

School Improvement Grants

# Application for FY 2013 New Awards Competition

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

Fiscal Year 2013

CFDA Number: 84.377A

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**State Name:** Florida



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

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### Paperwork Burden Statement

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## Florida State Application for FY13 SIG 1003(g) Funds

### 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 (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. Under the final requirements published in the *Federal Register* on October 28, 2010 (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-10-28/pdf/2010-27313.pdf>), school improvement funds are to be focused on each State's "Tier I" and "Tier II" schools. Tier I schools are the lowest-achieving five percent of a State's Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, Title I secondary schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring with graduation rates below 60 percent over a number of years, and, if a State so chooses, certain Title I eligible (and participating) elementary schools that are as low achieving as the State's other Tier I schools ("newly eligible" Tier I schools). Tier II schools are the lowest-achieving five percent of a State's secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I, Part A funds, secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I, Part A funds with graduation rates below 60 percent over a number of years, and, if a State so chooses, certain additional Title I eligible (participating and non-participating) secondary schools that are as low achieving as the State's other Tier II schools or that have had a graduation rate below 60 percent over a number of years ("newly eligible" Tier II schools). An LEA also may use school improvement funds in Tier III schools, which are Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that are not identified as Tier I or Tier II schools and, if a State so chooses, certain additional Title I eligible (participating and non-participating) schools ("newly eligible" Tier III schools). In the Tier I and Tier II schools an LEA chooses to serve, the LEA must implement one of four school intervention models: turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model.

#### **ESEA Flexibility**

An SEA that has received ESEA flexibility no longer identifies Title I schools for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring; instead, it identifies priority schools, which are generally a State's lowest-achieving Title I schools. Accordingly, if it chooses, an SEA with an approved ESEA flexibility request may select the "**priority schools list waiver**" in Section H of the SEA application for SIG funds. This waiver permits the SEA to replace its lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools with its list of priority schools.

Through its approved ESEA flexibility request, an SEA has already received a waiver that permits its LEAs to apply for SIG funds to serve priority schools that are not otherwise eligible to receive SIG funds because they are not identified as Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III schools. The waiver offered in this application goes beyond this previously granted waiver to permit the SEA to actually use its priority schools list as its SIG list.

#### **Availability of Funds**

The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013, provided \$506 million for School Improvement Grants in fiscal year (FY) 2013.

FY 2013 SIG funds are available for obligation by SEAs and LEAs through September 30, 2015.

#### **State and LEA Allocations**

Each State (including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico), the Bureau of Indian Education, and the outlying areas are eligible to apply to receive a SIG grant. The Department will allocate FY 2013 SIG funds in proportion to the funds received in FY 2013 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 (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-10-28/pdf/2010-27313.pdf>). The SEA may retain an amount not to exceed five percent of its allocation for State administration, evaluation, and technical assistance.

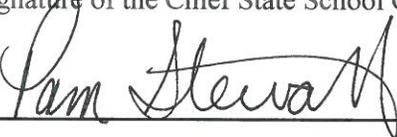
#### **Consultation with the Committee of Practitioners**

Before submitting its application for a SIG grant to the Department, an SEA must consult with its Committee of Practitioners established under section 1903(b) of the ESEA regarding the rules and policies contained therein. The Department recommends that the SEA also consult with other stakeholders, such as potential external providers, teachers' unions, and business, civil rights, and community leaders that have an interest in its application.

Florida State Application for FY13 SIG 1003(g) Funds

APPLICATION COVER SHEET

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

<p>Legal Name of Applicant: Florida Department of Education</p>	<p>Applicant's Mailing Address: 325 W. Gaines Street Tallahassee, Florida 32399</p>
<p>State Contact for the School Improvement Grant</p> <p>Name: Shannon Houston</p> <p>Position and Office: Senior Educational Programs Director, Bureau of School Improvement (BSI), Division of Public Schools</p> <p>Contact's Mailing Address:  325 W. Gaines Street, Ste. 314 Tallahassee, Florida 32399</p> <p>Telephone: 850-245-0007</p> <p>Fax: 850-245-0803</p> <p>Email address: <a href="mailto:shannon.houston@fldoe.org">shannon.houston@fldoe.org</a></p>	
<p>Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Pam Stewart</p>	<p>Telephone: 850-245-0505</p>
<p>Signature of the Chief State School Officer:  X </p>	<p>Date:  12/20/13</p>
<p>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.</p>	

## Introduction and Rationale for Program Design

Over the past 12 months, the Bureau of School Improvement (BSI) and Differentiated Accountability (DA) teams have deliberately engaged with “thought partners” across our school districts, other bureaus within the department, and external organizations to review our practices, determine our impact, and reflect on why schools in which we have provided intense interventions sometimes do not improve, or more often, fail to maintain improvements once the intervention cycle ends. Several of the lessons learned have informed the design goals for this SIG project.

