

U.S. Department of Education

A CONVERSATION ON
RACE TO THE TOP, SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
GRANTS AND ESEA FLEXIBILITY ALIGNMENT

November 2012

Objectives

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- Review school improvement requirements in low-achieving schools under Race to the Top (RTT), School Improvement Grants (SIG), and ESEA Flexibility.
- Respond to State questions around program requirements, program overlap, resource alignment, and allowable use of funds.
- Identify additional State questions for follow up.

Webinar Norms

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- We will answer common questions submitted in advance from States throughout the webinar.
- To submit additional questions during the webinar, please use the “Chat” function.
- Any unanswered questions will be compiled for follow-up.

Agenda

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- Introductions
- Overview of Federal school improvement programs
- Common State Questions
 - Program Requirements
 - Overlap for Low Performing Schools
 - Resource Alignment & Allowable Use of Funds
- Additional Q &A

Introductions

Representatives from:

- Implementation and Support Unit
- Office of School Turnaround
- Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Office of the General Counsel
- Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development

6 Federal Program Overview

School Improvement Grants

Race to the Top

ESEA Flexibility

Overview of School Improvement at the Federal Level

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ED is focusing much of its resources and attention on helping states and districts turn around the lowest-performing schools.

School Improvement Grants - \$3.5 billion additional funding

ESEA Flexibility announced and guidance released

2009

2010

2011

2012

Race to the Top announced – \$4 billion

Overview of School Improvement at the Federal Level

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School Improvement Grants

- Re-regulated in 2009
- Authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the ESEA
- Over \$5 billion in grants awarded since 2009
- Formula grants awarded to all States, competitive to districts
- PLA Schools (Tiers I and II) and Tier III schools

Race to the Top

- Notice Inviting Applications released late 2009
- Authorized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009
- \$4.2 billion in grants awarded since 2009
- Discretionary grants awarded to 19 States
- PLA Schools

ESEA Flexibility

- ESEA Flexibility principles announced in September 2011
- Flexibility offered pursuant to section 9401 of the ESEA
- Provides flexibility regarding certain NCLB accountability requirements in exchange for comprehensive state-developed systems
- Flexibility currently approved for 34 States and the District of Columbia
- Priority and Focus schools

Schools Eligible to Receive School Improvement Funds

Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools:

Tier I schools

Any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that—

- Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State or the five lowest-achieving such schools (whichever number of schools is greater); or
- Is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b) that is below 60 percent over a number of years.

Tier II schools

Any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I, Part A funds that—

- Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the five lowest-achieving secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds; or
- Is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b) that is below 60 percent over a number of years.

Other Schools

Tier III Schools

- Any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that is not a Tier I school.

* At a State's option, it may also identify "newly eligible" schools as Tier I or II schools even though those schools are not "persistently lowest-achieving" schools. For purposes of this webinar, we include "newly eligible" schools within the term "persistently lowest-achieving" schools.

Defining PLAs and Priority Schools

Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools (PLAs) – RTT and SIG

The definition of **persistently lowest-achieving schools** (PLAs) must be consistent for States that have both Race to the Top and School Improvement Grant funding.

Additionally--

- **Race to the Top** allows States to identify non-Title I eligible secondary schools with similar performance as their PLAs (criterion (E)(2)(i)) (NOTE: States may not use SIG funds to serve).
- **SIG** requires States to identify Tier III schools and permits States to add schools to Tiers I and II that are not identified as persistently lowest-achieving schools (NOTE: Not part of RTT criterion (E)(2)).

Priority Schools under ESEA Flexibility

A **priority school** is—

- a school among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the State based on the achievement of the “all students” group in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments that are part of the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, combined, and has demonstrated a lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the “all students” group;
- a Title I-participating or Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate less than 60 percent over a number of years; or
- a Tier I or Tier II school under the SIG program that is using SIG funds to implement a school intervention model.
- The total number of priority schools in a State must be at least five percent of the Title I schools in the State.

