

Application for Federal Education Assistance (ED 424)



U.S. Department of Education

Form Approved
OMB No. 1875-0106
Exp. 11/30/2004

Applicant Information

1. Name and Address

Legal Name: South Carolina Department of Education

Address: 1429 Senate Street, Room 1005

The Rutledge Building

Columbia

City

Organizational Unit

Division of Innovation and Support

SC

State

Richland

County

29201 -

ZIP Code + 4

2. Applicant's D-U-N-S Number 6 0 9 3 1 3 6 0 9

6. Novice Applicant Yes No

3. Applicant's T-I-N 5 7 - 6 0 0 0 2 8 6

7. Is the applicant delinquent on any Federal debt? Yes No
(If "Yes," attach an explanation.)

4. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance #: 8 4 3 7 7 A

Title: School Improvement Fund 1003(g)

8. Type of Applicant (Enter appropriate letter in the box.) A

5. Project Director: Elizabeth Carpentier

Address: 1429 Senate Street, Room

Columbia

City

SC

State

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Tel. #: 803-734-8169

Fax #: 803-734-3820

E-Mail Address: bcarpent@ed.sc.gov

A State

B Local

C Special District

D Indian Tribe

E Individual

F Independent School District

G Public College or University

H Private, Non-Profit College or University

I Non-Profit Organization

J Private, Profit-Making Organization

K Other (Specify):

Application Information

9. Type of Submission:

—Pre-Application

Construction

Non-Construction

—Application

Construction

Non-Construction

10. Is application subject to review by Executive Order 12372 process?

Yes (Date made available to the Executive Order 12372 process for review): _____

No (If "No," check appropriate box below.)

Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

Program has not been selected by State for review.

11. Proposed Project Dates:

Start Date:

1/1/2008

End Date:

6/30/2008

12. Are any research activities involving human subjects planned at any time during the proposed project period?

Yes (Go to 12a.)

No (Go to item 13.)

12a. Are all the research activities proposed designated to be exempt from the regulations?

Yes (Provide Exemption(s) #): _____

No (Provide Assurance #): _____

13. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:

Estimated Funding

14a. Federal	\$	1,814,777 .00
b. Applicant	\$.00
c. State	\$.00
d. Local	\$.00
e. Other	\$.00
f. Program Income	\$.00
g. TOTAL	\$	1,814,777 .00

Authorized Representative Information

15. To the best of my knowledge and belief, all data in this preapplication/application are true and correct. The document has been duly authorized by the governing body of the applicant and the applicant will comply with the attached assurances if the assistance is awarded.

a. Authorized Representative (Please type or print name clearly.)

Dr. Jim Rex

b. Title

State Superintendent of Education

c. Tel. #: 803-734-8500

Fax #: 803-734-3389

d. E-Mail Address:

e. Signature of Authorized Representative

Date: 11/19/2007

**South Carolina Department of Education
2007 School Improvement Fund State Application**

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) requests \$1,814,777 under section 1003(g) for Title I schools in need of improvement.

Part A. Funds Retained by the SEA

1. Funds for State-Level Activities

The SCDE will retain five percent (\$90,739) of the total award to South Carolina (\$1,814,777) from 1003(g) for state-level activities. The remainder (\$1,724,039) will be allocated to districts for specific Title I schools in need of improvement.

The SCDE will use the SEA-retained funds to:

- provide consulting and professional development to grantee schools and districts;
- verify fidelity of implementation;
- evaluate effectiveness;
- monitor grantees; and
- support administrative, evaluation, monitoring, and technical assistance costs.

The mission of SCDE's Office of Innovation is to foster sustainable innovation within South Carolina schools and to assist schools with innovation through professional development, research, evaluation, and grant funding. The Office of Innovation will oversee the use of all funds to ensure effective administration and disbursement of funds as well as the quality of activities implemented by the target sites. In addition, the Office of Innovation will act as a resource in developing, researching, and evaluating the grantees' innovative proposals for use of these funds in light of the needs assessment, overall focused strategy, and other resources available to that grantee.