### ***Design Goal 1: Allow districts and schools to focus on those SIG interventions believed to be most important in improving student outcomes***

In fall of 2012 at a convening of the State Development Network (an organization of state education agency [SEA] leaders working to clarify the emerging role of SEAs in school turnaround work) in Washington, D.C., the school turnaround lead for a Midwestern state shared his belief that the art of school improvement lay in doing fewer things well, not in doing all things better. He had studied both the turnaround successes and failures in his state, and an attribute shared by successful implementations was focus.

The conversations at that convening served as a starting point for what would become a many-months-long process of inquiry and reflection regarding Florida’s activities and underlying philosophies regarding the work of school improvement. One of the many observations made through the course of that reflection was that nearly every school in the DA system struggles in two instructional areas: standards-based instruction and effective differentiation of instruction based on student data. Was there evidence to suggest that such a narrow focus could have a broad impact on student achievement? As it turns out, yes.

The Florida legislature required for the first time in 2012-13 that Florida’s 100 lowest performing elementary schools (based on reading proficiency and reading learning gains) implement an extra hour of research-based reading instruction for every student every day. The program was expensive (costing roughly \$300,000 to \$500,000 per school) and inconvenient to implementing districts, but it appeared to have been very effective across multiple subjects, as indicated by comparing average year-over-year growth in school grading formula components in the “Low 100” schools to that in all other traditional Title I elementary schools.

Eager to identify lessons learned for purposes of informing Florida’s school improvement work, BSI staff arranged to meet with those district and school leaders responsible for the most successful Low 100 implementation in Florida (Palm Beach).

While Palm Beach staff did many thoughtful things well (e.g., marketing the additional hour to parents, teachers and principals as an incredible opportunity for professional and student growth; showing appreciation of teachers by reimbursing daycare costs incurred by the extended day teachers; creating a coalition of willing educators by allowing any teacher in a Low 100 school to “opt out”; modeling servant based leadership at the district level by regularly and systematically identifying barriers to success with building leaders and minimizing or eliminating them), their core focus was investing in teachers’ capacity to deliver high quality differentiated instruction. District

## Florida State Application for FY13 SIG 1003(g) Funds

staff designed, delivered and funded six full days of high-quality professional development throughout the first semester to every teacher in each of the *sixteen* Low 100 schools. Teachers and principals were trained in the use of diagnostic data, intervention design, needs of readers at varied levels, whole group instruction and small group instruction.

School principals indicated this intense focus on the use of formative and diagnostic data for purposes of meeting students' needs in whole group and small group instruction changed how their schools approached all instruction, not just reading. Without being explicitly directed to do so, many teachers began applying the same concepts to other subject areas. The results were remarkable; *fifteen* of Palm Beach's *sixteen* Low 100 elementary schools successfully exited the list in one year, and many of them showed remarkable progress in all four primary content areas.

Palm Beach's approach and outcomes seemed to reinforce the criticality of servant-based leadership at the district level, development of teacher and leader potential through high-quality professional development, and alignment of district and school activities around relatively few, strategically selected instructional initiatives. These findings, which were consistent with conclusions drawn by Florida's DA Regional Executive Directors (REDs) based on their experience in supporting hundreds of underperforming schools, are reflected in Florida's SIG Cohort 3 Request for Proposals (RFP) by stratifying SIG intervention strategies into areas of assurance and areas of focus.

1) Areas of Assurance are those items that require response and/or evidence in order to maintain compliance with the terms of the grant but are not viewed as central to Florida's SIG project. Rather than ask districts to produce action plans around each and every one of these areas, the proposal requires them to ensure they will be completed, include detailed budgets where funding is needed, and provide specific documentation of implementation, where appropriate.

