

RFP# GC16-015: 1003(g) School Improvement Grant (SIG)

Questions and Answers: **Reposted 07-19-16 with page number changes (highlighted)**

Question 1:

- (a) Are schools that are currently receiving Socioeconomic Grants (#32 and #61) eligible for SIG 7?

Answer: Yes, if these schools are Priority Schools found on the list posted at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/ESEADesignations.html> (RFP, page 3), and are not currently receiving SIG 1003[g] or School Innovation Fund (SIF) grant funding, then they are eligible for SIG 7. The district must apply on their behalf.

- (b) If not, are they eligible to write for SIG 7 and forfeit the Socioeconomic Grant should they be awarded the competitive SIG 7?

Answer: If the SIG 7 application is approved, the Office of Accountability's Socioeconomic Integration Pilot Program (SIPP) review team will require an explanation of how the funds will be coordinated. As indicated in the RFP, SIG 7 funds cannot supplant other funding sources, including SIG 1003(a).

Question 2: We have two schools that we are exploring for SIG 7 that are currently a part of the Socioeconomic Integration pilot program. Would these schools be eligible for SIG 7?

Answer: See answer to Question 1.

Question 3: Regarding #205, they were a SIG 2, but they did not receive the extension of years 4 and 5, so their funding ended June 30, 2014. In the RFP, it states that SIG 2 awardees that ended their award period June 30, 2016 are not eligible for SIG 7. Given this information, we read this to mean that #205 would be eligible. Can you please confirm?

Answer: Yes, if School #205 is a Priority School found on the list posted at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/ESEADesignations.html> (RFP, page 3), and it is not currently receiving SIG 1003[g] or School Innovation Fund (SIF) grant funding, it is eligible for SIG 7. This applies to any otherwise SIG eligible school that received a SIG 2 award that ended prior to June 30, 2016.

Question 4:

- (a) Are schools that previously received SIG (#200 and #205) eligible for SIG 7?

Answer: Yes, districts may apply on behalf of schools that previously received a SIG award, although those schools cannot *currently* have a SIG grant. Please note that schools that received a SIG 2 award that ended on June 30, 2016 *are* considered to be *currently* receiving a SIG grant and, therefore, the district cannot apply on behalf of that same school. As stated in the answer to Q2, if the school's SIG 2 grant ended prior to June 30, 2016, then the district is eligible to apply on behalf of that same school.

- (b) For #200, we will have only seniors in SY 2016-17, and if eligible, the SIG would be written for closure with the goal of 100% graduation of the senior class.

Answer: Yes, if School #200 is a Priority School found on the list posted at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/ESEADesignations.html> (RFP, page 3), and it is not currently receiving SIG 1003[g] or School Innovation Fund (SIF) grant funding, it is eligible for SIG 7. For applications proposing to implement a *Closure* model plan, Local Education Agencies

(LEAs) are eligible for up to \$200,000, commensurate to school size and need, for the full grant term of one year (RFP, page 2).

Question 5:

- (a) Are SIG 1 schools eligible to apply for SIG 7?

Answer: Yes. Please see the answer to Q4 (a).

- (b) If they are, will they be at a competitive disadvantage because of their previous funding?

Answer: No. The Method of Award section of the RFP (pages 20-21) provides the manner in which awards will be granted, which does not include consideration of previously funded Priority Schools. Applications will be scored based on the criteria identified in the Application Scoring Guide included in the RFP.

Question 6:

- (a) Is SIG eligibility applicable to the school building or to the BEDS code?

Answer: SIG eligibility is applicable to the BEDS code. As per the Data Dictionary for Priority School Identification available on the Office of Accountability's website at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/ESEADesignations.html>, the School's 12 digit Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) code comes from School Information Repository System (SIRS). This grant is open to LEAs with one or more eligible Priority Schools on that list. The eligible district will apply on behalf of an eligible priority school.

- (b) I ask because while #131 is an alternative school in the #131 building, there are several alternative programs in the District that fall under the #131 BEDS code. The Academy School #131 (enrollment ~187, with one Principal). Under the same BEDS code, in separate buildings, we have The Newcomer Program (enrollment ~300, with one Principal), Pathways Program (enrollment ~60, with one Asst. Principal). All students referenced above are combined for the student data that impacts accountability for BEDS Code at #131.

1. Can we write for The Academy School #131 only, ie. ~187 students, or do we have to write for all students?

Answer: No, you cannot write for The Academy School #131 only. The application must address the needs of all of the students within the BEDS code that generated the Priority School accountability status. You indicate that students in The Academy School #131 and the two alternative programs impact accountability at BEDS code 131; however, alternative High School at 44 is the name of the school that appears with the BEDS code on this Priority Schools list. The school's internal numbering system appears to use #44 or #131 interchangeably.

