

School Improvement Grants Application

Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

CFDA Numbers: 84.377A; 84.388A



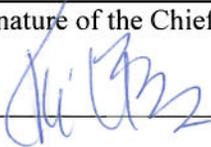
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

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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. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0682. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 100 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537.

APPLICATION COVER SHEET
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

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| State Contact for the School Improvement Grant Name: Jeremy Skinner Position and Office: Director, Teaching and Learning Elementary and Secondary Education Contact's Mailing Address: 810 1st Street, NE, #5025B Washington, DC 20002 Telephone: 202-724-2343 Fax: 202-741-0229 Email address: Jeremy.Skinner@dc.gov | |
| Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Kerri L. Briggs, Ph.D. | Telephone: 202-727-3557 |
| Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X  | Date: 02-22-10 |
| 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

As part of its application for a School Improvement Grant under section 1003(g) of the ESEA, an SEA must provide the following information.

A. ELIGIBLE SCHOOLS: An SEA must provide a list, by LEA, of each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III school in the State. (A State’s Tier I and Tier II schools are its persistently lowest-achieving schools and, if the SEA so chooses, certain additional Title I eligible schools that are as low achieving as the State’s persistently lowest-achieving schools or that have had a graduation rate below 60 percent over a number of years.) 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. In addition, the SEA must indicate whether it has exercised the option to identify as a Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III school a school that was made newly eligible to receive SIG funds by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010.

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. If the SEA’s definition of persistently lowest-achieving schools that it makes publicly available on its Web site is identical to the definition that it used to develop its list of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools, it may provide a link to the page on its Web site where that definition is posted rather than providing the complete definition.

The District of Columbia used the persistently lowest-achieving schools definition to develop its list of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools. Because the page on OSSE’s website is being updated to reflect recent changes to the definition in response to feedback on the SFSF Phase II application from the U.S. Department of Education, this definition is provided here as Attachment A.

As shown in Attachment B, a list by LEA of all 1003(g)-eligible schools, DC has 10 Tier I schools and one Tier II school; 9 of the 10 Tier I schools are within one LEA – District of Columbia Public Schools. OSSE anticipates that, once all (or most) of the District’s 11 Tier I and Tier II schools are served, there will be no additional funds available for LEAs to serve any Tier III schools. Therefore, OSSE will administer a two-phase application process, as described in further detail in Section D below. In Phase I, applications will be accepted only for plans to serve Tier I and Tier II schools (meaning only from 3 LEAs). If funds are available after Phase I awards, all LEAs with Tier III schools will be invited to apply for funds in Phase II. The LEA application for Phase II will be mostly identical to that for Phase I, with references to “the selected intervention” changed to “school improvement activities.”

| <u>LEA NAME, NCES ID #</u> | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------|---------|----------|-----------|-----------------|
| SCHOOL NAME | NCES ID # | TIER I | TIER II | TIER III | GRAD RATE | NEWLY ELIGIBLE* |
| | | | | | | |

* As noted above, an SEA must identify newly eligible schools on its list only if it chooses to take advantage of this option.

B. EVALUATION CRITERIA: An SEA must provide the criteria it will use to evaluate the information set forth below in an LEA’s application for a School Improvement Grant.

Part 1

The three actions listed in Part 1 are ones that an LEA must take prior to submitting its application for 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 each of the following actions:

- (1) The LEA has analyzed the needs of each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA’s application and has selected an intervention for each school.

OSSE will evaluate an LEA application with respect to the needs analysis and intervention selection through three application requirements (see Part 1 of “A” tabs in Attachment C), which the LEA will have to complete for each school it proposes to serve. For each Tier I or Tier II school the LEA proposes to serve, the LEA will be required to perform a standard needs assessment and analysis. The tool, which all LEAs must use, is based on the “Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools,” first developed by the Washington State Education Agency. Then, in the application, the LEA must, for each school:

- **Indicate the dates during which this needs assessment and analysis took place,**
- **Complete a chart showing the results in the nine general categories of the needs assessment, and**
- **Assure that a copy of the needs assessment and all related documentation will be made available to OSSE for review upon request.**

The LEA will also provide a narrative “Summary of Needs Identified Through LEA Analysis” and indicate which of the four required interventions it proposes to implement in the school.

