

Title I School Improvement Grants: Summary of Draft Priorities, Requirements, Selection Criteria, and Definitions

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The following summary incorporates direct language from the [Federal Register notice](#).

Title I School Improvement Grants: SEA Priorities and Responsibilities

1. To receive a School Improvement Grant, a state education agency (SEA) must submit an application to the Department at such time, and containing such information, as the Secretary shall reasonably require.
2. An SEA must identify three tiers of schools to enable the SEA to select those local education agencies (LEAs) with the greatest need for such funds (see definitions).
3. An SEA must review and approve an application for a School Improvement Grant that it receives from an LEA.
4. From among the LEAs in greatest need, the SEA must select those LEAs that demonstrate the strongest commitment to ensuring that the funds are used to provide adequate resources to enable the lowest-achieving schools to meet, or be on track to meet, the LEA's three-year student achievement goals in reading/language arts and mathematics (see definitions).
5. Before approving the application, the SEA must ensure that it meets the requirements, particularly with respect to:
 - a. Whether the LEA has agreed to implement one of the four rigorous interventions identified (see definitions) in each Tier I and Tier II school included in its application
 - b. The extent to which the LEA's application shows the LEA's efforts to:
 - i. Analyze the needs of each school and match an intervention to those needs, consistent with requirements for LEA applications.
 - ii. Design and implement interventions consistent with the requirements.
 - iii. Recruit, screen, and select external providers to ensure quality.
 - iv. Embed the interventions in a longer-term plan to sustain gains in student achievement.
 - v. Coordinate with other resources.
 - vi. Modify its practices, if necessary, to enable it to fully and effectively implement the interventions.
 - vii. Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.
 - c. Whether the LEA has the capacity to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively in each Tier I and Tier II school
 - d. Whether the LEA has submitted a budget that includes sufficient funds to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively in each Tier I and Tier II school

6. An SEA must review and approve the LEA’s three-year student achievement goals to ensure that they are sufficiently rigorous to hold each Tier I and Tier II school accountable for meeting, or being on track to meet, those goals with respect to all students in the school, as well as each subgroup of students identified in 34 CFR 200.13(b)(7), and for making progress on the leading indicators (see metrics).
7. An SEA may reserve from the total fiscal year (FY) 2009 school improvement funds it receives under section 1003(g) of the ESEA no more than five percent for administration, evaluation, and technical assistance expenses.

**Title I School Improvement Grants:
Flexibility for SEAs from the U.S. Department of Education**

1. An SEA may award school improvement funds to an LEA for a Tier I school that has implemented, in whole or in part, a turnaround model, restart model, or transformation model (see definitions) within the last two years so that the LEA and school can continue or complete the intervention being implemented in that school.
2. An SEA may seek a waiver from the Secretary of the requirements in section 1116(b) of the ESEA in order to permit a Tier I school implementing an intervention that meets the requirements for a turnaround model or restart model (see definitions) in an LEA that receives a School Improvement Grant to “start over” in the school improvement timeline. Even though the school is no longer in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, it may receive school improvement funds.
3. An SEA may seek a waiver from the Secretary to enable a Tier I school that is ineligible to operate a Title I schoolwide program and is operating a Title I targeted assistance program to operate a schoolwide program in order to implement an intervention that meets the requirements of a turnaround model, restart model, or transformation model (see definitions).

**Title I School Improvement Grants:
Selecting Grantees and Determining Amount of Grants**

1. If an SEA does not have sufficient school improvement funds to award, for up to three years, a grant to each LEA that submits an approvable application, the SEA must give priority to LEAs that apply to serve both Tier I and Tier II schools.
 - a. An SEA must award a School Improvement Grant to an LEA in an amount that is of sufficient size and scope to support the activities required under section 1116 of the ESEA and this notice. The LEA’s total grant may not be less than \$50,000 or more than \$500,000 per year for each Tier I and Tier III school that the LEA commits to serve.
 - b. In awarding the school improvement funds, an SEA must allocate \$500,000 per year for each Tier I school that will implement a rigorous intervention (turnaround model, restart model, or transformation model) for which the LEA has requested funds in its budget and for which the SEA determines the LEA has the capacity to serve.
 - c. The SEA also must allocate sufficient school improvement funds in total to the LEA, consistent with section 1003(g)(5), to match, as closely as possible, the LEA’s budget

