

**Application for Funding for the State of Texas**  
**An Amendment to the Texas Consolidated State Application**  
**for the**  
**School Improvement Fund**  
**Section 1003(g)**

CFDA # 84.377A

**The Application Process**

*Applications are due November 20, 2007.*

*Applications may be submitted electronically or by paper submission. The application does not have a required application format but should be 10 pages or less.*

*Electronic submissions must be sent to: [school.improvement.fund@ed.gov](mailto:school.improvement.fund@ed.gov)  
Please send a follow-up paper copy of the cover page signed by the authorized representative.*

*If applying by paper submission, the original and 2 copies must be sent to the following address:*

*Zollie Stevenson, Jr., Ph.D.  
Acting Director  
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202-6132*

*Due to potential delays due to required processing of mail sent through the U.S. Postal Service, applicants are encouraged to employ alternate carriers for paper submissions.*

**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.**

**Texas Education Agency (TEA) Response:**

TEA will retain the allowable 5% of section 1003(g) funds for state-level administration and program activities. Of the allowable 5% reservation, 1% will be retained at the Texas Education Agency (TEA) as part of the state's consolidated administrative fund to provide for oversight and administration of the grant program. The remaining 4% of the reservation will be allocated to the School Improvement Resource Center (SIRC), a state-initiative housed at Region XIII Education Service Center (ESC) in Austin, Texas for providing technical assistance to campuses identified in Title I School Improvement status. For additional information on the SIRC and their technical assistance responsibilities, see <http://www5.esc13.net/sirc/>. Section 1003(a) School Improvement Program funds are retained by the state agency as allowable in

statute. Section 1003(a) state-level activity funds are also allocated to the SIRC for providing technical assistance to schools identified in the Title I School Improvement Program (SIP).

- 2. Describe the SEA's current 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.*

TEA Response:

School Support in Texas is a collaboration between the Texas Education Agency, the twenty regional educational service centers, the School Improvement Resource Center statewide initiative housed at Region XIII ESC, the Statewide Title I School Support and Parental Involvement Initiative housed at Region XVI ESC, the campus administrative mentors (CAMs) assigned to campuses in Stage I of School Improvement, and the external technical assistance providers (TAPs) assigned to campuses in Stage 2 and above of School Improvement. These partners are supported by the work of the Texas Comprehensive Center (TXCC). See Attachment 1 for a description of the state's Statewide System of Support and each partner's role in the collaboration.

In addition, the TXCC is beginning in December 2007, to provide on-going, systemic training in the *Working Systemically* model to the Title I staff at all twenty regional ESCs. This model will be implemented statewide as the state's school support team training. The TXCC has for the past year been working with staff in the curriculum and leadership areas of the ESCs to provide this training and support to ESC staff working with Title I campuses that have missed AYP for the first time and could "potentially" enter Title I School Improvement if the campuses misses AYP for the same indicator for a second consecutive year.

Funds through Section 1003(a) are allocated to the twenty regional ESCs and the two state initiatives for providing professional development and technical assistance to Title I campuses identified in school improvement. The uses of the Section 1003(g) funds will align to the existing statewide system of support structure described in Attachment 1.

- 3. From the list, 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.*

### **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES**

*Each SEA and LEA that receives School Improvement Funds must implement one or more of the following strategies. Each SEA and LEA should select the strategy or strategies it determines will be the most effective, based on data that reflect their individual circumstances, in building LEA and school capacity to improve student achievement and move schools out of improvement.*

- 1. Provide customized technical assistance and/or professional development that is designed to build the capacity of LEA and school staff to improve schools and is informed by student achievement and other outcome-related measures.*

2. *Utilize research-based strategies or practices to change instructional practice to address the academic achievement problems that caused the school to be identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.*
3. *Create partnerships among the SEA, LEAs and other entities for the purpose of delivering technical assistance, professional development, and management advice.*
4. *Provide professional development to enhance the capacity of school support team members and other technical assistance providers who are part of the statewide system of support and that is informed by student achievement and other outcome-related measures.*
5. *Implement other strategies determined by the SEA 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.*

TEA Response:

TEA staff from the Division of NCLB Program Coordination conducted focus group discussions regarding the use of the Section 1003(g) funds with the following groups:

- Statewide System of Support Advisory Group—consisting of representatives from the TEA, the TXCC, the regional ESCs, and the two state Title I initiatives;
- Statewide Title I Committee of Practitioners; and
- Local education agency (LEA) and ESC administrators and federal program staff, both with campuses in school improvement and without campuses in school improvement.