2) Areas of Focus are the components Florida has identified as being vital to a successful SIG implementation and are to be addressed within the DIAP using the 8-step planning and problem-solving process. They include:

- Implementing a school wide multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)
- Implementing a Florida Standards-based instructional program
- Promoting continuous use of student data to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the academic needs of individual students
- Increasing learning time for the purposes of (a) instruction in core academic subjects; (b) instruction in other subjects and provision of enrichment activities that contribute to a well-rounded education, such as physical education, service learning, and experiential and work-based learning opportunities; and (c) teacher collaboration, planning and professional development within and across grades and subjects. All three components should be included with priority being given to time for core instruction for all students and for teachers to collaborate, plan and engage in professional development.
- Providing staff ongoing, high quality, job-embedded professional development and intensive technical assistance, that is designed to support the strategies for and reduce the barriers to DIAP goals addressing the first four areas of focus. This fifth area is not a stand-

## Florida State Application for FY13 SIG 1003(g) Funds

alone goal but a natural by-product of the first four areas, literally prepopulated from the action steps marked as professional development or technical assistance in the DIAP.

### ***Design Goal 2: Align the SIG application and monitoring processes to existing district plans and processes***

When queried, stakeholders at the school, district and state levels made clear that the lack of alignment between distinct federal, state and local planning requirements often results in frustration, duplication of effort, scattered implementation and mixed results.

Florida addressed this concern by integrating the required elements of the SIG Cohort 3 RFP into the existing state-required plans for districts with underperforming schools. Districts will complete their proposals using the FDOE's SIP Online web application, the tool schools and districts already use to develop School Improvement Plans (SIPs) and District Improvement and Assistance Plans (DIAPs), as required under Rule 6A-1-099811, F.A.C.

The proposals will be prepopulated wherever possible with information from the DIAP or other plans or documents collected by the department (e.g., Parental Involvement Plan, Approved Instructional Performance Evaluation System, etc.). Additionally, completion of the RFP for schools planning for turnaround under Florida statute will satisfy the requirements of Forms TOP-1 and TOP-2, eliminating any duplication of effort.

### ***Design Goal 3: Ensure professional development, technical assistance and budget items are aligned to specific identified needs and connected to specific measures of effectiveness***

Professional development, technical assistance and budget line items will be entered in the context of the 8-step planning and problem-solving process for the Areas of Focus. Accordingly, each item will be explicitly aligned to an articulated strategic goal, barrier and strategy, and to data elements to be used to determine strategy effectiveness and progress toward the goal.

## Florida State Application for FY13 SIG 1003(g) Funds

### List of Appendices

- Appendix A: Florida's Eligibility List for FY13 competition
- Appendix B: Request for Proposals for FY13 School Improvement Grants (SIG) 1003(g)
- Appendix C: Proposed District Improvement and Assistance Plan (DIAP) for 2014-15
- Appendix D: SIG Proposal Scoring Rubric
- Appendix E: Scoring Rubric Points Summary
- Appendix F: Guide to 8-Step Planning and Problem Solving for SIG Proposals
- Appendix G: Waiver Request
- Appendix H: Waiver 3 Notice and Comments

## 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

**Part 1 (Definition of Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools):** 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 Florida Department of Education (FDOE) is requesting a waiver of the school eligibility requirements in Section I.A.1 of the SIG final requirements in order to use the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Priority and Focus list in place of Tier I, II and III lists. Schools that have since closed or are receiving SIG 1003(g) funds in 2013-14 have been removed from the list.

**Part 2 (Eligible Schools List):** As part of its FY 2013 application an SEA must provide a list, by LEA, of each SIG-eligible school in the State.

See Appendix A for Florida's list of eligible schools. The list includes: LEA name, LEA Florida ID number, LEA National Center for Education Statistics identification (NCES ID) number, school name, Florida school ID number, school NCES ID number, whether it is Priority or Focus in the ESEA Flexibility Waiver and graduation rate.

**Part 3 (Terminated Awards):** 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 2014-2015 school year. For each such school, note the amount of unused remaining funds and explain how the SEA or LEA plans to use those funds.

Florida does not have any schools for which funding under previously awarded SIGs will not be renewed for the 2014-15 school year.

### 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 SIG Targeted school identified in the LEA's application and has selected an intervention for each school.