Alignment with ESEA Flexibility

- A priority school that implements one of the four SIG models is implementing an intervention that satisfies the ESEA flexibility turnaround principles. An SEA may also implement interventions aligned with the turnaround principles as part of a statewide school turnaround strategy that allows for State takeover of schools or for transferring operational control of the school to another entity such as a recovery school district or other management organization.
- A priority school not implementing one of the four SIG models is not eligible for SIG funding.
- States may propose amendments to use Race to the Top funds to support intervention in priority schools; however, they will still be held accountable for the performance of PLAs as designated in their RTT applications.

Source: Meeting FLEX Definitions: <http://www.ed.gov/sites/default/files/demonstrating-meet-flex-definitions.pdf>

Common State Questions

Program Requirements

Overlap for Low Performing Schools

Resource Alignment

Allowable Use of Funds

Program Requirements

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Q As it relates to requirements for low-achieving schools, including SIG requirements, what does ESEA Flexibility waive?

A ESEA flexibility waives:

- Requirement to identify low-achieving schools for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring
- Requirement to take certain actions as a result of identification for improvement, such as providing SES or transportation for public school choice
- Requirements related to which schools can receive SIG funds
 - Allows priority schools to receive SIG funds to implement a SIG model
- Requirements related to which schools can receive ESEA section 1003(a) funds
 - Allows priority and focus schools to receive those funds to implement interventions
- In most States, requirements to make AYP determinations for schools and LEAs

Program Requirements

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- As it relates to requirements for low-achieving schools, including SIG requirements, what does ESEA Flexibility NOT waive?
- ▲ ESEA flexibility does not waive:
 - Any of the other SIG final requirements, including:
 - Requirement for Tier I, Tier II, or priority schools that receive SIG funds to implement one of the four SIG intervention models
 - Substantive requirements of the SIG intervention models
 - Requirements to take into account performance against AMOs and graduation rate targets in determining interventions, incentives, and supports for schools

Program Requirements

Q What interventions do SIG, ESEA Flexibility, and RTT require for low-achieving schools?

	Low-Achieving Schools	Required Interventions
SIG	Tier I and Tier II schools	Turnaround Model; Restart Model; School Closure; or Transformation Model
ESEA Flexibility	Priority Schools	One of the four SIG models; or Interventions aligned with the Turnaround Principles
	Focus Schools	Interventions based on reviews of the specific academic needs of the school and its students and designed to close identified achievement gaps

Program Requirements

Q What interventions do SIG, ESEA Flexibility, and RTT require for low-achieving schools?

	Low-Achieving Schools	Required Interventions
Race to the Top	Persistently-lowest achieving schools and, at a State's discretion, any non-Title I eligible secondary schools that would be considered persistently lowest-achieving schools if they were eligible to receive Title I funds	Turnaround Model; Restart Model; School Closure; or Transformation Model

SEA monitoring responsibilities

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- Q What are an SEA's monitoring responsibilities with respect to its lowest-performing schools?
- A An SEA should have a coherent system of monitoring and support for all of its lowest-performing schools, regardless of how these schools are identified or what Federal funds are used to support interventions. In general, SIG, Race to the Top, and ESEA flexibility all require comprehensive and rigorous whole-school interventions in the lowest-performing schools. However, the specific interventions may vary, and an SEA must have a system of monitoring and support that ensures successful implementation of interventions:
- ❑ PLA schools or priority schools receiving SIG funds must implement one of the four SIG models.
 - ❑ PLA schools that an SEA has committed to serve under Race to the Top must implement one of the four SIG models.
 - ❑ Priority schools that do not receive SIG funds must implement interventions aligned with all of the turnaround principles (or one of the four SIG models).

Program Requirements

Q What are the requirements for teacher and principal evaluation systems across SIG, ESEA Flexibility, and RTT?