2. Current Statewide System of Support and Plans for Capacity Building

In 2007-08, seven districts in South Carolina have been identified in Corrective Action. Under the options for corrective action presented through the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation, the state has chosen to implement fully a new curriculum in each of these districts. Support for these districts includes the following initiatives.

1. The Office of Federal and State Accountability (OFSA) within the SCDE assists in this process by providing funds for purchasing and printing the curriculum and by providing for supplemental materials to support the districts' resources. Professional development has been provided through initial and follow-up trainings tailored to district needs.

2. The OFSA has also collaborated with our regional comprehensive center, Southeastern Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), to conduct leadership training and to use surveys to evaluate the implementation process. External providers have conducted on-

site monitoring visits and have provided to teachers and school-level administrators ongoing curricular technical assistance to the districts.

Through the state system of accountability and support, schools are identified for ongoing support through the External Review Team (ERT) process. All of the proposed grantee schools are subject to this state process. The state process provides ongoing collaboration with the district through the assistance of an assigned ERT Liaison. The Liaison meets regularly with school officials to develop, revise, monitor and implement a Focused School Renewal Plan. The approved plan becomes the individualized ERT review instrument. The Liaison, the External Review Team members, district administrators, and the principal are responsible for the implementation of this year-long process.

Another area of support originates through state-level Academic Technical Assistance (ATA). Funding is provided to schools with absolute ratings of below average or unsatisfactory under the state accountability system to support initiatives spelled out in legislative budget proviso 1A.44. All of the proposed grantee schools are either unsatisfactory or below average under the state system. These ATA initiatives include homework centers, teacher specialists, principal specialists, retraining grants, other technical assistance, principal leaders, design and implementation of school renewal plans, and coordination for technical assistance personnel. The school must prepare a school renewal plan that includes actions consistent with each of the alternative researched-based technical assistance criteria as approved by the Education Oversight Committee and the SCDE.

Upon approval of the plans by the SCDE and the State Board of Education, the school with an absolute rating of below average will receive an allocation of not less than \$75,000, taking into consideration the enrollment of the school. A school with an absolute rating of unsatisfactory will receive an allocation of not less than \$250,000, taking into consideration the enrollment of the school and the recommendations of the ERT.

The funds must be expended as outlined in the school renewal plan which may include professional development, the Teacher Advancement Program, homework centers, diagnostic testing, supplement health and social services, or comprehensive school reform efforts.

The SCDE must monitor and report on the expenditure of funds and the academic achievement in schools receiving these funds.

Schools that fail to make expected progress under the school renewal plan are subject to additional state intervention. In 2007 (2005-06 state accountability ratings), 16 schools have been designated as Palmetto Priority Schools (PPS) subject to additional state interventions. The PPS Program has focused partnership and collaborative efforts on those schools that have not met long-term student learning goals mandated in South Carolina's Education Accountability Act (EAA). Three of the proposed grantee schools are currently PPS.

Because South Carolina has set high academic achievement standards (ranked among the highest in the nation), the number of schools and districts identified for improvement continues to rise. In 2007-08 school year, of the 500 schools served through Title I, 198 are identified for improvement, corrective action, and restructuring. Of the 85 school districts in the state, 42

districts are identified for improvement (an increase from 27 the previous year), and 23 are identified for corrective action.

All improvement funds under section 1003(a) are awarded to districts with schools identified in improvement and must be expended in these schools; however, the increase in the number of Title I schools has diluted the impact of these funds. The total available is \$7,146,472 for 198 schools, which averages to \$36,094 per school. In addition, an amount of \$376,130 of school improvement funds under section 1003(a) is being retained by the state to provide a statewide system of support to the 23 districts identified as being in corrective action for the 2007-08 school year. Receipt of additional School Improvement Funds under section 1003(g) will supplement other state and federal aid by providing to a limited number of schools an average of \$95,780, an increase substantial enough to make a significant impact on student achievement by increasing the capacity at the district and school levels.

