

School Improvement Grants Application

Section 1003(g) of the
Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Fiscal Year 2010

CFDA Number: 84.377A

State Name:North Carolina



U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202



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Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0682. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 100 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Purpose of the Program

School Improvement Grants (SIG), authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I or ESEA), are grants to State educational agencies (SEAs) that SEAs use to make competitive subgrants to local educational agencies (LEAs) that demonstrate the greatest need for the funds and the strongest commitment to use the funds to provide adequate resources in order to raise substantially the achievement of students in their lowest-performing schools. Under the final requirements published in the *Federal Register* on October 28, 2010 (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-10-28/pdf/2010-27313.pdf>), school improvement funds are to be focused on each State's "Tier I" and "Tier II" schools. Tier I schools are the lowest-achieving 5 percent of a State's Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, Title I secondary schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring with graduation rates below 60 percent over a number of years, and, if a State so chooses, certain Title I eligible (and participating) elementary schools that are as low achieving as the State's other Tier I schools ("newly eligible" Tier I schools). Tier II schools are the lowest-achieving 5 percent of a State's secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I, Part A funds, secondary schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I, Part A funds with graduation rates below 60 percent over a number of years, and, if a State so chooses, certain additional Title I eligible (participating and non-participating) secondary schools that are as low achieving as the State's other Tier II schools or that have had a graduation rate below 60 percent over a number of years ("newly eligible" Tier II schools). An LEA also may use school improvement funds in Tier III schools, which are Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that are not identified as Tier I or Tier II schools and, if a State so chooses, certain additional Title I eligible (participating and non-participating) schools ("newly eligible" Tier III schools). (See Appendix B for a chart summarizing the schools included in each tier.) In the Tier I and Tier II schools an LEA chooses to serve, the LEA must implement one of four school intervention models: turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model.

Availability of Funds

The Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2010, provided \$546 million for School Improvement Grants in fiscal year (FY) 2010. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) estimates that, collectively, States have carried over approximately \$825 million in FY 2009 SIG funds that will be combined with FY 2010 SIG funds, for a total of nearly \$1.4 billion that will be awarded by States as part of their FY 2010 SIG competitions.

FY 2010 school improvement funds are available for obligation by SEAs and LEAs through September 30, 2012.

State and LEA Allocations

Each State (including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico), the Bureau of Indian Education, and the outlying areas are eligible to apply to receive a School Improvement Grant. The Department will allocate FY 2010 school improvement funds in proportion to the funds received in FY 2010 by the States, the Bureau of Indian Education, and the outlying areas under Parts A, C, and D of Title I of the ESEA. An SEA must allocate at least 95 percent of its school improvement funds directly to LEAs in accordance with the final requirements (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-10-28/pdf/2010-27313.pdf>). The SEA may retain an amount not to exceed five percent of its allocation for State administration, evaluation, and technical assistance.

Appendix A provides guidance on how SEAs can maximize the number of Tier I and Tier II schools its LEAs can serve with FY 2009 carryover and FY 2010 SIG funds when making their LEA allocations for the FY 2010 competition. See Appendix A for a more detailed explanation.

Consultation with the Committee of Practitioners

Before submitting its application for a SIG grant to the Department, an SEA must consult with its Committee of Practitioners established under section 1903(b) of the ESEA regarding the rules and policies contained therein. The Department recommends that the SEA also consult with other stakeholders, such as potential external providers, teachers' unions, and business, civil rights, and community leaders that have an interest in its application.

FY 2010 Submission Information

Electronic Submission:

The Department strongly prefers to receive an SEA's FY 2010 School Improvement Grant (SIG) application electronically. The application should be sent as a Microsoft Word document, not as a PDF.

The SEA should submit its FY 2010 application to the following address: school.improvement.grants@ed.gov

In addition, the SEA must submit a paper copy of the cover page signed by the SEA's authorized representative to the address listed below under "Paper Submission."

Paper Submission:

If an SEA is not able to submit its application electronically, it may submit the original and two copies of its SIG application to the following address:

Carlas McCauley, Education Program Specialist
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3W320
Washington, DC 20202-6132

Due to potential delays in government processing of mail sent through the U.S. Postal Service, SEAs are encouraged to use alternate carriers for paper submissions.

Application Deadline

Applications are due on or before December 3, 2010.

For Further Information

If you have any questions, please contact Carlas McCauley at (202) 260-0824 or by e-mail at carlas.mccauley@ed.gov.