During OSSE review of the LEA’s application, OSSE staff will ensure that, for each Tier I or Tier II school the LEA proposes to serve:

- 1. The LEA provided dates for the needs assessment and analysis;**
- 2. The LEA listed the general-category results of that analysis in the chart provided;**
- 3. The LEA summarized the needs it identified;**
- 4. The LEA indicated which intervention it proposes to implement; and**
- 5. The selected intervention aligns with the results of the needs assessment and analysis, as described through the chart and the narrative summary.**

- (2) 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 identified in the LEA’s application in order to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention in each of those schools.

For each Tier I and Tier II school to be served, an LEA must provide a narrative response which describes the elements of capacity it believes will make full and effective implementation of the selected intervention possible (see Part 5.1 of “A” tabs in Attachment C). The LEA application narrative will be guided by OSSE’s Review Rubric, which will be provided within the LEA application (see Attachment D).

Consistent with the U.S. Department of Education’s non-regulatory guidance, OSSE will also direct LEAs to include in this statement, as applicable, such information as number and credentials of staff dedicated to intervention implementation; amount of other funds to be dedicated to implementing the intervention; ability to recruit new principals for the turnaround and transformation models or the availability of EMOs to enlist for the restart model; and lack of barriers and/or evidence of support from teachers, the board of education, school staff, and/or parents. Based on the Review Rubric, OSSE reviewers will rate the narrative response as “not acceptable,” “conditionally acceptable” (acceptable only after necessary revisions), or “fully acceptable.”

Also, the LEA must provide an action plan for the proposed implementation (see Part 3 of “A” tabs in Attachment C). This plan will list action steps containing specific dates and the person/s responsible for each action step. OSSE reviewers will validate that all of the timelines demonstrate that the LEA has the ability to get the basic elements of its selected model/s up and running by the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year in every school in the application.

- (3) The LEA’s budget includes sufficient funds to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively in each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA’s application as well as to support school improvement activities in Tier III schools throughout the period of availability of those funds (taking into account any waiver extending that period received by either the SEA or the LEA).

During both LEA application phases, each LEA applicant must provide a separate budget for each of the three years of the period of availability (provided the waiver to extend the period of availability is granted) for each of the Tier I and Tier II schools (in Phase I) or Tier III schools (in Phase II) it proposes to serve with school improvement funds (see “C” tabs in Attachment C). In its descriptions of activities to be funded, the LEA will distinguish between activities to be implemented by the school and services to be provided by the LEA.

Furthermore, the LEA will provide a narrative statement for each school to be served to explain how the total amount of funds included in the budget will be sufficient to fully and effectively implement the selected intervention/s in each Tier I and Tier II school identified to be served in Phase I and to support school improvement activities in each Tier III school in Phase II (see Part 5.2 in “A” tabs in Attachment C). If the amount budgeted for one year in which the LEA will implement the turnaround model, the restart model, or the transformation model in a Tier I or Tier II school is less than \$500,000, OSSE reviewers will closely scrutinize the response to ensure that a lesser amount will be sufficient to support full and effective implementation of that intervention.

Finally, the LEA is also asked to provide details on total other funds expected to be dedicated to supporting the intervention, including local funds, Title I funds, school improvement funds reserved under Section 1003(a) of the ESEA, or funds from other sources (see Part 5.3 in “A” tabs in Attachment C).

During its review of the LEA's application, OSSE must find that, taken as a whole, the budgets and statements provided by the LEA support the LEA's contention that the total budget includes sufficient funds.

Part 2

The actions in Part 2 are ones that an LEA may have taken, in whole or in part, prior to submitting its application for a School Improvement Grant but, most likely, will take after receiving a School Improvement Grant. Accordingly, an SEA must describe how it will assess the LEA's commitment to do the following:

- (1) Design and implement interventions consistent with the final requirements.
- (2) Recruit, screen, and select external providers, if applicable, to ensure their quality.
- (3) Align other resources with the interventions.
- (4) Modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable it to implement the interventions fully and effectively.
- (5) Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.