Current Strategies that the state provides with section 1003(a) funds include:

- The curriculum facilitator allows the district to tailor assistance to its needs. In some districts, the facilitator works with data to analyze assessment results and provide support for remediation and intervention strategies. In other districts, the facilitator provides coaching and mentoring at the school, grade, or content level on standards-based instruction and best practices. Finally, in other districts, the facilitator assists with developing and using observation surveys to target and improve instructional practices.
- The OFSA is building collaborative relationships across SCDE division lines to coalesce and focus technical assistance to districts on the use of assessment to build higher levels of student achievement. This is an area for further development with our districts in Corrective Action.
- In the early stages of identifying districts in Corrective Action, the SCDE contacted our regional provider, Southeastern Educational Developmental laboratory (SEDL), to advise it on its partnership function and responsibilities. SEDL has played a vital role in our efforts to provide technical assistance and support to the districts. SEDL and the Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) assisted the OFSA in the initial year of assisting districts in Corrective Action. Based on the information gathered with their assistance, new efforts were initiated in the current year of implementation to provide a curricular facilitator to meet with district personnel, review a curriculum implementation model, assess the needs and provide support in the targeted technical assistance to the districts on an ongoing basis.
- In the districts in Corrective Action, professional development has been provided by trainers who have developed and used the curriculum to district- and school-level coaches who have received additional training, and curricular facilitators who have provided an external source of technical assistance. Key aspects of all levels of support, training and professional development have focused on building rigor and relevance components into the classroom to achieve comprehensive curricular reform.

3. Implementation of School Improvement Strategy or Strategies

The SCDE will implement at least one of the following strategies with section 1003 (g) funds:

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

The SEA will use student achievement data and other outcome-related measures to assess needs, identify weaknesses, plan effectively, implement efficiently, and improve schools and student achievement.

The Office of Innovation and/or consultants will assist and encourage districts with conducting needs analyses and curriculum review, developing a comprehensive plan of priorities to address the identified needs, and examining funding sources to build capacity to improve and sustain student achievement. To implement this strategy, the SCDE will encourage and promote the development of professional learning communities that work in teams to improve school climate and student achievement.

Strategy 2: Use 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.

The Office of Innovation and/or consultants will assist school districts in identifying research-based strategies and practices that can improve student achievement, implementing those strategies, and evaluating their effectiveness. A preferred method of implementing this strategy will be to support or develop professional learning communities that work in teams to identify the problem, research effective strategies, develop practices to implement those strategies, support implementation, and evaluate effectiveness.

Strategy 3: Create partnerships among the SCDE, LEAs, and other entities for the purpose of delivering technical assistance, professional development, and management advice.

The OFSA, the Office of Innovation, Southeastern Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), and/or consultants will work collaboratively to plan, advise, and provide appropriate and unique professional development and technical assistance to each district. In addition, these offices will draw on expertise within the SCDE (again across division lines) to serve the districts and help them build capacity and improve student achievement.

Because three of the proposed grantee schools are also state Palmetto Priority Schools, the SCDE will integrate state initiatives being implemented for those schools with the grantee schools. Under EAA guidelines, all schools face possible state takeover. Often, these schools have extremely high poverty rates (above 90%) and experience high rates

of teacher and staff turnover. To help these schools, the SCDE is bringing together multiple partners with diverse expertise, ranging from education to public health.

Current PPS program partners include the state Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement, which is co-sponsoring a Teacher Expo with the SCDE, the University of South Carolina, Clemson University, South Carolina State University, Francis Marion University, the Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, and the Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities.

Strategy 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.

Although an aligned curriculum and professional development has been provided to districts in corrective action, school-level personnel often need additional assistance and training on adopting the curriculum to their students' needs. Professional development will be provided by trainers who have developed and used the curriculum to school-level coaches who have received additional training, and curricular facilitators who have provided an external source of technical assistance. Key aspects of all levels of support, training and professional development will be focused on building rigor and relevance components into the classroom to achieve comprehensive curricular reform.