2. If we can write for The Academy School #131 only, do we move the principal at #131 only, or do we have to move the principal at Newcomer as well?

Answer: NA. See answer to Q6 (c) 1.

3. If we write for all students, ie. a plan that effects The Academy School #131 and the two programs, do we have to move both principals? Ultimately, we would like to write for the ~187 students at The Academy School #131 as "transformation" and move the principal at #131.

Answer: If you select a SIG model other than Restart, Closure, Evidence-based, and Innovation and Reform Framework, the principal needs to be replaced if the first year of

implementation of the SIG model (2016-2017) would be the principal's fourth year at the school. The first year of implementation of the model can be the principal's third year of appointment at the school or less. (See G-1b., and G-1c. of the March 2015 SIG Federal Guidance available at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/turnaround/SIGOnlineToolkit.html>.)

Question 7: Can individual schools apply for this or does the application have to come from the district?

Answer: LEAs must submit an application on behalf of their eligible Priority Schools. For the purpose of this RFP, an LEA is a public school district and does not include BOCES. In New York City, the eligible applicant is the NYC Department of Education on behalf of the individual Priority Schools.

Question 8:

(a) I saw our elementary schools on the Priority list but we were supposed to be implementing a Whole school change reform model on 2018-2019 school year. Do we qualify to apply?

Answer: Yes. A district may apply on behalf of any school found on the full list of Priority Schools that is not currently receiving SIG 1003[g] or School Innovation Fund (SIF) grant funding is eligible for SIG 7.

The ESEA flexibility waiver indicates that newly identified priority schools are required to implement a whole school reform model in 2018-19. With the SIG 7 RFP aligned to the turnaround principles (whole school reform model), if the elementary school is awarded, it would implement this model as part of the SIG requirement not the ESEA flexibility waiver requirement. However, in 2018-19 the school would be compliant with this waiver requirement because it would be in year-three of implementing its approved 5-year SIG 7 plan.

(b) We also have our Middle school in receivership but it is a priority struggling school. Does the Middle school qualify?

Answer: Yes, if the middle school is on the full list of Priority Schools and is not currently receiving SIG 1003[g] or School Innovation Fund (SIF) grant funding, then it is eligible.

Question 9: In reading the grant eligibility section, I see that the targeted agencies are those with one or more "priority schools". Would there be any circumstance where a "rewards school" would be eligible?

Answer: No. Districts may not apply on behalf of reward schools. Reward schools are not eligible.

Question 10:

(a) We would like to know if this is only for schools that are at risk of closing?

Answer: No. This grant is open to LEAs with one or more eligible Priority Schools. The district must apply on behalf of an eligible priority school.

(b) We are a school in good standing but we would like to apply for this grant for the purpose of improving the socio-emotional level of our students and decrease the suspension rates, etc... under INNOVATION AND REFORM. Can this grant be for something like this?

Answer: No. Schools in good standing are not eligible.

Question 11:

Can a school apply for a SIG grant that is in good standing?

Answer: See answer to Question 10(b).

Question 12: How do we know if we qualify for the grant?

Answer: Refer to the Eligibility section of the RFP. A district must apply on behalf of a school that is on the full list of Priority Schools at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/ESEADesignations.html> (RFP, page 3), and the school cannot currently be receiving SIG 1003[g] or School Innovation Fund (SIF) grant funding.

Question 13: We are identified as both a Focus District as well as a LAP elementary building. We are in the process of working on finishing up our self-reflections as well as our DCIP. Our school was designated for 3-8 ELA and Math for economically disadvantaged and SWD subgroups. We are looking to implement the following items as part of our improvement plan and wanted to check that these were allowable uses:

- 1) Fountas & Pinnel (Benchmark system) to be used in Special Education and AIS settings for reading recovery
- 2) NWEA's MAP Skills software to use as a universal screener and tracker for UPK-12th grade for reading and math and to help identify students in need of AIS.
- 3) Begin creating a leveled library for Guided Reading groups which is a school initiative we would like to use for struggling students and all students in conjunction with the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmarking tool.

Please let me know if these are allowable allocations of funds.

Answer: LAP elementary schools are not eligible applicants. This grant is open to LEAs with one or more eligible Priority Schools. Please see the answer to previous eligibility questions and the RFP Eligibility section for additional information.