To gather information to show an LEA's commitment to complete each of these actions, OSSE will require the LEA to provide five action plans in its application (see Part 2 of tab 6 of Attachment C). For each of these five actions, regardless of whether the respective action is begun prior to applying or will begin only after applying, the LEA must provide a list of action steps. For each action step, the LEA will provide beginning and ending dates, a description, and the name/s of the person/s responsible for completing the action step. To ensure the LEA has the opportunity to fully demonstrate its commitment to take each action, the LEA will also provide a narrative statement to demonstrate the commitment.

OSSE reviewers will rate the LEA's combined action plan and narrative for each of these 5 actions as "not acceptable," "conditionally acceptable," or "fully acceptable." In doing so for Tier I and Tier II schools (in Phase I), reviewers will consider whether the timelines allow the LEA to get the basic elements of its selected model/s up and running by the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year in every school in the application.

C. CAPACITY: The SEA must explain how it will evaluate whether an LEA lacks capacity to implement a school intervention model in each Tier I school.

An LEA that applies for a School Improvement Grant must serve each of its Tier I schools using one of the four school intervention models unless the LEA demonstrates that it lacks sufficient capacity to do so. If an LEA claims it lacks sufficient capacity to serve each Tier I school, the SEA must evaluate the sufficiency of the LEA's claim. Claims of lack of capacity should be scrutinized carefully to ensure that LEAs effectively intervene in as many of their Tier I schools as possible.

The SEA must explain how it will evaluate whether an LEA lacks capacity to implement a school intervention model in each Tier I school. The SEA must also explain what it will do if it determines that an LEA has more capacity than the LEA demonstrates.

First, again, there are three LEAs in the District with Tier I schools or Tier II schools – 9 within the District of Columbia Public Schools and one each within Options Public Charter School and Roots Public Charter School. In its Phase I application, if either of the two LEAs with at least one Tier I school proposes to serve fewer than all of its Tier I schools, using one of the four intervention models, the LEA must provide a statement describing how it lacks sufficient capacity to do so (see Part 1 of tab 6 of Attachment C). The statement must refer to specific elements of capacity the LEA believes make the LEA unable to fully and effectively implement an intervention in all Tier I schools. Consistent with the U.S. Department of Education's non-regulatory guidance, OSSE will direct LEAs to include in this statement information that relates to, among other things, the number and credentials of staff dedicated to intervention implementation; amount of other funds to be dedicated to implementing the intervention; in/ability to recruit new principals for the turnaround and transformation models or the un/availability of EMOs to enlist for the restart model; and barriers and/or evidence of support or lack of support from teachers, the board of education, school staff, and/or parents.

Additionally, in order to provide the required close scrutiny if either of these LEAs indicate a lack of capacity, OSSE will require a personalized follow-up meeting between OSSE's Title I director and relevant LEA staff during which OSSE will gather additional information and detail. In this meeting, OSSE will ensure that the LEA has considered all elements of capacity and each of the four allowable interventions (including school closure) and also consider whether any claimed lack of capacity could be resolved through technical assistance or other support provided by OSSE.

If OSSE determines that, despite its claim, the LEA does indeed have the capacity to implement an intervention in every Tier I school, OSSE will require the LEA to serve all Tier I schools in order to receive any 1003(g) funds and will require the LEA to amend its application to include plans for the Tier I school/s it originally did not include. Additionally, OSSE will require the LEA to address how it will ensure it leverages its full capacity in the statement it will then have to provide in the application demonstrating that it *does* have the capacity to serve all Tier I schools (or at least all of those that OSSE determines it has the capacity to serve, if it is not all Tier I schools).

D. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION: An SEA must include the information set forth below.

(1) Describe the SEA's process and timeline for approving LEA applications.