Pursuant to Section 1008.33, F.S., Florida offers five “turnaround options” to schools required to implement turnaround. To align with the final requirements, Florida has cross-walked the models as follows:

Florida Turnaround Options	SIG Intervention Models
1. District-Managed Turnaround	1a. Transformation
	1b. Turnaround
2. Closure	2. Closure
3. Restart with EMO	3. Restart
4. Restart with Charter	
5. Hybrid	Not offered under SIG

LEAs selecting District-Managed Turnaround will be asked to further delineate between Transformation and Turnaround and follow the final requirements accordingly. LEAs selecting Education Management Organization (EMO) or Charter will be considered Restart for SIG purposes and will follow the final requirements for Restart, in addition to any requirements under Florida statute for the selected type of restart (i.e., EMO or Charter). The purpose for the distinction is that charter schools are exempt from the Florida statute governing Differentiated Accountability (DA) [s. 1008.33, Florida Statutes (F.S.)] and have a separate accountability system in its place under [Section 1002.33, F.S.](#), whereas Florida will require EMOs to follow many of the components of District-Managed Turnaround. LEAs will not be allowed to select the Hybrid model for purposes of the SIG. The Request for Proposals (RFP) clarifies which interventions will be required for each model according to the final requirements, as well as Florida requirements. See Appendix B.

LEAs will be required to review school-level performance and leading indicators and respond to questions in the RFP to confirm the interventions match the need. The FDOE has developed a rubric to evaluate the LEA’s needs analysis and intervention selection for each school. See Appendix D.

- (2) The LEA has demonstrated that it has the capacity to use school improvement funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each SIG Targeted school identified in the LEA’s application in order to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention in each of those schools.

**LEAs will demonstrate commitment and capacity to implement SIG interventions by sending a team responsible for implementation to a regional 8-step planning and problem-solving workshop hosted by the Differentiated Accountability team, completing the full application process and earning a rubric score above 70 percent. Bonus points may be earned for an LEA that has previously implemented a SIG model successfully.**

- (3) The LEA’s budget includes sufficient funds to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively in each SIG Targeted school identified in the LEA’s application throughout the period of availability of those funds (taking into account any waiver extending that period received by either the SEA or the LEA).

The FDOE has developed criteria to evaluate the LEA's proposed budget to support the model selected and outlined for each school (see Appendix B). The FDOE program and grants management staff will review each submitted budget and certify the cost for each line item budget category has been evaluated and determined to be allowable, reasonable and necessary under the final requirements and as required by Section 216.3475, F.S. The FDOE will maintain documentation on file evidencing the methodology and conclusions reached.

**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 the criteria it will use to assess the LEA's commitment to do the following:

- a) Design and implement interventions consistent with the final requirements;
- b) Recruit, screen, and select external providers, if applicable, to ensure their quality;
- c) Align other resources with the interventions;
- d) Modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable it to implement the interventions fully and effectively; and,
- e) Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.

The FDOE will assess the LEA's commitment to do each of the following activities based on a combination of required assurances and evidences, narrative responses, use of the 8-step planning and problem-solving process, and resulting SIG goals and action plans for addressing the Areas of Focus, as captured in the District Improvement and Assistance Plan (DIAP), which will be reviewed and scored according to the scoring rubric (see Appendix D):

- a) *Designing and implementing interventions consistent with the final requirements will be assessed through a set of Assurances in the proposal and DIAP Action Plans for the Areas of Focus.*

For the purposes of this application, Florida is defining "Assurances" as the compliance items that need response and/or evidence for the grant but do not require a problem-solving process to be documented by the LEA. For Assurances, some evidence will be met through questions answered in the DIAP; some will be automatically populated or linked to other plans (e.g., parental involvement, educator evaluations). Uploads will be limited to only those items the Department cannot readily access.

For Transformation, Turnaround and Restart with EMO models, Florida will bring focus to five specific SIG components by requiring them to be addressed in the DIAP using the 8-step planning and problem-solving process. The "Areas of Focus" are:

1. Implementing a school wide multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)
2. Implementing a Florida Standards-based instructional program
3. Promoting continuous use of student data to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the academic needs of individual students

4. **Increasing learning time for the purposes of (a) instruction in core academic subjects; (b) instruction in other subjects and provision of enrichment activities that contribute to a well-rounded education, such as physical education, service learning, and experiential and work-based learning opportunities; and (c) teacher collaboration, planning and professional development within and across grades and subjects. All three components should be included with priority being given to time for core instruction for all students and for teachers to collaborate, plan and engage in professional development.**
5. **Providing staff ongoing, high quality, job-embedded professional development and intensive technical assistance, which is authentically aligned to the comprehensive instructional program and designed to overcome barriers to goals (this fifth item will be embedded throughout the DIAP goals)**

**Annual targets for data indicating successful implementation of the Areas of Focus will be established in the 8-step process; these targets will be used in the annual review process.**