Under the state accountability system, a primary intent of the External Review Team Process for Collaborative Planning to Increase Student Achievement (ERT Process) is to bring about dramatic improvement in student achievement in schools with unsatisfactory absolute ratings. This revised ERT process provides ongoing support and collaboration with the school through an assigned ERT liaison. Schools will receive varied degrees of professional development and on-site support based on the years that schools are required to meet expected progress. The 2008 schools will receive the most intense on-site assistance and support.

Grantee schools with a state School Renewal Plan that has focused goals and evidence-based strategies/practices related to professional development may propose to integrate activities under the Plan with those under the grant.

Strategy 5: Implement other strategies determined by the SCDE 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.

As noted above, all of these schools are under state accountability review and have focused goals under a school renewal plan with ongoing support and review by an assigned External Review Team Liaison. Grantees may choose to propose that grant funds be utilized to implement specific goals under those plans that promote student achievement and that will transition these schools away from corrective action status.

Part B: Funded Awarded to LEAs

1. Allocation of Funds to LEAs

a. Funding Amounts

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) will allocate funds (\$1,724,039) to LEAs based on an application that eligible LEAs will complete and submit. This application will stem from the guidance regarding the School Improvement Fund State Application (2007) issued by the US Department of Education and on the Request for Proposals template used by the SCDE. The OFSA and the Office of Innovation will collaborate in creating and issuing the application to eligible LEAs. In their applications, LEAs must provide a plan to address the areas that caused them to go into corrective action or refer to what elements of their strategic plan.

To ensure that allocations to each eligible LEA are of sufficient size and scope to support the activities and outcomes, the SCDE plans to allocate a maximum of 18 awards of up to \$95,780 each to middle and junior high schools that are Title I, have failed to make AYP in students subgroups in both English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, are in REAP-designated districts, and are in improvement or corrective action as defined by *No Child Left Behind*. Setting the potential award above the \$50,000 minimum will ensure that awards are substantial enough to make a difference in the programs of these schools. The precise number of awards and exact funding level will be determined by the quality of applications and the requested budget amounts.

b. Greatest Need

The SCDE has defined greatest need by looking at existing resources and school performance. Eligibility for funding consideration will be determined by whether the school meets each of the following criteria:

1. Is a Title I designated school;
2. Has failed to make AYP in the each subgroup in both English Language Arts and Mathematics;
3. Is in improvement or correction action;
4. Is in a REAP district (rural and low-income); and
5. Is a middle or junior school (one or more of grades 6-8).

Because REAP districts have few businesses and a much smaller tax-base from which to draw resources, these districts lack the resources of urban and suburban districts. Historically, districts in South Carolina have paid greater attention to the early grades (elementary) while middle, intermediary, and junior high schools receive less support. We, therefore, propose to award these school improvement funds to the middle and junior high schools. The chart on the next page lists the eligible schools and districts.

SIF Eligible Districts and Schools					
District	School MS=Middle School	ESEA Status	State Accountability Status		
			2006	2007	
				Absolute	Improvement
Allendale	Allendale-Fairfax MS	Planning to Restructure	Palmetto Priority School	U*	U
Bamberg 2	Denmark-Olar MS	Restructure		U	U
Calhoun	John Ford MS	Planning to Restructure		U	U
Clarendon 1	Scotts Branch Intermediate	Planning to Restructure		U	U
Colleton	Colleton MS	Restructure		U	U
Dillon 2	J.V. Martin Jr. High	Planning to Restructure	Review for satisfactory implementation	U	U
Dorchester 4	Clay Hill MS	School Improvement -Y1		U	U
Dorchester 4	St. George MS	Planning to Restructure		U	U
Hampton 2	Estill MS	Restructure	Palmetto Priority School	U	U
Jasper	Ridgeland Jr. High	Restructure	Palmetto Priority School	U	U
Marion 1	Johnakin MS	Restructure		U	U
Marlboro	Bennettsville MS	Restructure		U	U
Marlboro	Blenheim Elem/MS	Restructure		U	U
Marlboro	Clio Elem/MS	Corrective Action		U	U
McCormick	McCormick MS	Restructure		BA	BA
Orangeburg 3	Holly Hill MS	Restructure		U	U
Orangeburg 4	Carver Edisto MS	Restructure		U	U
Williamsburg	Kingstree Jr. High	Restructure		U	U

*U=Unsatisfactory; BA=Below Average

c. Greatest Commitment

The SCDE will give priority to the low-achieving middle and junior high schools identified above that demonstrate the strongest commitment to using the funds to advance student achievement and improve school quality.