As noted briefly in Section A above, OSSE anticipates that awards for its 10 Tier I schools and one Tier II school, presuming approval of the requested waiver extending the period of availability (see Section H), will likely exhaust the full amount available in School Improvement Grants to LEAs. The total amount available for subgrants to LEAs – 95% of the District of Columbia's combined allocation for School Improvement Grants – is approximately \$11.9 million. With the waiver mentioned above, awards will be required to be apportioned in a way to allow for two annual award renewals, meaning annual awards for Tier I and Tier II schools could average less than \$500,000 per school. Given that an LEA can actually request up to \$2 million per school, it is likely no funds will be available to serve any Tier III schools.

Knowing this, and in order to avoid wasted time and effort by as many as 30 LEAs that have only Tier III eligible schools, OSSE will implement a two-phase LEA application process. In Phase I, only LEAs with Tier I or Tier II schools will be invited to apply only for funds to implement interventions in their Tier I or Tier II schools. If, after awarding funds to those LEAs based on their Phase I applications, additional funds are available for serving additional schools this year, OSSE will invite all 31 LEAs with Tier III schools to apply for awards to serve one or more of their Tier III schools in a Phase II application process, using the same application as was used for Phase I, except for changing all references to "the selection intervention" to "school improvement activities." To ensure maximum transparency for LEAs in a Phase II application process, OSSE will announce the total amount of funds available and will require a "Notice of Intent to Apply to Serve Tier III School/s" as the first step in the application process. The list of LEAs intending to apply will be published on OSSE's website.

The SIG timeline depends on when OSSE receives approval from ED. Phase I applications will be released, depending on the date OSSE receives ED approval, between 03-01-10 and 03-15-10. These applications will be due to OSSE approximately six weeks after they are released, between 04-09-10 and 04-23-10. Grant Award Notifications (GANs) based on Phase I applications for serving Tier I and Tier II schools will be provided between 04-30-10 and 05-14-10. If necessary, Phase II applications will be released the same day GANs for Phase I are provided. Phase II applications will then be due to OSSE between 05-28-10 and 06-11-10 for a release date for GANs for serving Tier III schools between 06-11-10 and 06-25-10.

Phase I applications (from two eligible LEAs) will be reviewed by the School Improvement Grants coordinator, the director of the Title I program, and the most senior Title I program analyst. OSSE's Review Rubric defining "not acceptable," "conditionally acceptable," and "fully acceptable" responses for each part of the application will be used by all reviewers. For each school, the request will receive a rubric score between 0 and 100. For any score below 75, the application will be rejected as "not acceptable" overall. For any score between 76 and 99, the request will be deemed "conditionally acceptable" and the LEA will have two weeks to refine those responses in order to make them "fully acceptable" during the review process. A score of 100 is necessary to receive funding, as that score indicates fully acceptable responses for all elements of the application (meeting all requirements).

If it is necessary to implement Phase II, those applications (from up to 31 eligible LEAs) will be reviewed by three Title I staff members. The same rubric with appropriate adjustments given different requirements for Tier III schools will be used for their review of these applications. Again, LEAs with “conditionally acceptable” responses will have an opportunity during the 2-week review process to refine those responses in order to make them “fully acceptable.”

- (2) Describe the SEA’s process for reviewing an LEA’s annual goals for student achievement for its Tier I and Tier II schools and 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 in the LEA that are not meeting those goals and making progress on the leading indicators in section III of the final requirements.

The LEA will be required to provide proposed annual goals for each school in its application (see Part 2 of “A” tabs in Attachment C). OSSE will review the proposed annual goals to ensure that the LEA established rigorous, yet obtainable goals. OSSE will determine whether the goals align with the examples in Section H-25 of ED’s non-regulatory guidance.

Any LEA that receives a School Improvement Grant will be required to submit data on the leading indicators listed in the Department’s final regulations and the LEA application to OSSE for each school year during which it receives an initial or renewed School Improvement Grant. Additionally, the LEA will be required to submit a report on the progress of the school improvement intervention implementation.

OSSE’s determination of whether to renew an award for a school will take into consideration the following three data sources:

- DC-CAS results (student assessment data),
- Data on the leading indicators, and
- The school-specific report on the progress of intervention implementation.