Based on reviewing historical data from schools entering the Title I School Improvement program over the past five years, the current SIP status of those campuses, and the trend data reflecting when the schools are most successful in exiting school improvement status, the Committee of Practitioners (COP) reviewed the recommendations of the focus groups and drafted the framework for the grants under Section 1003(g) to be named the School Improvement Program (SIP) Academy grant.

The SIP Academy grants will align to the following strategies from the list provided by USDE and meet the provisions of the grant program described below:

1. Provide customized technical assistance and/or professional development that is designed to build the capacity of LEA and school staff to improve schools and is informed by student achievement and other outcome-related measures.

Rationale: A customized program of technical assistance and professional development that is directly relevant to district and school goals, needs, skill levels, and learning preferences is essential to continuous school improvement. This system, focused on capacity-building, should be long-term, integrated into daily practice, and accompanied by the expectation that what is learned is implemented through follow-up and feedback.

5. Implement other strategies determined by the SEA 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.

Rationale: It is logical to begin any discussion on school improvement with research based data. A program or practice being considered for implementation by a campus should be substantiated with both sound theory and successful results derived from a similar school situation. In this age of education reform and accountability, districts and campuses need to be confident that their instructional models, methods, and materials have been proven effective.

The grants will focus on the following provisions:

- 1) Schools in Stage 2 of School Improvement will be eligible for the Section 1003(g) grants, with priority to small and rural schools if there are not enough funds to award all Stage 2 grants.
- 2) Grants will be awarded equally among the Stage 2 campuses choosing to apply, ensuring the statutory minimum of \$50,000 per grant. Each LEA authorized official, by signing the grant application, will agree to participate in the administrative coaching and additional external technical assistance. Coaching and external technical assistance services will be pre-paid by the TEA through the SIRC, as existing services are paid under Section 1003(a) funding.
- 3) The grants will focus on on-going, systemic professional development, with the majority of the campus staff participating and some LEA administrative staff participating, in the following areas:
  - a) data disaggregation, comprehensive needs assessment, campus planning;
  - b) team building for the staff on the campus;
  - c) leadership, including but not limited to coaching and mentoring; and
  - d) instructional strategies identified by the data disaggregation, needs assessment, and campus planning processes and aligned to student achievement and other outcomes identified.
- 4) Campuses must conduct data disaggregation, comprehensive needs assessment, and campus planning activities with a majority of the campus staff participating in attendance, and may pay for the following: reasonable and necessary costs related to facilities rental if space is not available at the LEA, contracted services for a facilitator not to exceed local district policy, extra-duty pay for staff not to exceed \$100 per day; and costs for child care not to exceed \$25 per child per day.
- 5) The campus will receive ten days of service from an external administrative coach focusing on coaching the principal and instructional leaders and may receive 10 additional days from the campus; external technical assistance provider (currently 20-55 days under the Section 1003(a) grant for Stage 2 campuses).
- 6) The campus and LEA staff must participate in the state's web-based discussion groups, to be developed with assistance from the Texas Comprehensive Center, for Section 1003(g) grant participants. This will serve as a follow-up tool for monitoring implementation of the grant activities.
- 7) The LEA must ensure that campuses receive the benefit of the pre-award and carryover provisions for both the Section 1003(a) and Section 1003(g) funds ensuring the campus has access to the funds to implement the required activities in a timely manner.
- 8) The LEA and campus principal must assure that the grant program will be implemented with their full support.
- 9) If a large percentage of either the Section 1003(a) or Section 1003(g) (after the first year) funds are not expended and carried over, then the campus may not be awarded a second or third year continuation grant.
- 10) The SIRC, the state's technical assistance provider, will provide technical assistance to the grantee campuses by providing the following assistance:
  - a) Training of administrative coaches in the coaching process;
  - b) Working with grantee campuses to develop the data disaggregation, comprehensive needs assessment, campus planning, and team building activities;
  - c) Provide training for staff in the design of academy activities;
  - d) Provide administrative coaching services;
  - e) Collect and review agendas from grant activities;
  - f) Provide guidance in design of the agendas for grant activities and follow-up activities
  - g) Provide formative evaluation of the revised campus plan; and

- h) coordinate for sharing of successful academy strategies at the Texas School Improvement Conference.