**Additional strategies will be permitted if the LEA demonstrates alignment to DIAP goals using the 8-step process, the capacity to fully implement them in addition to the Assurances and Areas of Focus, and that expenses are allowable. They may be on the USED “permitted list” in the final requirements or proposed as customized strategies.**

**All DIAP goals which address SIG Areas of Focus, including the professional development and technical assistance outline, will be “pushed” to the SIPs of SIG-awarded schools upon award. During the pre-implementation period, awarded schools will be required to complete the school-level action steps and school-level budget needed to implement the plan. They will not be able to change the SIG goals, targets or strategies without working with the LEA to seek an amendment. This will encourage alignment of goals, strategies and budgets between LEA and school.**

- b) ***Recruit, screen and select external providers, if applicable, to ensure their quality will be assessed by Assurance 17 in the RFP, which requires LEAs to ensure they will follow district policies and procedures to recruit, select and provide oversight to external providers (including charter companies) to ensure their quality and hold them accountable for complying with the final requirements. All external providers should have a successful record of providing support in similar settings. By April 4, 2014, districts will upload description of recruitment screening and selection process used in the district. By October 1, 2014, districts will upload qualifications and experience of all contracted external providers assigned to work with each school.***
- c) **Aligning other resources with the interventions will be assessed by a narrative response in the DIAP to the following prompt:**

*Describe the process through which district leadership identifies and aligns all district resources (e.g., personnel, funds, instructional programs) in order to meet the needs of all students and maximize desired student outcomes. Include the methodology for coordinating and supplementing federal, state and local funds, services and programs (e.g., School Improvement Grant 1003(g), Title I, Part A, including 1003(a); Title I, Part C Migrant; Title II; Title III; Title VI, Part B; Title X Homeless; Supplemental Academic Instruction (SAI); or other sources, as applicable to your district) to align to interventions in priority and focus schools. Include the person/people responsible, frequency of meetings, how an inventory of resources is maintained and any problem-solving activities used to determine how to apply resources for the highest impact.*

- d) *Modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable it to implement the interventions fully and effectively will be assessed by Assurance 19, which requires the LEA to ensure it will identify and seek to enhance current policies and practices that may create barriers to full and effective implementation of the selected model in a school or to sustainability of improvements after grant funding ends. By April 4, 2014, the DIAP must include a list of policies or practices that need to be modified, the proposed modifications, the rationale for the modifications, the steps required to make the modifications, and the person(s) responsible for implementation and follow-up.*
- e) *Sustaining the reforms after the funding period ends will be assessed by Assurance 19 described above and by Assurance 20, which requires the LEA to ensure it will monitor and evaluate the actions schools have taken, as outlined in the approved SIG application, to sustain the reforms after the funding period ends and provide technical assistance to schools on how they can sustain progress in the absence of SIG funding. By April 4, 2014, the DIAP must include a response to the following prompt:*

*If the district's Priority and Focus schools improve as a result of the interventions described in this plan, describe how the district will sustain the improvements after the school's SIG funding ends. Include any plans to reorganize personnel, redistribute resources and/or reach out to community organizations, unions and other partners to build capacity for and sustainability of improvements.*

**B-1. ADDITIONAL EVALUATION CRITERIA: In addition to the evaluation criteria listed in Section B, the SEA must evaluate the following information in an LEA's budget and application:**

(1) How will the SEA review an LEA's proposed budget with respect to activities carried out during the pre-implementation period<sup>2</sup> to help an LEA prepare for full implementation in the following school year?

The FDOE program and grants management staff will review each submitted budget and certify the cost for each line item budget category has been evaluated and determined to be allowable, reasonable and necessary under the final requirements and as required by Section 216.3475, F.S. The FDOE will maintain documentation on file evidencing the methodology and conclusions reached. For a sample of Form DOE 101S, see Appendix B.

(2) How will the SEA evaluate the LEA's proposed activities to be carried out during the pre-implementation period to determine whether they are allowable?

<sup>2</sup> "Pre-implementation" enables an LEA to prepare for full implementation of a school intervention model at the start of the 2014–2015 school year. For a full description of pre-implementation, please refer to section J of the SIG Guidance.

The FDOE program staff has developed criteria to evaluate the LEA's proposed pre-implementation activities to support the model selected and outlined for each school (see Appendix D). Considerations include whether the proposed activities are research-based and directly related to full and effective implementation of the SIG model, and will address the needs identified by the district's needs assessment (see Appendix B).