FY 2010 Application Instructions

Most of the FY 2010 SIG application is identical to the FY 2009 application. A new section for additional evaluation criteria (Section B-1) has been added and Section H on Waivers has been expanded. Section D on Descriptive Information (Section D – Part 1, Section D – Parts 2-8) has also been reformatted into two separate sections for the FY 2010 application, but all other parts of the application remain the same.

Consequently, except as provided below, an SEA must update only those sections that include changes from the FY 2009 application. In particular, the Department expects that most SEAs will be able to retain Section B on Evaluation Criteria, Section C on Capacity, and Section D (parts 2-8) on Descriptive Information, sections that make up the bulk of the SIG application. An SEA has the option to update any of the material in these sections if it so desires.

We are requiring SEAs to update some sections of the SIG application to ensure that each SEA focuses its FY 2010 SIG funds, including any funds carried over from FY 2009, on serving its persistently lowest-achieving schools in LEAs with the capacity and commitment to fully and effectively implement one of the four required school intervention models beginning in the 2011-2012 school year.

Note that while an SEA may be able to submit significant portions of its FY 2010 SIG application unchanged from FY 2009, we recommend that it review all sections of the FY 2010 application to ensure alignment with any required changes or revisions.

SEAs should also note that they will only be able to insert information in designated spaces (form fields) in the application because of formatting restrictions. Clicking on a section of the application that is restricted will automatically jump the cursor to the next form field which may cause users to skip over information in the application. Users may avoid this issue by using the scroll bar to review the application. However, due to these restrictions, the Department recommends that SEAs print a copy of the application and review it in its entirety before filling out the form.

APPLICATION COVER SHEET
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Legal Name of Applicant: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction	Applicant's Mailing Address: Mail Service Center 6351 Raleigh, NC 27601-6351
State Contact for the School Improvement Grant Name: Charlotte Hughes Position and Office: Director, Federal Program Monitoring and Support Division Contact's Mailing Address: MSC 6351, Raleigh, NC 27699-6351 Telephone: 919.807.3957 Fax: 919.807.3968 Email address: chughes@dpi.state.nc.us	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): June S. Atkinson	Telephone: 919.807.3957
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X	Date: December 3, 2010
The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to comply with all requirements applicable to the School Improvement Grants program, including the assurances contained herein and the conditions that apply to any waivers that the State receives through this application.	

FY 2010 Application Checklist

Please use this checklist to serve as a roadmap for the SEA's FY 2010 application.

Please note that an SEA's submission for FY 2010 must include the following attachments, as indicated on the application form:

- Lists, by LEA, of the State's Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools.
- A copy of the SEA's FY 2010 LEA application form that LEAs will use to apply to the SEA for a School Improvement Grant.
- If the SEA seeks any waivers through its application, a copy of the notice it provided to LEAs and a copy of any comments it received from LEAs as well as a copy of, or link to, the notice the SEA provided to the public.

Please check the relevant boxes below to verify that all required sections of the SEA application are included and to indicate which sections of the FY 2010 application the SEA has revised from its FY 2009 application.

SECTION A: ELIGIBLE SCHOOLS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Definition of "persistently lowest-achieving schools" (PLA schools) is same as FY 2009	<input type="checkbox"/> Definition of "persistently lowest-achieving schools" (PLA schools) is revised for FY 2010
	<i>For an SEA keeping the same definition of PLA schools, please select one of the following options:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> SEA will not generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools because it has five or more unserved Tier I schools from FY 2009 (SEA is requesting waiver) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SEA must generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools because it has less than five unserved Tier I schools from FY 2009 <input type="checkbox"/> SEA elects to generate new lists	<i>For an SEA revising its definition of PLA schools, please select the following option:</i> <input type="checkbox"/> SEA must generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools because it has revised its definition
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lists, by LEA, of State's Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools provided	
SECTION B: EVALUATION CRITERIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as FY 2009	<input type="checkbox"/> Revised for FY 2010
SECTION B-1: ADDITIONAL EVALUATION CRITERIA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Section B-1: Additional evaluation criteria provided	
SECTION C: CAPACITY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as FY 2009	<input type="checkbox"/> Revised for FY 2010
SECTION D (PART 1): TIMELINE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Updated Section D (Part 1): Timeline provided	
SECTION D (PARTS 2-8): DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same as FY 2009	<input type="checkbox"/> Revised for FY 2010
SECTION E: ASSURANCES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Updated Section E: Assurances provided	
SECTION F: SEA RESERVATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Updated Section F: SEA reservations provided	
SECTION G: CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Updated Section G: Consultation with stakeholders provided	
SECTION H: WAIVERS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Updated Section H: Waivers provided	

PART I: SEA REQUIREMENTS

As part of its application for a School Improvement Grant under section 1003(g) of the ESEA, an SEA must provide the following information.

