 15/FY 16 ALLOCATION |
|---|-------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| N/A   |             | (e.g. 2013-14 school year)           |  |
|   |             |                                      |  |
|   |             |                                      |  |
|   |             |                                      |  |
| <b>TOTAL AMOUNT OF CONTINUATION FUNDS PROJECTED FOR ALLOCATION IN FY 15/FY16:</b> |             |                                      |  |

In the table below, list any LEAs with one or more schools for which funding under previously awarded SIG grants will not be renewed. For each such school, note the date of nonrenewal or termination, description of reason for nonrenewal or termination, amount of unused remaining funds and explain how the SEA or LEA plans to use those funds as well as noting the explicit reason and process for reallocating those funds (e.g., reallocate to rural schools with SIG grants in cohort 2 who demonstrate a need for technology aimed at increasing student literacy interaction). If all schools have been renewed, please indicate not applicable (“N/A”) in the chart:

| LEA NAME                                | SCHOOL NAME | DATE OF NONRENEWAL OR TERMINATION | DESCRIPTION OF REASON FOR NONRENEWAL OR TERMINATION | DESCRIPTION OF HOW REMAINING FUNDS WERE OR WILL BE USED | AMOUNT OF REMAINING FUNDS |
|---|-------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|
| N/A                                     |             |                                   |   |   |                           |
|   |             |                                   |   |   |                           |
|   |             |                                   |   |   |                           |
|   |             |                                   |   |   |                           |
| <b>TOTAL AMOUNT OF REMAINING FUNDS:</b> |             |                                   |   |   |                           |

### **School Improvement Grants (SIG) Program FY 2015/2016 Assurances**

By submitting this continuation awards application, the SEA assures that it will do the following (check each box):

- Use FY 2015/2016 SIG funds solely to make continuation awards and will not make any new awards<sup>3</sup> to its LEAs unless the SEA has an approved new awards application.
- Use the renewal process described in Section II(C) of the final requirements to determine whether to renew an LEA's School Improvement Grant.
- Monitor and evaluate the actions an LEA has taken, as outlined in its approved SIG application, to recruit, select and provide oversight to external providers to ensure their quality and regularly review and hold accountable such providers for their performance.
- Monitor and evaluate the actions the LEA has taken, as outlined in its approved SIG application, to sustain the reforms after the funding period ends and provide technical assistance to LEAs on how they can sustain progress in the absence of SIG funding.
- If a school implementing the restart model becomes a charter school LEA, hold the charter school operator or charter management organization accountable, or ensure that the charter school authorizer holds the respective entity accountable, for meeting the final requirements.
- If the SEA approves any amendments to an LEA application, post the LEA's amended application on the SEA website.
- Report the specific school-level data required in section III of the final SIG requirements, including baseline data for the year prior to SIG implementation.

**For states planning to use FY 2015 and FY 2016 SIG funds for continuation awards only: By submitting the assurances and information above, the SEA agrees to carry out its most recently approved SIG application and does not need to submit a FY 2015/2016 SIG application for new awards; however, the State must submit the signature page included in the application for new awards (page 3).**

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<sup>3</sup> A "new award" is defined as an award of SIG funds to an LEA for a school that the LEA was not previously approved to serve with SIG funds in the school year for which funds are being awarded—in this case, the 2016–2017 school year. New awards may be made with the FY 2015 or FY 2016 funds or any remaining SIG funds not already committed to grants made in earlier competitions.