The Assurances and Areas of Focus sections of the RFP provide tasks that must be completed in order to meet the deliverables deadline of October 1, 2014. Regional Executive Directors (REDs) may advise districts on their timelines for implementing the SIG model, which may inform their proposed budget allocations for the pre-implementation period.

The Areas of Focus section of the RFP requires districts to commit their schools to engage in the 8-step planning and problem-solving process during the pre-implementation period in order to develop the school's role in and action steps for implementing the SIG goals, as established in the DIAP. See Appendix B.

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

- **December 2013 – Development of RFP in online system**
  - *Dec. 20 – State application submitted to the USED*
- **January 2014 – RFP testing in online system**
- **February – 8-step planning and problem-solving (8SPPS) workshops for eligible LEAs**
  - *Feb. 20-21 – Workshop 1*
  - *Feb. 24-25 – Workshop 2*
  - *Mar. 7 – Intent to Apply due*
- **March 21– Phase 1 of RFP due (Turnaround Lead, Stakeholder Engagement, Needs Analysis and Intervention Selection)**
- **April –**
  - *Apr. 4 – Phase 2 of RFP due (Areas of Assurance, Areas of Focus, Budget and Implementation Timeline)*
  - *Review teams review and score proposals*
- **May – FDOE determines grantees and funding amounts**
  - *On or before May 31 – Awards announced; once awards are announced by the FDOE, awarded LEAs/schools may begin approved pre-implementation activities*
- **June – List of grantees published on Bureau of School Improvement (BSI) website**

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

(1) Describe the SEA’s process for reviewing an LEA’s annual goals for student achievement for SIG-Targeted schools and how the SEA will determine whether to renew an LEA’s School Improvement Grant with respect to one or more for SIG-Targeted schools in at LEA that is not meeting those goals and making progress on the leading indicators in section III of the final requirements.

**FDOE will be making three-year awards using FY13 funds. However, funds will be released annually based on renewal rubrics, which are scored in three parts:**

**1) Documentation: Quarterly, the BSI conducts a review of assurances and documentation to check for compliance and provides technical assistance and support as needed to help districts submit the appropriate deliverables. During the annual renewal process, any outstanding documentation will be noted and could affect the outcome.**

**2) Implementation: Each school completes a mid-year reflection to self-assess the implementation fidelity and effectiveness of each strategy, as well as progress toward each goal established in the school improvement plan (SIP). REDs use the self-assessments combined with observations in the field to assign a rating (i.e., green [2 points], yellow [1**

point], or red [0 points]) to each school and district on implementation for the following questions:

- Are they implementing the strategy with fidelity?
- Is the strategy reducing the barrier to the goal, as evidenced by leading indicators or other measurements?

**3) Performance:** Points will be assigned based on movement toward school targets as established by the LEA during the application process for each year of implementation. In the 8-step planning and problem-solving process, school targets are the numeric data indicators the LEA selects by which they will measure progress toward the stated goal. The stated goal and the targets it supports form the LEA's "theory of action."

For example, if an LEA sets a goal to establish a schoolwide multi-tiered system of supports and sets annual targets for reducing truancy by X amount, discipline incidents by Y amount and improving reading and math proficiency by Z amount, the LEA is essentially stating the following theory of action: "If we implement a schoolwide multi-tiered system of supports, we will see a reduction of X amount in truancy and Y amount in discipline incidents, resulting in improved reading and math performance by Z amount." In Step 1 of the 8SPPS, LEAs are provided a selection of data indicators from which to choose the targets to support each goal, and offered guidance for setting targets that are ambitious yet achievable given the current trajectory of the school's data. LEAs will be held to the targets they set for each school in the annual review of performance, as follows:

- 2 points = target met or exceeded
- 1 point = some movement but target not met
- 0 points = decline or no movement in targets

While some leading indicators are collected throughout the year and can be used to inform the mid-year reflection described in part two (Implementation), annual targets are typically measured by summative data, which in many cases are not fully verified and publishable until well after the annual review needs to occur (especially for high schools). Therefore, in the first annual renewal, only Documentation and Implementation scores will be used to determine awards. The LEA and school must each earn 80 percent of the possible points on Documentation and Implementation, which will be weighted 40-60, respectively, in order for funds to be renewed for a second year.

In the second annual renewal, Documentation and Implementation from Year 2 *and* Performance scores from Year 1 of implementation will be used to determine continuation. The weighting will be 30 percent documentation, 40 percent implementation and 30 percent performance, and the LEA and school must earn 80 percent of the possible points for the respective school to receive funding for the third year.