A. ELIGIBLE SCHOOLS: An SEA must provide a list, by LEA, of each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III school in the State. (A State's Tier I and Tier II schools are its persistently lowest-achieving schools and, if the SEA so chooses, certain additional Title I eligible schools that are as low achieving as the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools or that have had a graduation rate below 60 percent over a number of years.) In providing its list of schools, the SEA must indicate whether a school has been identified as a Tier I or Tier II school solely because it has had a graduation rate below 60 percent over a number of years. In addition, the SEA must indicate whether it has exercised the option to identify as a Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III school a school that was made newly eligible to receive SIG funds by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010.

Each SEA must generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools based on the State's most recent achievement and graduation rate data to ensure that LEAs continue to give priority to using SIG funds to implement one of the four school intervention models in each of their persistently lowest-achieving schools, rather than using SIG funds to support less rigorous improvement measures in less needy schools. However, any SEA that has five or more Tier I schools that were identified for purposes of the State's FY 2009 SIG competition but are not being served with SIG funds in the 2010-2011 school year may apply for a waiver of the requirement to generate new lists.

An SEA also has the option of making changes to its FY 2009 definition of "persistently lowest-achieving schools". An SEA that exercises this option must generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools.

Regardless of whether it modifies its definition of "persistently lowest-achieving schools" or generates new lists, along with its lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools, an SEA must provide the definition that it used to develop these lists. The SEA may provide a link to the page on its Web site where its definition is posted, or it may attach the complete definition to its application.

Definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools” (PLA schools) is same as FY 2009

Definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools” (PLA schools) is revised for FY 2010

For an SEA keeping the same definition of PLA schools, please select one of the following options:

1. SEA will not generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools. SEA has five or more unserved Tier I schools from FY 2009 and is therefore eligible to request a waiver of the requirement to generate new lists of schools. Lists and waiver request submitted below.

SEA is electing not to include newly eligible schools for the FY 2010 competition. (Only applicable if the SEA elected to add newly eligible schools in FY 2009.)

2. SEA must generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools because it has fewer than five unserved Tier I schools from FY 2009. Lists submitted below.

3. SEA elects to generate new lists. Lists submitted below.

For an SEA revising its definition of PLA schools, please select the following option:

1. SEA must generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools because it has revised its definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools.” Lists submitted below.

Insert definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools” or link to definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools” here:

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/program-monitoring/grants/>

An SEA must attach two tables to its SIG application. The first table must include its lists of all Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools that are eligible for FY 2010 SIG funds. The second table must include its lists of all Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools that were served with FY 2009 SIG funds.

Please create these two tables in Excel and use the formats shown below. Examples of the tables have been provided for guidance.

SCHOOLS ELIGIBLE FOR FY 2010 SIG FUNDS								
LEA NAME	LEA NCES ID #	SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL NCES ID#	TIER I	TIER II	TIER III	GRAD RATE	NEWLY ELIGIBLE ¹

SCHOOLS SERVED WITH FY 2009 SIG FUNDS							
LEA NAME	LEA NCES ID #	SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL NCES ID#	TIER I	TIER II	TIER III	GRAD RATE

EXAMPLE:

SCHOOLS ELIGIBLE FOR FY 2010 SIG FUNDS								
LEA NAME	LEA NCES ID #	SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL NCES ID#	TIER I	TIER II	TIER III	GRAD RATE	NEWLY ELIGIBLE
LEA 1	##	HARRISON ES	##	X				
LEA 1	##	MADISON ES	##	X				
LEA 1	##	TAYLOR MS	##			X		X
LEA 2	##	WASHINGTON ES	##	X				
LEA 2	##	FILLMORE HS	##			X		
LEA 3	##	TYLER HS	##		X		X	
LEA 4	##	VAN BUREN MS	##	X				
LEA 4	##	POLK ES	##			X		

¹ “Newly Eligible” refers to a school that was made eligible to receive SIG funds by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010. A newly eligible school may be identified for Tier I or Tier II because it has not made adequate yearly progress for at least two consecutive years; is in the State’s lowest quintile of performance based on proficiency rates on State’s assessments; and is no higher achieving than the highest-achieving school identified by the SEA as a “persistently lowest-achieving school” or is a high school that has a graduation rate less than 60 percent over a number of years. For complete definitions of and additional information about “newly eligible schools,” please refer to the FY 2010 SIG Guidance, questions A-20 to A-30.