	SIG: Transformation Model	ESEA Flexibility	RTT
Use of Student Growth	Systems must take into account student growth as a significant factor	Systems must include data on student growth for all students as a significant factor in determining performance levels	Systems must take into account data on student growth as a significant factor in differentiating effectiveness
Definition of Student Growth	<p>The change in achievement for an individual student between two or more points in time.</p> <p>For tested grades and subjects, student growth data must be based on a student’s score on the State’s assessment. A State may also include other measures of student learning that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.</p>	<p>The change in student achievement for an individual student between two or more points in time.</p> <p>For tested grades and subjects, student achievement means a student’s score on the State’s assessments and may include other measures of student learning, provided they are rigorous and comparable across schools within an LEA.</p>	<p>The change in student achievement for an individual student between two or more points in time.</p> <p>For tested grades and subjects, student achievement means: (1) a student’s score on the State’s assessments; and, as appropriate, (2) other measures of student learning, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.</p>

Requirements and Selection Criteria

Q What are the requirements for teacher and principal evaluation systems across SIG, ESEA Flexibility, and RTT?

	ESEA Flexibility	RTT
Other Requirements*	Used for continual improvement of instruction.	Measure, evaluate, and continuously improve supports provided to improve student achievement.
	Meaningfully differentiate performance using at least three performance levels.	Differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories.
	Use multiple valid measures (in addition to student growth).	
	Evaluate teachers and principals on a regular basis.	Evaluate teachers and principals annually.
	Provide clear, timely, and useful feedback.	Provide timely and constructive feedback, including data on student growth.
	Be used to inform personnel decisions.	Used to inform decisions regarding: (a) developing teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or professional development; (b) compensating, promoting, and retaining teachers and principals; (c) whether to grant tenure and/or full certification; and (d) removing ineffective teachers and principals after ample opportunities to improve.

Program Requirements

Q What are the timelines for implementation of teacher and principal evaluation systems in SIG, ESEA Flexibility, and RTT?

	<u>2010–2011</u>	<u>2011–2012</u>	<u>2012–2013</u>	<u>2013–2014</u>	<u>2014–2015</u>	<u>2015–2016</u>
SIG Cohort 1, No Waiver	Develop systems	Pilot systems	Use for decisions regarding, e.g., retention, promotion, compensation, and rewards			
SIG Cohort 1, Waiver		Develop systems	Pilot systems (all teachers and principals)	Use for decisions regarding, e.g., retention, promotion, compensation, and rewards		
SIG Cohort 2		Develop systems	Pilot systems (all teachers and principals)	Use for decisions regarding, e.g., retention, promotion, compensation, and rewards		

Program Requirements

Q What are the timelines for implementation of teacher and principal evaluation systems in SIG, ESEA Flexibility, and RTT?

	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016
ESEA Flexibility, Window 1 or Window 2		Adopt guidelines for systems	Develop systems	Pilot or fully implement systems	Fully implement systems	Use results of systems to improve instruction, guide professional development, inform other personnel decisions
ESEA Flexibility, Window 3			Adopt guidelines for systems	Develop systems	Pilot or fully implement systems	Fully implement systems; Have plan to use results to improve instruction, guide professional development, inform other personnel decisions in 2016–2017
RTT	Implement consistent with timelines in approved application					

SIG models vs. turnaround principles

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- Q What is the difference between the transformation model and the ESEA Flexibility turnaround principles?
- A The requirements of the transformation model under SIG are very similar to the ESEA flexibility turnaround principles, with four main differences:

Reform area	Transformation model	Turnaround principles
Leadership	Replace principal.	Review the performance of the principal and either replace the principal or demonstrate to the SEA that the current principal has a track record in improving achievement and has the ability to lead the turnaround effort.
Time	Provide increased learning time by adding time to the day, week, or year.	Redesign the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration (but not necessarily adding time to the day, week, or year).
Non-academic needs	May develop partnerships to create safe school environments and improve school climate and discipline.	Establish a school environment that improves school safety and discipline and addresses other non-academic factors.

Additional Guidance

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Q Where can I find the statutory, regulatory, or other applicable requirements for ESEA Flexibility, SIG, and RTT?