- for implementing one of the four interventions in each Tier I and Tier II school it commits to serve, including costs associated with closing such schools under Section I.A.2.c, as well as for serving participating Tier III schools, particularly those meeting additional criteria established by the SEA.
2. If an SEA does not have sufficient school improvement funds to allocate to each LEA with a Tier I or Tier II school an amount sufficient to enable the school to implement fully the specified intervention for three years, the SEA may take into account the distribution of Tier I and Tier II schools among such LEAs in the State to ensure that Tier I and Tier II schools throughout the State can be served.
 3. If an SEA has provided a School Improvement Grant to each LEA that has requested funds to serve a Tier I or Tier II school in accordance with this notice, the SEA may award remaining school improvement funds to an LEA with only Tier III schools that applies to receive those funds.
 4. In awarding School Improvement Grants, an SEA must apportion its FY 2009 school improvement funds, including those available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), in order to make grants that are renewable for two additional years, which the Secretary will make possible by waiving the limitation on the period of availability beyond September 30, 2011.
 - a. An SEA must renew an LEA's School Improvement Grant for two additional one-year periods if the LEA demonstrates that its Tier I and Tier II schools are meeting, or are on track to meet, the LEA's student achievement goals with respect to all students in the school, as well as each subgroup of students identified in 34 CFR 200.13(b)(7), and are making progress on the leading indicators described in Section III of this notice and that its Tier III schools are meeting the goals in their plans developed under section 1116 of the ESEA.
 - b. If an SEA does not renew an LEA's School Improvement Grant because the LEA's participating schools are not meeting or on track to meet their student achievement goals, the SEA may reallocate those funds to other eligible LEAs, consistent with the requirements of this notice.
 5. States Whose School Improvement Grant Exceeds the Amount the State May Award to Eligible LEAs: In some States in which a limited number of Title I schools are identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, the SEA may be able to make School Improvement Grants, renewable for two additional years, to each LEA with a Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III school without using the State's full allocation under section 1003(g) of the ESEA.
 - a. An SEA in this situation may reserve up to five percent of its FY 2009 allocation of school improvement funds for administration, evaluation, and technical assistance expenses under section 1003(g)(8) of the ESEA.
 - b. The SEA may retain sufficient school improvement funds to serve, for two succeeding years, each Tier I, II, and III school that generates funds for an eligible LEA in the 2010–2011 school year.
 - c. The Secretary proposes to reallocate to other States, before September 30, 2010, any remaining school improvement funds from the States with surplus funds.

Title I School Improvement Grants: LEA Applications

1. An LEA may apply for a School Improvement Grant if it has one or more schools that qualify under the State's definition of a Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III school.
2. In its application, in addition to other information that the SEA may require, the LEA must do the following:
 - a. Identify the Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools it commits to serve.
 - b. Demonstrate that it has the capacity to use the school improvement funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each of the Tier I and Tier II schools in order to implement fully and effectively one of the identified interventions identified (turnaround, restart, or transformation models).
 - c. If an LEA has nine or more Tier I and Tier II schools, the LEA may not implement the same intervention in more than 50 percent of those schools.
3. An LEA must establish, in its application, three-year student achievement goals in reading/language arts and mathematics.
 - a. The LEA must hold each Tier I and Tier II school it commits to serve annually accountable for meeting, or being on track to meet, those goals with respect to the achievement of all students in each school, as well as each subgroup of students identified in 34 CFR 200.13(b)(7),14 and for making progress on the leading indicators described in Section III of this notice.
 - b. If an LEA proposes to implement a restart model, it also must describe how it will hold the charter school operator, charter management organization (CMO), or educational management organization (EMO) accountable for meeting, or being on track to meet, the LEA's student achievement goals and making progress on the leading indicators.
4. An LEA must demonstrate how it will sustain the interventions implemented with its School Improvement Grant after the funding period for the grant has ended.
5. The LEA must serve each Tier I school using one of the four interventions identified in Section I.A.2 of this notice, unless the LEA demonstrates that it lacks sufficient capacity to undertake intensive interventions in each such school, in which case the LEA must indicate the Tier I schools that it can effectively serve.
 - a. An LEA may not serve with these school improvement funds a Tier I school in which it does not implement one of the proposed interventions.
6. The LEA must include in its application a budget indicating how it will allocate school improvement funds among the Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools it commits to serve.
 - a. The LEA's budget for each Tier I and Tier II school it commits to serve must be of sufficient size and scope to ensure that the LEA can implement one of the rigorous interventions identified in Section I.A.2 of this notice.
 - i. A budget should cover three years.
 - ii. The LEA's budget may, and likely would, exceed \$500,000 per year for each Tier I and Tier II school that implements an intervention in Section I.A.2.a, 2.b, or 2.d in order to reform the school consistent with the LEA's application and the requirements in this notice.