First, student assessment data (DC-CAS results) will be compared with the annual goals provided in the LEA application. OSSE will determine whether a school “made significant progress,” “made some progress,” or “made little or no progress.” For a school to have made significant progress, annual goals in both reading/language arts and mathematics must be met. Second, OSSE will determine whether, on the leading indicators, a school “made significant progress,” “made some progress,” or “made little or no progress.” Finally, from the implementation report and any data gathered through on-site and/or other monitoring, OSSE will determine whether, toward full implementation of the intervention, a school “made significant progress,” “made some progress,” or “made little or no progress.”

For an LEA to receive award renewal for a school, the school must have (1) made “significant” progress in at least one area or (2) have made “some” progress in at least two areas. Consistent with the final requirements, any school that met its annual achievement goals will meet these criteria. For schools that did not make significant progress in any area and made little or no progress in two or more areas, the LEA will not receive funds toward a renewal award. LEAs will be required to consider and report on plans for adjustment to the original plan for any school that did not meet annual goals.

- (3) Describe the SEA's process for reviewing the goals an LEA establishes for its Tier III schools (subject to approval by the SEA) 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.

If there is a Phase II LEA application process for LEAs to apply to serve Tier III schools, LEAs will establish, and OSSE will approve, these goals in the application. OSSE will approve goals in mathematics and reading/language arts that either (1) are equal to the goals established by OSSE for determining AYP or (2) decrease the non-proficient percentage of students by at least 10 percent.

Tier III schools receiving funds or services through an LEA's School Improvement Grant will be required to report on the same leading indicators on which Tier I schools are required to report. In determining whether to renew an LEA's School Improvement Grant with respect to one or more Tier III schools in the LEA, OSSE will determine whether a school "made significant progress," "made some progress," or "made little or no progress" toward meeting its achievement goals and on the leading indicators. The same criteria that apply to Tier I schools for these ratings will apply to Tier III schools. For an LEA to receive renewal funds for a Tier III school, the Tier III school must have either (1) made significant progress in one area or (2) made some progress in both areas. For schools that did not make significant progress in any area and made little or no progress in one or more areas, the LEA will not receive funds toward a renewal award. LEAs will be required to consider and report on plans for adjustment to the original plan for any school that did not meet annual goals.

- (4) Describe how the SEA will monitor 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 the LEA is approved to serve.

OSSE will monitor each LEA that receives a School Improvement Grant in three ways. First, OSSE's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education has initiated a new on-site monitoring cycle for the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 school years, in which all LEAs receiving ARRA funds will be monitored on-site at least once during these two years. LEAs monitored on-site as part of this coordinated monitoring plan will be monitored for their implementation of their School Improvement Grant program, among all other programs for which the LEA receives federal grant funds. OSSE's Title I monitoring indicators, based on the Department's indicators for SEAs, include indicators related to school improvement.

Second, LEAs will provide annual reports describing the progress of the school improvement intervention implementation in Tier I schools and reporting data on the leading indicators identified in the final regulations and the LEA application. These reports and data will be used to determine whether renewal grants are awarded to each LEA.

Third, OSSE will perform additional desktop monitoring, including but not limited to reviewing and approving reimbursement requests for School Improvement Grants, during the full period of availability. The results of these desktop monitoring activities may lead OSSE to

perform additional on-site monitoring and to provide additional technical assistance and support to ensure that School Improvement funds are effectively used to implement interventions consistent with the final requirements.

Based on reports and data collected, OSSE will provide monitoring reports to all LEAs receiving School Improvement Grants. If there are one or more monitoring findings, OSSE will require the LEA to develop and implement a Corrective Action Plan to resolve the finding/s and then will conduct additional monitoring to ensure the CAP is implemented fully.

Again, only three LEAs are eligible to receive funds for serving Tier I or Tier II schools. Therefore, OSSE can focus a substantial portion of its School Improvement Grant monitoring activities within these three LEAs.

Finally, OSSE is considering using a portion of the State-level funds it has reserved from its School Improvement Grant to fund a third-party evaluation of the implementation and results of school improvement interventions in Tier I and Tier II schools.

- (5) 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.

