

**School Improvement Fund  
State Application  
Section 1003(g)**

***Part A—Funds Retained by the SEA***

**1. Identify the amount of funds the SEA will retain from section 1003(g) and 1003(a) for state-level activities.**

With the approval of the eligible LEAs, the Illinois State Board of Education currently uses \$23,725,454 of the state allocation for activities associated with section 1003(a) to conduct state-level activities through the Regional System of Support Providers (RESPRO).

Of the \$5,669,746 additional funds to be allocated to Illinois through section 1003(g), the SEA will retain 5 percent of the allocation (\$283,487) for state-level administrative, evaluation, and technical assistance costs. The remaining balance of \$5,386,259 will be provided in grants to eligible schools in the 826 LEAs in Illinois.

**2. Describe the current SEA statewide system of support required under section 1117 and how the SEA will use funds available to the SEA under section 1003(g) and 1003(a) to build capacity at the LEA and school levels to improve student achievement.**

The RESPRO system of support was established by the Illinois State Board of Education in 2003 to provide technical assistance support teams to schools and LEAs in corrective action or restructuring status. The RESPRO system of support provides schools and LEAs specific services that:

- focus on school and LEA improvement plans;
- target proven approaches and standardized processes;
- customize services to accommodate differences among regions, LEAs, and schools;
- facilitate the coordination of programs, services, and funding;

- deploy state, regional, and local staff and resources; and
- use adequate yearly progress, as defined by state and federal law, as the “bottom line” measure of effectiveness in helping schools and LEAs.

There are six service regions in Illinois, which are served by ten RESPRO groups throughout the state. Four RESPROs provide services in Cook County (outside the city of Chicago) and the five collar counties and one RESPRO serves Chicago. (See Attachment A.) This combined area encompasses about 60 percent of the student population and LEAs in Illinois. The other five RESPRO groups are located throughout the remainder of Illinois.

Each RESPRO provides school support teams for schools that do not make adequate yearly progress for at least two consecutive years. The school support teams comprise distinguished teachers and principals, representatives of higher education, and other qualified members who help to develop and implement school improvement plans that are data-driven, complete, timely, and effective. Through data review and frequent monitoring, a RESPRO team is able to assist in providing professional development activities for a school. The RESPRO system emphasizes processes that have a record of success and are likely to improve the academic achievement of students when tailored to the schools they serve.

RESPRO support teams monitor electronic school improvement plans, with permission from the LEA, on the Interactive Illinois Report Card (IIRC) website. The IIRC website hosts the Illinois e-Plan, an interactive communication system that allows electronic planning and submission of school improvement plans. The system allows for sharing effective plans and best practices throughout the state. The IIRC website provides for each Illinois public school an individual template that is populated with multiple years of state assessment trend data and addresses all school improvement requirements.

Illinois has consolidated RESPRO training into a monthly session at one location, which allows for maximized collaboration and professional development for RESPROs. If a specific type of expertise is needed in a school, a request may be conveyed at the monthly meeting. RESPROs also provide local training that is specific to the needs of each region and school.

The number of Title I schools not making adequate yearly progress decreased between 2004 and 2007: 660 in 2004, 625 in 2005, 573 in 2006, and 511 in 2007. Currently, RESPRO school support teams are assigned to 379 schools that are in corrective action or restructuring status. An additional 132 schools are in Choice and Supplemental Educational Service (SES) status. Where possible, Choice and SES schools receive limited services from the RESPRO groups. This makes a total of 511 Illinois schools currently receiving services through the RESPRO system of support.

Illinois schools that receive section 1003(g) funds will work with the RESPRO system to implement the strategies identified in each school's competitive grant application. The RESPRO team will assist each school to focus on the identified goals in order to build capacity and improve student achievement. The schools will also be invited to send a liaison to the monthly RESPRO meetings.