- iii. The LEA’s budget may include less than \$500,000 per year for a Tier I or Tier II school for which it proposes to implement the school closure intervention in Section I.A.2.c. In addition, a school closure typically would be completed in less than three years.
 - b. The LEA’s budget for each Tier III school it commits to serve must include the services it will provide the school, particularly if the school meets additional criteria established by the SEA, although those services do not need to be commensurate with the funds the SEA provides the LEA based on the school’s inclusion in the LEA’s School Improvement Grant application.
7. An LEA in which a Tier I school is located and that does not apply to serve that school for reasons other than lack of capacity may not apply for a grant to serve only Tier III schools.
 8. An LEA that receives a School Improvement Grant must participate in any evaluation of that grant conducted by the Secretary.

Title I School Improvement Grants: Reporting and Evaluation

To inform and evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions in this notice, the Secretary proposes to collect data on the metrics in the following chart. The Department already collects most of these data through EDFacts and will collect data on two metrics through State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) reporting. Accordingly, an SEA must report only the following new data with respect to school improvement funds:

1. A list of the LEAs that received a School Improvement Grant under section 1003(g) and the amount of each grant.
2. For each LEA that received a School Improvement Grant, a list of the schools that were served and the amount of funds or value of services each school received.
3. For any Tier I or Tier II school, school-level data on the metrics designated on the following chart as “SIG” (School Improvement Grant):

Metric	Source	Achievement Indicators	Leading Indicators
<i>School Data</i>			
Which intervention the school used (i.e., turnaround, restart, closed, or transformation)	NEW SIG		
AYP status	EDFacts	✓	
Which AYP targets the school met and missed	EDFacts	✓	
School improvement status	EDFacts	✓	
<i>Student Outcome/Academic Progress Data</i>			
Percentage of students at or above each proficiency level on State assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics (e.g., Basic, Proficient, Advanced),	EDFacts	✓	

Metric	Source	Achievement Indicators	Leading Indicators
by grade and by student subgroup			
Student participation rate on State assessments, by student subgroup	EDFacts		✓
Average scores on State assessments across subgroups—scale scores by quartile	NEW SIG	✓	
Title III LEP students' English language proficiency	EDFacts	✓	
AMAO status for LEP students	EDFacts	✓	
Graduation rate	EDFacts	✓	
Dropout rate	EDFacts		✓
Student attendance	EDFacts		✓
Students enrolled in advanced coursework (e.g., AP/IB), early college high schools, or dual enrollment classes	NEW SIG HS only		✓
College enrollment rates	NEW SFSF phase two HS only		✓
<i>Student Connection and School Climate</i>			
Discipline incidents	EDFacts		✓
Truants	EDFacts		✓
Number of instructional minutes	NEW SIG		✓
<i>Talent</i>			
Distribution of teachers by performance level on LEA's teacher evaluation system	NEW SFSF Phase two		✓
Teacher attendance	NEW SIG		✓

Title I School Improvement Grants: Definitions

The Secretary proposes to require an SEA to use the following definitions to define key terms:

Greatest Need: An LEA with the greatest need for a School Improvement Grant must have one or more schools in at least one of the following tiers:

- a. ***Tier I schools.*** A Tier I school is a school in the lowest-achieving five percent of all Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, or one of the five lowest-achieving Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater.

- i. In determining the lowest achieving Title I schools in the State, an SEA must consider both the absolute performance of a school on the State’s assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics and the school’s lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years as defined in paragraph (a)(ii).12.
 - ii. A school has not made progress if its gains on the State’s assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics, in the “all students” category (as used in section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(I) of the ESEA), are less than the average gains of schools in the State on those assessments.
- b. **Tier II schools.** A Tier II school is a secondary school (middle school or high school) that is equally as low-achieving as a Tier I school and that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I, Part A funds.
 - c. **Tier III schools.** A Tier III school is a Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that is not a Tier I school. An SEA may establish additional criteria to encourage LEAs to differentiate among these schools in their use of school improvement funds and to use in setting priorities among LEA applications for funding.

Strongest Commitment: An LEA with the strongest commitment is an LEA that agrees to implement, and demonstrates the capacity to implement fully and effectively, one of the following rigorous interventions in each Tier I and Tier II school that the LEA commits to serve:

- a. **Turnaround model.** A turnaround model must include the following:
 - i. Replacing the principal and at least 50 percent of the staff.
 - ii. Adopting a new governance structure, which may include, but is not limited to, reporting to a new “turnaround office” in the LEA or SEA; hiring a “turnaround leader” who reports directly to the Superintendent or Chief Academic Officer; or entering into a multi-year contract with the LEA or SEA to obtain added flexibility in exchange for greater accountability.
 - iii. Implementing a new or revised instructional program.
 - iv. Implementing strategies designed to recruit, place, and retain effective staff.
 - v. Providing ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development to staff to ensure that they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning.
 - vi. Promoting the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of individual students.
 - vii. Establishing schedules and strategies that increase instructional time for students and time for collaboration and professional development for staff.
 - viii. Providing appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students.
- b. **Restart model.** A restart model is one in which an LEA closes a school and reopens it under a charter school operator, a CMO, or an EMO that has been selected through a rigorous review process. A restart model must admit, within the grades it serves, all former students who wish to attend the school.