### *Part B – Funds Awarded to LEAs*

*Each SEA must describe:*

1. *How the SEA will allocate at least 95 percent of its section 1003(g) and 1003(a) funds, either separately or combined, to LEAs<sup>1</sup>. In its description, the SEA must address the following statutory provisions:*
  - *The criteria the SEA will use to give priority to LEAs with the lowest-achieving schools that demonstrate--*
    - *The greatest need for these funds, and*
    - *The strongest commitment to ensuring that the funds are used to provide adequate resources for the lowest-achieving schools to meet the goals for improvement under section 1116.*
  - *How the SEA will define “greatest need” and “strongest commitment.”*
  - *With respect to section 1003(g) funds (if allocated separately from 1003(a) funds), the criteria the SEA will use to determine grant award amounts to LEAs to ensure that each grant—*
    - *Is of sufficient size and scope to support the activities required under sections 1116 and 1117, and*
    - *Is not less than \$50,000 or more than \$500,000 for each participating school.*
  - *How funds will be integrated with other funds awarded by the SEA under the ESEA.*
  - *Whether, assuming section 1003(g) funds are appropriated in subsequent years, the SEA will renew an LEA’s grant for up to two additional one-year periods if schools in the LEA are meeting the goals for improvement under section 1116.*

#### TEA Response:

With the approval of the SIP Academy grants, the funding will be awarded to eligible campuses through a consolidated school improvement program grant application. SIP Academy grants will be added to the existing SIP (Section 1003(a)) grant application. A separate budget column will be added to the existing application for all budgetary information. Additional programmatic information will be completed and attached to the application. The application will be submitted electronically through the state’s eGrants automated grant system as an amendment to the campus’ SIP application which has already been approved and awarded. The grant application amendment will be submitted by the eligible LEAs in the winter with approval from the Agency by mid-Spring. The data disaggregation, needs assessment, campus planning, and team building activities must be implemented by the end of the summer, so that the administrative coaching and systemic professional development activities may begin early in the following school year (beginning of the second grant year).

---

<sup>1</sup> An SEA may, with the approval of the LEA, directly provide for one or more of the school improvement strategies listed above or to arrange for their provision through other entities such as school support teams or educational service agencies.

The TEA ensures that 95% of the Section 1003(g) funds will be allocated to LEAs on behalf of the campuses identified in Title I School Improvement under the criteria defined for greatest need and strongest commitment.

Attachment 2 outlines the trend data for Title I schools identified needing improvement over the past four years in Texas. As indicated, the largest numbers of schools in school improvement status are in Stages 1 and 2 reflecting the greatest need for the additional funding. Also in Attachment 2 are the data that schools are more likely to exit school improvement status by meeting AYP for two consecutive years while in Stage 1 or Stage 2 of improvement. This commitment by schools to make the necessary improvements and exit SIP status as quickly as possible demonstrates the need for the additional funding at these levels of improvement. Also, it has been identified that small and rural schools often do not have the resources and staff that larger and urban LEAs have to offer to their schools.

The current Section 1003(a) SIP funds are allocated to campuses as shown below.

Stage	Small Campus (<800 students)	Large Campus (>800 students)
1	\$50,000 per campus regardless of size	
2	\$100,000	\$150,000
3	\$150,000	\$200,000
4	\$200,000	\$250,000
5	\$250,000	\$300,000

Allocations are ratably reduced if the state allocation is insufficient to fund the above schedule. Any remaining funds are equitably distributed at maximum entitlements. In addition, the campus administrative mentor and external technical assistance provider services are pre-paid by the TEA on behalf of the LEA/campus. Section 1003(g) funds will also pre-pay for the additional CAM and TAP services to the grantee campuses. When the LEA's authorized official electronically signs and transmits the campus' application for funding, the LEA is agreeing to receive the pre-paid CAM and TAP services.

The SIP funds focus higher allocations as the campuses advance into higher levels of school improvement and intervention. The TEA, based on the data in Attachment 2 and other verbal data from campuses, believes that continued earlier intervention in Stage 2 will have the greatest impact and benefit to campuses to meet the goals of the Section 1003(g) funds and exit school improvement status quicker. The combined allocations of both grant programs, which both individually meet the statutory minimum \$50,000 and maximum \$500,000 grant allocation, will allow the campus a total allocation of sufficient size and scope to ensure the goals of the program can be met.