**3. Describe the school improvement strategy or strategies the SEA will implement with section 1003(g) and 1003(a) funds, including a brief explanation of why each strategy was selected.**

In order to assist grantees to build capacity, the Illinois system of support will train school staff in how to conduct a self-assessment, develop a plan, and implement specific strategies to address the grant objectives, place more emphasis on parental involvement, and use data, research-based strategies, and outcome-related measures to drive instruction that is tailored to

meet the needs of individual schools. In addition, each LEA that receives section 1003(g) funds will be required to implement one or more of the following strategies:

*1. Schools will coordinate with RESPRO Support Teams to develop a professional development plan that is designed to build the capacity of the school staff and is informed by student achievement and outcome-related measures.*

Each school will work with a RESPRO team to create a professional development plan that takes into consideration the various needs of the entire instructional staff. The plan must be systemic in behavior-changing approaches that foster collaboration and increase teacher knowledge of best practices. The plan must:

- Include instructional teams that meet regularly to examine student work, collaborate on lesson design, and implement tiered instruction.
- Align with the National Staff Development Council Standards for Staff Development and with specific context, process, and content standards.
- Provide time for all staff to collaborate and plan strategy implementation.

*2. Schools will target research-based strategies to change instructional practice in order to address the academic achievement problems that led to the school being identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.*

Each school will develop a plan that clearly identifies the expected outcomes for students. Plans will include, but not be limited to, data retreats, the Professional Learning Communities Framework, and continual self-monitoring of individually targeted student progress.

Additionally, each school will explore tools that identify the local alignment of curricula, such as the Survey of Enacted Curriculum, with the *Illinois Learning Standards*. This will provide the school with research-based data to focus on the curriculum areas that need improvement.

Schools will implement scientifically based research programs that will enable differentiated instruction. LEAs will be encouraged to approach educating all students using universal screening, progress-monitoring instruments, data analysis, collaborative decision-making, tiered and differentiated instruction, parental involvement, and access to a standards-aligned core curriculum.

*3. Schools will create partnerships among external entities through the RESPRO system of support or other external partners to obtain technical assistance, professional development, and management advice.*

Through the RESPRO system of support, the Illinois State Board of Education currently works with three major organizations that provide professional development opportunities throughout Illinois, which are not financed with Title I funds: the Illinois Association of School Administrators, the Illinois Principals Association, and the Illinois Association of School Boards. Each organization provides important professional development in the area of school improvement, which will be made available to the section 1003(g) grantees. Grantees will be encouraged to create additional partnerships that can be cultivated to leverage assistance in meeting the individual needs of each school.

*4. Schools must strengthen the parental involvement component of the school improvement plan and must work with their School Support Team members and other technical assistance providers to provide opportunities for parents to become more involved in the educational process.*

The IIRC school improvement plan template includes parental involvement strategies for each objective of the plan. Parents will be informed of the school improvement process and through the section 1003(g) grant will be provided opportunities to become more involved in the

education of their children. Schools will incorporate specific goals into their parental involvement component to: 1) strengthen family-school connections, 2) engage parents in children's learning, and 3) improve student academic and social learning.

*5. Schools will implement other strategies determined by the Illinois State Board of Education or LEA, as appropriate, for which data indicate the strategy is likely to result in improved teaching and learning in schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.*

Schools will be required to plan for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting individualized student data in order to adjust the daily instruction to promote student outcomes. School improvement teams at the local level will work with Illinois system of support teams to create a plan for how to use funds to provide differentiated instruction based on the data in each school.

#### ***Part B—Funds Awarded to LEAs***

The Illinois State Board of Education will award 25-35 school improvement grants in accordance with section 1003(g) funds separately from 1003(a) funds, and will require schools to describe how the two funding sources will supplement, not supplant, each other and how the school improvement funds will be integrated with other funds. The 1003(g) funds will be distributed to LEAs by region, based on the total points scored by all applications in a region. (See Attachment A.) The top LEA applicants from each region will be awarded grants based on the need and size of the school, the scope of planned activities, and the commitment to work with partners. Each 1003(g) grant amount will be a minimum of \$50,000 and will not exceed \$500,000; the anticipated range of grant amounts is \$50,000 to \$250,000. The Illinois State Board of Education will renew a grant for up to two additional one-year periods if schools in the LEA are meeting the goals for improvement, as identified in section 1116.

LEAs will provide evidence of greatest need through a competitive priority focusing on improvement status; reading and math achievement results, as measured by the Illinois Standards Achievement Test or the Prairie State Achievement Examination; poverty level, and ability to leverage the resources currently available to the LEA. Evidence of strongest commitment will be demonstrated through staff commitment to implement the plan, LEA support, commitment to use of scientifically based research, collaboration, and parental involvement.