“Strongest Commitment” will be demonstrated by the integral involvement of key stakeholders, the strength of the tie between the needs assessment and the proposed strategies, the clarity of the implementation plan, and the integration of funding streams (local, state, and federal, including other Title I funding).

d. Future 1003(g) funds – renewal

South Carolina is facing an increasing number of schools and districts in corrective action each year. If additional funds are appropriated, it is likely that the SCDE will not renew grants but rather will look at the pool of potential grantees at that time and determine whether a new round of applications is likely to provide the best allocation of resources for students in our state.

If grants are renewed the schools must still be designated as Title I schools and must be making satisfactory progress toward goals for improvement and implementation.

2. Local Application Provisions

To be approved for funding, each eligible district will have to submit an application on behalf of the school that includes a narrative that addresses the following criteria:

1. Evidence of Need for Selected Strategy or Strategies
2. Implementation Plan for Selected Strategy or Strategies
3. Commitment to Participate in state level professional development and initiatives
4. Commitment to Project Management and Sustainability (including integration of key stakeholders and other funding streams to achievement outcomes)
5. Commitment to Participation in Evaluation (Monitoring, Data Collection, Quality Control)

Applications will also include a cover sheet and a project budget (with justification). In their application, each applicant must identify which of the five identified strategies will be implemented. This choice must be firmly based (and explained) on valid data and used in a needs analysis, and all outcomes must be measured with data that includes student achievement (Strategy 6). The selected strategy must be one that is reasonably likely to move the school in a positive direction so that it will ultimately move out of Title I school improvement status.

1. LEAs must use funds under sections 1003(a) and (g) to implement one or more of the school improvement strategies previously listed (C. above) and decisions about strategies selected must be based on a data-based needs assessment and scientifically based research.

2. The strategies must contribute to achieving the annual measurable objectives in school improvement plans [section 1116(b)(3)(v)], or to achieving the goals necessary for schools to exit corrective action and restructuring status, as appropriate.
3. The SCDE will assess the effectiveness of school improvement activities and disseminate information on what works to other LEAs in the state
4. Schools will be permitted to spend these funds for the entire Tydings Amendment period.

All funded applications must also participate in the SCDE's evaluation of the strategies implemented. All applicants will be required to report on the measurable outcomes of the strategies. To demonstrate progress on the measurable outcomes listed above, each LEA will be required to report the following information:

1. The total number and percentage of students who are proficient in reading/language arts and mathematics and whether that number and percentage increased from the prior year as measured by State assessments required under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.
2. Evidence that the grantee used data to make decisions about the use of School Improvement Funds and created a system of continuous feedback and improvement.
3. Evidence indicating those school improvement strategies that were effective in contributing to increased student achievement and schools' making adequate yearly progress and exiting improvement status.

Part C—Monitoring

The SCDE will use part of the retained administrative funds to evaluate and monitor the progress of funded applicants. An evaluator will conduct on-site visits, examine data collected, and provide interim reports.

In addition, all proposed grantees are already subject to monitoring under Title I and the state accountability system (see chart above). All grantees are currently subject to Title I reviews, state ERTL reviews, state accreditation reviews, annual state accountability reporting, and additional reporting required under various other programs, such as TAP. A cross-divisional team within the SCDE is beginning an effort to consolidate and streamline this reporting so that our most needy schools are not spending their limited resources on duplicative reporting. The SCDE anticipates that a portion of the monitoring and reporting will be conducted under a new streamlined system resulting from this team's efforts.