- c. **School closure.** An LEA closes a school and enrolls the students who attended that school in other high-achieving schools in the LEA, which may include charter schools.
- d. **Transformation model.** A transformation model must include each of the following strategies:

Strategy	Required Activities	Permissible Activities
<i>Developing teacher and school leader effectiveness</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use evaluations that are based in significant measure on student growth to improve teachers’ and school leaders’ performance. 2. Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who improve student achievement outcomes, and identify and remove those who do not. 3. Replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformation model. 4. Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development (e.g., regarding subject-specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school, or differentiated instruction) that is aligned with the school’s comprehensive instructional program and designed to ensure staff are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies. 5. Implement strategies designed to recruit, place, and retain effective staff. 	<p>An LEA may also implement other strategies to develop teachers’ and school leaders’ effectiveness, such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing additional compensation to attract and retain high-quality educators to the school. 2. Instituting a system for measuring changes in instructional practices resulting from professional development. 3. Ensuring that the school is not required to accept a teacher without the mutual consent of the teacher and principal, regardless of the teacher’s seniority.
<i>Comprehensive instructional reform strategies</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use data to identify and implement comprehensive, research-based, instructional programs that are vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards. 2. Promote the continuous use of individualized student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the needs of individual students. 	<p>An LEA may also implement other strategies for implementing comprehensive instructional reform strategies, such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conducting periodic reviews to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented with fidelity, is having the intended impact on student achievement, and is modified if ineffective. 2. Implementing a schoolwide “response-to-intervention” model. 3. In secondary schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing rigor by offering opportunities for students to enroll in advanced coursework (such as Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate), early-college high schools, dual-enrollment programs, or thematic learning academies that prepare students for college and

		<p>careers, including by providing appropriate supports designed to ensure that low-achieving students can take advantage of these programs and coursework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving student transition from middle to high school through summer transition programs or freshman academies. • Increasing graduation rates through, for example, credit-recovery programs, smaller learning communities, and acceleration of basic reading and mathematics skills.
<i>Extending learning time and creating community-oriented schools</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide more time for students to learn core academic content by expanding the school day, the school week, or the school year, or increasing instructional time for core academic subjects during the school day. 2. Provide more time for teachers to collaborate, including time for horizontal and vertical planning to improve instruction. 3. Provide more time or opportunities for enrichment activities for students (e.g., instruction in financial literacy, internships or apprenticeships, service-learning opportunities) by partnering, as appropriate, with other organizations, such as universities, businesses, and museums. 4. Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement. 	<p>An LEA may also implement other strategies that extend learning time and create community-oriented schools, such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partnering with parents, faith- and community-based organizations, health clinics, the police department, and others to create safe school environments that meet students’ social, emotional, and health needs. 2. Extending or restructuring the school day to add time for such strategies as advisory periods to build relationships between students, faculty, and other school staff. 3. Implementing approaches to improve school climate and discipline, such as implementing a system of positive behavioral supports or taking steps to eliminate bullying and student harassment.
<i>Providing operating flexibility and sustained support</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give the school sufficient operating flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes. 2. Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, the SEA, or a designated external lead partner organization (such as a school turnaround organization or an EMO). 	<p>An LEA may also implement other strategies for providing operational flexibility and intensive support, such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allowing the school to be run under a new governance arrangement, such as a turnaround division within the LEA or SEA. 2. Implementing a weighted, per-pupil, school-based budget formula. In determining the strength of an LEA’s commitment to using school improvement funds to implement these interventions, an SEA must consider, at a minimum, the extent to which the LEA’s application shows the LEA’s efforts to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the needs of its schools and match the interventions to those needs.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design interventions consistent with this notice. • Recruit, screen, and select external providers to ensure quality. • Embed the interventions in a longer-term plan to sustain gains in achievement. • Align other resources with the interventions. • Modify its practices, if necessary, to enable it to implement the interventions fully and effectively. • Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends. Moreover, the SEA must consider the LEA’s capacity to implement the proposed interventions and may approve the LEA to serve only those schools for which the SEA determines that the LEA can implement fully and effectively one of the proposed interventions.
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