If the threshold is not met during a renewal process, the RED will recommend renewal only if the LEA commits to receive additional technical assistance and support in refining the SIPs

and DIAP to address the areas of deficiency and/or in the implementation itself. The LEA also may be required to do one or more of the following:

- Complete a thorough review of implementation practices to determine whether poor results are due to not implementing strategies as intended, and if so, commit to providing technical support to schools to ensure implementation fidelity
- Refine the strategies or select a new model, in cases where it is determined poor results are due to a misalignment of strategies to address the school's needs
- Make revisions to the grant budget and/or timeline
- Increase operational flexibility for the school administrators and instructional leaders

If the school does not demonstrate improvement after two full years of implementation, the LEA will be required to complete a needs assessment using a format similar to the one set forth in Appendix B to determine whether one or more of the following actions is required, pursuant to s. 1008.33, F.S.:

- Select and implement a different model
- Replace staff who have been ineffective in implementing the original model

If a school has not demonstrated improvement and the RED cannot recommend renewal of SIG 1003(g) funds during an annual renewal process, FDOE will rescind funding for that school.

(2) 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 an SEA is requesting the priority schools list waiver, it need not provide this information, as it will have no Tier III schools.

**The FDOE is requesting the Priority/Focus schools list waiver and will have no Tier III schools.**

(3) 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 all schools the LEA is approved to serve.

**The annual renewal process described above is an example of the ongoing support and monitoring provided through the DA system, which is described in greater detail in the SEA Reservation section. As part of support normally provided to Priority and/or turnaround schools, the DA team will conduct tri-annual instructional reviews and supplemental site visits, facilitate discussion with the LEA and school leadership teams around any identified concerns related to the implementation of strategies and adjust action plans as necessary. Any substantive changes to targets and/or budgets will be submitted through an amendment process.**

(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.

**As described in the RFP, for a school to be considered for SIG funding, the LEA proposal must:**

- **Address all components<sup>1</sup> of the proposal (incomplete required sections will disqualify the LEA)**
- **Score higher than zero on every component**
- **Earn 70 percent of the possible rubric points when the LEA-level and respective school-level points are added together (not including bonus points)**

**Schools meeting the above criteria will be ranked and prioritized for funding according to their proposal scores. Bonus points will be added to proposal scores for the following criteria (for point values, see Appendices B or D):**

- **High proportion of SIG-eligible out of total number of graded schools in the LEA**
- **High poverty rate**
- **Low proportion of actual school grades points earned out of total possible in 2012-13**
- **Low graduation rates in 2013**
- **Planning or implementing a model in 2013-14 per Florida statute**
- **Successful previous implementation of SIG**

**In making final selections for awards, the FDOE will reserve the right to ensure a district or region is not overrepresented in Cohort 3. Award amounts will fall within the USED range of \$50,000 to \$2 million per school per year of implementation, and will be based upon the budget determined to be allowable, reasonable and necessary in order to fully and effectively implement the selected model.**

(5) Describe the criteria, if any, which the SEA intends to use to prioritize among Tier III schools. If an SEA is requesting the priority schools list waiver, it need not provide this information, as it will have no Tier III schools.

**The FDOE is requesting the Priority/Focus schools list waiver and will have no Tier III schools.**

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

**The FDOE does not intend to take over any schools.**

(7) 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, or for priority schools, as applicable, 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.

**The FDOE does not intend to provide services directly to any schools.**

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<sup>1</sup> For a listing of LEA-level components and school-level components, see Appendix E.

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

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

- Comply with the final requirements and ensure that each LEA carries out its responsibilities outlined in the final requirements.**
- 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 SIG-Targeted school that the SEA approves the LEA to serve.**
- 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.**
- 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 SIG Targeted 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; total amount of the three year grant listed by each year of implementation; name and NCES identification number of each school to be served; and type of intervention to be implemented in each SIG-Targeted school.**
- Report the specific school-level data required in section III of the final SIG requirements.**

**F. 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 that the SEA plans to conduct with any State-level funds it chooses to reserve from its School Improvement Grant allocation.