SIP Academy funds used for professional development will be required to align to the uses of other NCLB funds on the campus. At a minimum, the SIP Academy funds must be coordinated with Title I, Part A and SIP funding. The SIP Academy funds will be used to assist the campus in conducting a school wide needs assessment and comprehensive planning process that includes the majority of the campus staff. This process will greatly expand the participation in the campus' needs assessment process currently implemented with other fund sources. The professional development to be implemented by the SIP Academy funds must be integrated with existing Title I, Part A and SIP funding professional development. Since all of the eligible campuses operate Schoolwide programs, the campus will have the flexibility to consolidate the SIP Academy funds on the schoolwide campus as long as the specific grant activities are implemented to upgrade the entire educational instructional program of the campus.

Campuses awarded SIP Academy grants that make sufficient progress in implementing the goals and objectives of the grant will be eligible for continuation grants for up to two additional years as long as:

- a. The LEA ensures that campuses receive the benefit of the pre-award and carryover provisions for both the Section 1003(a) and Section 1003(g) funds ensuring the campus has access to the funds to implement the required activities in a timely manner.
- b. The campus is not carrying over a large percentage of either the Section 1003(a) or Section 1003(g) (after the first year) funds.

In the event that the campus is not making progress toward meeting the goals and objectives of the grant, the TEA will require the campus to contract for additional assistance through the regional ESC and review the implementation of the grant program.

Rational: Small and rural schools experience the inability to have sufficient funds to provide customized technical assistance and/or professional development that is designed to build the capacity of the LEA and school staff to improve schools. Larger LEAs have more staff and resources to provide capacity building to the campuses while small rural schools must either depend on their regional ESC or contracted services.

2. *The local application provisions the SEA will require its LEAs to address to ensure that—*
  - a. *LEAs will use funds under section 1003(g) and 1003(a) to implement one or more of the school improvement strategies previously listed and that decisions about the strategy or strategies selected are based on data; and*
  - b. *The school improvement strategies supported with these funds contribute to achieving the annual measurable objectives in school improvement plans [§1116(b)(3)(v)], or to achieving the goals necessary for schools to exit corrective action and restructuring status, as appropriate.*

TEA Response:

Each campus will describe the following in the application for funding process.

- a. A description of the data disaggregation, comprehensive needs assessment, and campus planning process to be used to identify the instructional needs of the campus and the professional development to be implemented to address those needs and align to the School Improvement Strategies supported by the TEA.
- b. Measurable objectives for the individual campus toward the goal of exiting school improvement after two years. (This goal will be slightly longer for the first round recipients of the SIP Academy funding due to the timeline for the state receiving the funds from USDE and the subsequent timeline for the TEA to award the grants to the campuses.)
- c. The commitment of the campus principal and the LEA to implement the grant with integrity.

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

TEA Response:

TEA will monitor the performance of campus grantees on AYP and the measurable objectives set by the campus in the application for funding. The state will collect the performance data and provide an analysis for dissemination. The SIRC state initiative will collect information on the data disaggregation,

comprehensive needs assessment, campus planning activities including, but not limited to, agendas, facilitator, minutes, and progress reports. SIRC will also collect information on the professional development implemented for dissemination. Dissemination of the information will be done through the annual SIP orientation meetings and the annual School Improvement conference.

In addition, the TEA is currently developing, with the assistance from the TXCC, an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of this grant program. The effectiveness will be measured by a review of all grantees and with a more targeted evaluation of a pilot group of campuses. Results of the effectiveness study will be disseminated by the TEA and the TXCC.

### ***Part C – Monitoring***

***Each SEA must describe how it will monitor the effectiveness of the strategies selected and implemented with funds from section 1003(g) and 1003(a) and the steps the SEA will take if the school improvement strategies supported with these funds are not contributing to increased student achievement.***

#### TEA Response:

TEA will monitor the performance of campus grantees on AYP and the measurable objectives set by the campus in the application for funding. The state will collect the performance data and monitor the implementation of the program activities of the campuses through telephone monitoring and reports.

The SIRC state initiative will collect information on the data disaggregation, comprehensive needs assessment, campus planning activities including, but not limited to, agendas, facilitator, minutes, and progress reports. SIRC will also collect information on the professional development implemented. This data will be used by the TEA for monitoring implementation of the grants.

In the event that the campus is not making progress toward meeting the goals and objectives of the grant, the TEA will require the campus to contract for additional assistance through the regional ESC and review the implementation of the grant program. In the event that the campus does not make progress in meeting the goals and objectives of the grant after the maximum three years, the campus will be ineligible for any new SIP Academy funding in the future.

In addition, the TEA is currently developing, with the assistance from the TXCC, an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of this grant program. The effectiveness will be measured by a review of all grantees and with a more targeted evaluation of a pilot group of campuses. Results of the effectiveness study will be disseminated by the TEA and the TXCC.