First, OSSE will prioritize serving all Tier I and Tier II schools first. As described above, OSSE will first collect applications only from LEAs with Tier I or Tier II schools only for proposed plans to serve their Tier I or Tier II schools. This includes only three LEAs. Consistent with the Departments' non-regulatory Guidance, OSSE will make efforts to spread 1003(g) funds among different districts.

Secondary to that criterion, OSSE will prioritize the lowest of the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the District. Therefore, if there are insufficient funds to serve all Tier I schools, OSSE will award funds to schools within LEAs with multiple Tier I schools beginning with the lowest performing school and continuing until there are insufficient funds to provide for a full and effective intervention in any more schools.

- (6) Describe the criteria, if any, that the SEA intends to use to prioritize among Tier III schools.

Applications will be received in a Phase II application process only if there are sufficient funds to serve more than just Tier I and Tier II schools. In the two scenarios below, there will be additional funds left to award for Tier III schools this year after Phase I of the LEA application process:

1. DCPS, Options Public Charter School, and Roots Public Charter School submit fully acceptable plans to serve all Tier I and Tier II schools in the District for a total of less than \$11.9 million over 3 years.
2. DCPS and Options Public Charter School submit fully acceptable plan to serve fewer than all 10 Tier I schools (due to a lack of capacity) for a total of less than approximately \$8.9 million (the maximum available for awards for 2010-2011 in this

scenario, knowing that, if not all Tier I schools will be served in 2010-2011, OSSE must reserve 25 percent of its School Improvement Grant award to combine it with the FY 2010 award to serve additional Tier I schools next year).

In reviewing Phase II applications, if necessary, OSSE will prioritize the lowest-ranked schools on the District's list used to identify the persistently lowest achieving schools. That is, the school ranked just above the 7th Tier I school identified based on achievement data (and not graduation data alone) would be prioritized above all others, then the school ranked above that, and so on. Any "conditionally approved" (after revisions) or "fully approved" application may be awarded funds.

OSSE believes that a base level of funding is required in order to implement any genuine reform. At the same time, if there are funds available for Tier III schools, OSSE would like to serve as many as possible. Therefore, to balance these competing priorities, OSSE will approve funding for Tier III schools in amounts of \$50,000 per school.

- (7) If the SEA intends to take over any Tier I or Tier II schools, identify those schools and indicate the school intervention model the SEA will implement in each school.

OSSE does not intend to take over any Tier I or Tier II schools.

- (8) If the SEA intends to provide services directly to any schools in the absence of a takeover, identify those schools and, for Tier I or Tier II schools, indicate the school intervention model the SEA will implement in each school, and provide evidence of the LEA's approval to have the SEA provide the services directly.[†]

OSSE does not intend to provide services directly to any schools in the absence of a takeover.

[†] If, at the time an SEA submits its application, it has not yet determined whether it will provide services directly to any schools in the absence of a takeover, it may omit this information from its application. However, if the SEA later decides that it will provide such services, it must amend its application to provide the required information.

E. ASSURANCES: The SEA must provide the assurances set forth below.

By submitting this application, the SEA assures that it will do the following:

- Comply with the final requirements and ensure that each LEA carries out its responsibilities.
- 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 that the SEA approves the LEA to serve.
- Apportion its school improvement funds in order to make grants to LEAs, as applicable, that are renewable for the length of the period of availability, taking into account any waivers that may have been requested and received by the SEA or an individual LEA to extend the period of availability.
- Carry over 25 percent of its FY 2009 school improvement funds, combine those funds with FY 2010 school improvement funds, and award those funds to eligible LEAs consistent with the final requirements if not every Tier I school in the State receives FY 2009 school improvement funds to implement a school improvement model in the 2010-2011 school year (unless the SEA does not have sufficient school improvement funds to serve every Tier I school in the State).
- Ensure, if the SEA is participating in the Department's differentiated accountability pilot, that its LEAs will use school improvement funds consistent with the final requirements.
- Monitor each LEA's implementation of the interventions supported with school improvement funds.
- To the extent a Tier I or Tier II 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.
- 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 the 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.
- Report the specific school-level data required in section III of the final requirements.