A ESEA Flexibility:

□ Waivers and Principles:

- *ESEA Flexibility, Request, Request Review Guidance, and FAQs*
<http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility>

□ Unwaived Requirements:

- Title I of the ESEA
<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html>
- 34 C.F.R. § § 200.1-200.79 http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-id?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title34/34cfr200_main_02.tpl

Additional Guidance

Q Where can I find the statutory, regulatory, or other applicable requirements for ESEA flexibility, SIG, and RTT?

A **School Improvement Grants:**

□ **Final Requirements:**

- *ESEA 75 Fed. Reg. 66363 (Oct. 28, 2010)*
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/2010-27313.pdf>

□ **FAQs:**

- <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/sigguidance03012012.doc>

Race to the Top

□ **Requirements, Guidance, and FAQs:**

- <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>

Allowable Use of Funds

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Q In which schools may States approved for ESEA Flexibility use SIG funds, and for what purposes?

A States approved for ESEA flexibility may use SIG funds to implement one of the four intervention models in:

1. Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools, consistent with the SIG final requirements.
2. Priority schools that meet the ESEA flexibility definition (i.e., lowest-achieving 5% of Title I schools or Title I participating or eligible high schools with graduation rates below 60% over a number of years).

States approved for ESEA flexibility may use SIG funds in priority schools that meet the ESEA flexibility definition only to implement one of the four SIG models (transformation, turnaround, restart, closure).

Allowable Use of Funds

- Q What are some examples of priority schools that **are** and **are not** eligible for SIG funds?
- A Example 1: A Title I-participating elementary school that is identified by the State as a priority school and is in the bottom 5% of all Title I schools in the State.
- Eligible for SIG funds to implement one of the four SIG models (meets ESEA flexibility definition).
- A Example 2: A Title I-participating middle school that is identified by the State as a priority school and is in the bottom 5% of all Title I schools in the State, but is implementing interventions aligned with the turnaround principles and not one of the four SIG models.
- Not eligible for SIG funds (meets ESEA flexibility definition, but is not implementing SIG model).
- A Example 3: A Title I-eligible high school that is identified by the State as a priority school and has a graduation rate below 60% over a number of years.
- Eligible for SIG funds to implement one of the four SIG models (meets ESEA flexibility definition).
- A Example 4: A Title I-eligible high school that is identified by the State as a priority school but does not have a graduation rate below 60%.
- Not eligible for SIG funds (does not meet ESEA flexibility definition).

Other Resources for Priority Schools

Q What other resources, beyond SIG funds, may be used to support priority schools, focus schools, and other low-performing schools?

A States approved for ESEA flexibility may use:

1. ESEA section 1003(a) funds to implement interventions in priority or focus schools that meet the ESEA flexibility definitions.
2. Title I, Part A funds to implement interventions in Title I priority, Title I focus, or other Title I schools.
3. Race to the Top funds to implement interventions in priority, focus, or other schools (including non-Title I schools), consistent with approved Race to the Top scope of work.
4. Other Federal program funds (e.g., Title II, Title III) to implement interventions in priority, focus, or other schools (including non-Title I schools), consistent with any specific program requirements.
5. State and local funds to implement interventions in priority, focus, or other schools (including non-Title I schools).

Allowable Use of Funds

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Q What are allowable uses of 1003(a) funds?

A Allowable use of 1003(a) funds is discussed in I-29 of the SIG Guidance:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/sigguidance03012012.doc>

Future Guidance

The Department anticipates sharing additional guidance on other questions received, including:

- Can States carry over unused 1003(g) funds beyond Year 3 of implementation?
- Can SIG schools reapply for a SIG grant after their three-year grant period ends?
- What are allowable uses of 5% administrative set aside funds (1003(g) funds) for supporting priority schools?

Additional Questions

Selected Resources

- School Improvement Grant Guidance:
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/sigguidance03012012.doc>
- U.S. Department of Education's ESEA flexibility website (includes FAQs and approved requests):
<http://www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility>
- Meeting FLEX Definitions:
<http://www.ed.gov/sites/default/files/demonstrating-meet-flex-definitions.pdf>
- Title I Fiscal Guidance:
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/fiscalguid.doc>

Thank You

Thank you for your participation in today's webinar.