**Table 1. Demonstration of Need (25 total points)**

<b>Improvement Status (5 points)</b>	<b>Math Achievement (5 points)</b>	<b>Reading Achievement (5 points)</b>	<b>Poverty (5 points)</b>	<b>Ability to Leverage Resources (5 points)</b>
Restructuring Implementation 5 points	<25% meets/exceeds 5 points	<25% meets/exceeds 5 points	>75% 5 points	Provide narrative. Identify current resources used in the district/school and the current resources available.
Restructuring Planning 3 points	25-50 % meets/exceeds 3 points	25-50 % meets/exceeds 3 points	50-74% 3 points	
Corrective Action 1 point	51-74% meets/exceeds 1 point	51-74 % meets/exceeds 1 point	35-49% 1 point	
	>75% meets/exceeds 0 points	>75% meets/exceeds 0 points	<35% 0 points	

**Table 2. Demonstration of Commitment (45 total points)**

<b>Staff Support (10 points)</b>	<b>LEA Support for Systemic Change (5 points)</b>	<b>Academic Growth Over Previous Year (5 points)</b>	<b>Commitment to SBR w/Emphasis on Tiered Instruction (15 points)</b>	<b>Collaboration and Scheduling (5 points)</b>	<b>Collaboration &amp; Involvement of Parents &amp; Community (5 points)</b>
Staff commitment =/> 80% Yes 10 points No 0 points	Provide narrative.	=/>10% 5 points 6-9 % 3 points 1-5% 1 point <0% 0 points	Provide narrative.	Provide narrative.	Provide narrative.

Each applicant will be required to submit an application that includes: 1) a cover page; 2) an abstract, not to exceed one page; 3) an application narrative that addresses organizational

capacity and discusses the need and commitment matrices in detail; 4) a work plan; and 5) assurances. Limit the application narrative to the equivalent of no more than 10 pages, using the following standards: 1) a “page” is 8.5" x 11" on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides; 2) double space all text; 3) use a 12-point or larger font.

The assurances will be designed to guarantee that section 1003(g) and section 1003(a) funds will be used to implement one or more of the five school improvement strategies cited here and that the strategies are data-based. Each school will be expected to achieve the annual measurable objectives to exit corrective action or restructuring status, as appropriate.

Applications will be worth a total of 100 possible points: up to 30 points for the narrative, up to 25 points for the Demonstration of Need matrix, and up to 45 points for the Demonstration of Commitment matrix. A high school may be awarded bonus points if its student achievement scores, as measured by the Prairie State Achievement Examination, are in the bottom 3 percent and it is in improvement status.

***How will the SEA assess the effectiveness of school improvement activities and disseminate information on what works to other LEAs in the state?***

The following outcomes will be used to measure the effectiveness of the school improvement activities:

- The number and percentage of students who score in the “meets” or “exceeds” categories in reading and mathematics will increase, as measured by the annual state assessment administered in grades 3 through 8, and in grade 11.
- An increase in the number of schools receiving support services through federal School Improvement Funds.
- Pre-/post-survey data of where staff began relative to the National Staff Development

Council standards and what the staff reports at the end of the three-year grant cycle.

- The number of schools receiving support services through federal School Improvement Funds that make adequate yearly progress and are removed from improvement status.

The electronic IIRC website used by Illinois schools allows for sharing effective plans and best practices throughout the state.

### ***Part C—Monitoring***

School improvement plans submitted via the IIRC will be aligned with the components included in this grant and monitored by a RESPRO team and Illinois State Board of Education staff. Following initial review, Illinois State Board of Education staff will coordinate follow-up with the school and the RESPRO team to schedule a review and discussion on the strategies being implemented. The Illinois State Board of Education will contract with an evaluator to collect outcome data and identify methods and practices that have the potential to create a positive effect on the schools in their regions. The evaluator will conduct monthly meetings to provide each grantee the opportunity to collaborate with other grantees and RESPRO teams. The meetings will have the added result of informing the plans for each grantee and will be used as capacity-building opportunities for all involved parties. Corrective actions will be addressed in this collaborative environment to ensure the highest degree of success.

# System of Support Service Areas