F. SEA RESERVATION: An 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 that the SEA plans to conduct with the State-level funds it has received from its School Improvement Grant.

OSSE will use the State-level funds it has reserved from its School Improvement Grant in several ways consistent with Sections 1003(g)(8), 1117(a)(4)(A), and 1117(c)(1)(A) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

First, OSSE will use a portion of the set-aside to fund part of a staff position devoted to building upon and implementing OSSE's statewide system of support to provide technical assistance to LEAs with schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring and the schools themselves in order to increase the opportunity for all students served by those agencies and schools to meet the State's academic content standards and student academic achievement standards.

Second, OSSE intends to use these funds to provide funding for school support team staff. The first priority for the District's school support teams this year will be to provide support, consistent with Section 1117 of the ESEA, to the persistently lowest achieving schools. Next, other schools in restructuring will receive priority in the provision of resources and other support.

At this time, OSSE is separately working on more detailed plans to build on its statewide system of support. Further details can be provided as those plans are finalized. OSSE is interested in using the one-time State-level funds available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to build additional capacity at the SEA to provide better ongoing support to LEAs through evaluation and technical assistance.

Third, some funds will be used to purchase supplies and materials and to support attendance by OSSE staff and/or other school support team staff at conferences related to school improvement and turnaround research and practice.

Finally, a portion of the State-level funds it has reserved from its School Improvement Grant may be used to fund a third-party evaluation of the implementation and results of school improvement interventions.

G. CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS: An SEA must consult with its Committee of Practitioners and is encouraged to consult with other stakeholders regarding its application for a School Improvement Grant.

Before submitting its application for a School Improvement Grant to the Department, the SEA must consult with its Committee of Practitioners established under section 1903(b) of the ESEA regarding the rules and policies contained therein.

- The SEA has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its application.**

The SEA may also consult with other stakeholders that have an interest in its application.

H. WAIVERS: The final requirements invite an SEA to request waivers of the requirements set forth below. An SEA must list in its application those requirements for which it is seeking a waiver.

The District of Columbia requests a waiver of the requirements it has listed below. These waivers would allow any local educational agency (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.

The District believes that the requested waiver(s) will increase the quality of instruction for students and improve the academic achievement of students in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools by enabling an LEA to use more effectively the school improvement funds to implement one of the four school intervention models in its Tier I or Tier II schools and to carry out school improvement activities in its Tier III schools. The four school intervention models are specifically designed to raise substantially the achievement of students in the State's Tier I and Tier II schools.

- Waive section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. § 1225(b)) to extend the period of availability of school improvement funds for the SEA and all of its LEAs to September 30, 2013.**
- Waive section 1116(b)(12) of the ESEA to permit LEAs to allow their Tier I and Tier II Title I participating schools that will implement a turnaround or restart model to "start over" in the school improvement timeline.**

The District assures that it will ensure that any LEA that chooses to implement one or more of these waivers will comply with section II.A.8 of the final requirements.

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

The District assures that, prior to submitting this request in its School Improvement Grant application, the State provided all LEAs in the State that are eligible to receive a School Improvement Grant with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on this request and has attached a copy of that notice as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs. The State also assures that it provided notice and information regarding this waiver request to the public in the manner in which the State 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.

The District assures that, if it is granted one or more of the waivers requested above, 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, including which specific waivers each LEA is implementing.

I. Attachments

Attachment A is the District of Columbia's definition of persistently lowest-achieving schools, which was used to develop its list of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools (pdf).

Attachment B is a list of eligible schools by LEA. Within each LEA, Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools are listed (xls).

Attachment C is a draft of the LEA Application for School Improvement Grants (xls).

Attachment D is a draft of the LEA Application Review Rubric (xls).

Attachment E is a copy of the notice of OSSE's proposed request for waivers and invitation for comments provided to LEAs through email (pdf).

Attachment F is a copy of the notice of the proposed request for waivers provided to LEAs and the public on OSSE's website (pdf).

Attachment G is a list of all comments received from LEAs regarding the requested waivers (pdf).