The applicant decides which strategies are necessary to implement its improvement plan based on a recently conducted needs assessment. Alignment is then expected between the information provided throughout all sections of the application. When aligning the District-Level Plan section and the School-Level Plan section narratives to the Budget Forms and Narrative section, reference pages 14-15 of the RFP for the Budget Requirements section which provides details about non-allowable and appropriate costs.

Question 14: Is Banana Kelly HS, a Renewal School currently receiving a Community School grant from the DOE, eligible for the FY 17 SIG grant?

Answer: Yes, if Banana Kelly HS is on the full list of Priority Schools available at:

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/ESEADesignations.html>, and is not currently receiving SIG 1003[g] or School Innovation Fund (SIF) grant funding. In addition, see answer to Question 7.

Question 15: We are planning on utilizing the Innovation & Reform Framework (Individualized Learning School Design). Are there specific requirements on how much longer we should extend the school year by?

Answer: This is the requirement of all Priority Schools, despite whether or not they receive SIG funding: *"If the 'Expanded Learning Time' program will be used to meet the requirements of the Title I set aside for Priority Schools, the program must expand learning time by a minimum of 200 student contact hours per year beyond the current mandated length of 900 hours per year of instruction in elementary school and 990 hours per year in high school."*

As per the School-Level Plan: Section H: Educational Plan: Element iii: Use of Time (RFP, page 33), the applicant determines the pedagogically sound restructuring of its daily/weekly/monthly school schedule that aligns with the Board of Regents standards for Expanded Learning Time as outlined at: <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2012Meetings/April2012/412bra5.pdf>.

Question 16: We have three schools that qualify for the SIG 7 grant. Is it possible for each school to be awarded 2.5 million dollars each?

Answer: As per the Eligibility section (RFP, pages 2-3), for each eligible school proposing to implement a model other than *Closure*, LEAs may request up to \$2.5 million, commensurate to school size and need, for the full term of the five-year grant. If applying for grants for multiple schools, the LEA must submit a separate and complete application for each eligible Priority School. Each application will be scored and considered for a grant award separately.

Question 17: Please confirm that union presidents no longer have to sign Attachment A, Collaboration and Consultation Form, and only the superintendent signs to verify that the appropriate consultations occurred.

Answer: Attachment A asks for only the Superintendent's signature (RFP, page 40), which will attest to collaboration among all stakeholders.

Question 18: Is there a limit on the number of Transformation models a district can implement?

Answer: No. The RFP does not limit the number of Transformation models that the district can implement.

Question 19: Are there any circumstances which would be considered for exemption from the requirement to replace the principal in any of the models?

Answer: Under all SIG models, except Restart, Closure, Evidence-based, and Innovation and Reform Framework, the principal must be replaced if the first year of implementation of the SIG model (2016-2017) would be the principal's fourth year at the school. The first year of implementation of the model can be the principal's third year of appointment at the school or less. (See G-1b., and G-1c. of the March 2015 SIG Federal Guidance available at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/turnaround/SIGOnlineToolkit.html>.)

Question 20: As we are working with partners, some are asking for more clarity on the expected role for a partner under the Innovation & Reform Framework. To be frank, some of our national partners are leery because of the language around EMO/EPO as they know what that language means in the federal language. Can you please provide guidance on what level of partnership would be considered a lead partner. Specifically, if EL Learning is the instructional designer / framework for a school—does that suffice? Same question with IB.

Answer: The Innovation and Reform Framework requires the applicant to partner specifically with an Educational Partnership Organization (EPO) to jointly launch a whole-school redesign (RFP, page 2). To successfully launch that redesign, the applicant needs to review the program requirements of the selected pathway in order to get a sense of the scope of the work that needs to be done (RFP, pages 6-10). The School-Level Plan: (D) School Leadership section prompts the applicant to discuss school leadership strengths and capacity to drive the successful implementation of the plan (RFP, pages 30-31). The School-Level Plan: (F) Partnerships section prompts the applicant to establish effective partnerships for areas where the LEA/school lacks specific capacity on their own to deliver; and the partnerships articulated in this section should

be those that are critical to the successful implementation of the school. The applicant needs to determine if Expeditionary Learning or IB meet the school's needs as an EPO to "jointly" launch the program requirements of the pathway selected.

Question 21: When we calculate the MWBE for the cohort 7, can we include our partners' fees as support personal salaries even though they are a purchased service? We would like to include our partner AIR as a support salary.

Answer: No. These fees should not be included in support or professional staff salaries when calculating the MWBE goal amount. These are considered purchased services.