**The SEA reservation of 5 percent will be used to support Florida's system of differentiated accountability (DA) for SIG-awarded schools. DA is a statewide network of strategic support, differentiated by need according to performance data, and provided to schools and districts in order to improve leadership capacity, teacher efficacy and student outcomes. The system is divided into regions, with each school district assigned to a region based primarily upon its geographic location within the state. Each region is served by a field team staffed by school improvement specialists with backgrounds in a balance of content areas and led by a RED.**

**To build capacity for creating and sustaining systems-level improvements, DA field teams:**

- Regularly model the facilitation of the 8-step planning and problem-solving process for district and school teams as they design, implement and refine goals and action plans until it becomes part of the way of work
- Provide direct instructional support where needed using a gradual release of responsibility model
- Offer technical assistance, professional development and monitoring support to LEAs and schools implementing SIG strategies
- Connect LEAs and schools to other educators across the state who can act as thought-partners, peer mentors and support networks to share best and promising practices, effective methods of implementation and lessons learned

**G. CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

By checking this box, the SEA assures that it has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its application.

**H. 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.

Florida requests a waiver of the state-level requirements it has indicated below. The FDOE believes the requested waiver 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 its Priority schools.

**Waiver 3: Priority and Focus schools list waiver**

In order to enable the State to replace its lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools with its list of priority schools that meet the definition of “priority or focus schools” in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility* and that were identified in accordance with its approved request for ESEA flexibility, waive the school eligibility requirements in Section I.A.1 of the SIG final requirements.

**Assurance**

The State assures that its methodology for identifying priority and focus schools, approved through its ESEA flexibility request, provides an acceptable alternative methodology for identifying the State’s lowest-performing schools and thus is an appropriate replacement for the eligibility requirements and definition of persistently lowest-achieving schools in the SIG final requirements.

**Waiver 4: Period of availability of FY 2013 funds waiver**

*Note: This waiver only applies to FY 2013 funds for the purpose of making three-year awards to eligible LEAs.*

Waive section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. § 1225(b)) to extend the period of availability of FY 2013 school improvement funds for the SEA and all of its LEAs to September 30, 2017.

**I. ASSURANCE OF NOTICE AND COMMENT PERIOD – APPLIES TO ALL WAIVER REQUESTS**

The State assures that, prior to submitting 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 its waiver request(s) 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 the above waiver request(s) 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.

## PART II: LEA APPLICATION

An SEA must develop an LEA application form that it will use to make subgrants of school improvement funds to eligible LEAs.

Florida's RFP contains the information set forth below (see Appendix B).

### 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 school the LEA commits to serve and identify the model that the LEA will use in each SIG-Targeted school.

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

- (1) For each 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, and selected interventions for each school aligned to the needs each school has identified.
- (2) The LEA must ensure that each 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.
- (3) The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to—
  - a) Determine its capacity to provide adequate resources and related support to each 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;
  - b) Design and implement interventions consistent with the final requirements of the turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model;
  - c) Recruit, screen, and select external providers, if applicable, to ensure their quality;
  - d) Modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable its schools to implement the interventions fully and effectively; and,
  - e) Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.
- (4) 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.
- (5) The LEA must describe how it will monitor each school that receives school improvement funds including by-
  - Establishing annual goals for student achievement on the State's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics; and,
  - Measuring progress on the leading indicators as defined in the final requirements.
- (6) As appropriate, the LEA must consult with relevant stakeholders regarding the LEA's application and implementation of school improvement models in its schools.

**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 school, it commits to serve.**

The LEA must provide a budget that indicates the amount of school improvement funds the LEA will use each year to—

- Implement the selected model in each school it commits to serve;
- Conduct LEA-level activities designed to support implementation of the selected school intervention models in the LEA's SIG-Targeted schools; and

Note: An LEA's budget should cover three years of full implementation and be of sufficient size and scope to implement the selected school intervention model in each 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 three-year budget plan.

An LEA's budget for each year may not exceed the number of schools it commits to serve multiplied by \$2,000,000 (not to exceed \$6,000,000 per school over three years).

**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 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 school that it serves with school improvement funds
- (3) If it implements a restart model in a priority school, include in its contract or agreement terms and provisions to hold the charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization accountable for complying with the final requirements;
- (4) Monitor and evaluate the actions a school has taken, as outlined in the approved SIG application, to recruit, select and provide oversight to external providers to ensure their quality;
- (5) Monitor and evaluate the actions schools have taken, as outlined in the approved SIG application, to sustain the reforms after the funding period ends and that it will provide technical assistance to schools on how they can sustain progress in the absence of SIG funding; and,
- (6) Report to the SEA the school-level data required under section III of the final requirements.