EXAMPLE:

SCHOOLS SERVED WITH FY 2009 SIG FUNDS							
LEA NAME	LEA NCES ID #	SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL NCES ID#	TIER I	TIER II	TIER III	GRAD RATE
LEA 1	##	MONROE ES	##	X			
LEA 1	##	JEFFERSON HS	##		X		X
LEA 2	##	ADAMS ES	##	X			
LEA 3	##	JACKSON ES	##	X			

Please attach the two tables in a separate file and submit it with the application.

SEA has attached the two tables in a separate file and submitted it with its application.

B. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Part 1: The three actions listed in Part 1 are ones that an LEA must take prior to submitting its application for a School Improvement Grant. Accordingly, the SEA must describe, with specificity, the criteria the SEA will use to evaluate an LEA’s application with respect to each of the following actions:

- (1) The LEA has analyzed the needs of each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA’s application and has selected an intervention for each school.
- (2) The LEA has demonstrated that it has the capacity to use school improvement funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA’s application in order to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention in each of those schools.
- (3) The LEA’s budget includes sufficient funds to implement the selected intervention fully and effectively in each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA’s application, as well as to support school improvement activities in Tier III schools, throughout the period of availability of those funds (taking into account any waiver extending that period received by either the SEA or the LEA).

Part 2: The actions in Part 2 are ones that an LEA may have taken, in whole or in part, prior to submitting its application for a School Improvement Grant, but most likely will take after receiving a School Improvement Grant. Accordingly, an SEA must describe the criteria it will use to assess the LEA’s commitment to do the following:

- (1) Design and implement interventions consistent with the final requirements.
- (2) Recruit, screen, and select external providers, if applicable, to ensure their quality.
- (3) Align other resources with the interventions.
- (4) Modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable it to implement the interventions fully and effectively.
- (5) Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.

SEA is using the same evaluation criteria as FY 2009.

SEA has revised its evaluation criteria for FY 2010.

Insert response to Section B Evaluation Criteria here:

Part 1

Each LEA with schools identified for Tier I and Tier II will be notified of eligibility in order to

provide an opportunity for submitting a Letter of Intent. Priority for funding will be given to LEAs submitting an LEA Application to serve its Tier I and/or Tier II schools. Applications and budgets for Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools will be prioritized for funding as outlined in section D(5) and D(6) of the SEA application.

Each application will be reviewed to determine if the LEA has sufficiently demonstrated an analysis of needs for each school, identified specific interventions for all schools, addressed capacity for supporting interventions, and budgeted to appropriately implement selected interventions within a specific timeline. The SIG Scoring Rubric for Tier I and Tier II schools as well as the SIG Scoring Rubric for Tier III schools is attached in Appendix D.

For each of the SIG requirements listed in the rubric, the LEA application will be rated as follows:

Leading	Developing	Emerging	Lacking
10 points	6 points	2 points	0 points

LEAs submitting requests for Tier I and/or Tier II schools will be prioritized for funding based on the total number of points received out of a possible 50 points total. LEAs submitting requests for Tier III schools will be prioritized for funding based on the total number of points received out of a possible 40 points total. An LEA Application that receives a rating of 0 for any required component will not be approved.

Part 2

In order to effectively assess the LEA's commitment to implement interventions throughout the period of SIG funding, DPI will utilize the Scoring Rubric (Appendix D) for each of the required components. Exemplars for each component are described as Leading in the rubric. DPI will provide funding to LEAs in priority for applications receiving the highest overall scores based on ratings described in section B(1). Descriptions must clearly demonstrate the following:

- Evidence of a thorough needs assessment clearly aligned to the selected intervention;
- Description of external partner/provider selection, alignment of resources, modification of existing policies or practices, and efforts to sustain the reforms;
- Capacity to support the interventions with adequate resources, monitoring, and evaluation; and
- Proposed budgets sufficient to implement the selected intervention.

In the LEA application, LEAs will have an opportunity to address any interventions that have been implemented prior to the receipt of SIG funds (see attached LEA Application). DPI will monitor the LEAs implementation of the interventions supported with SIG funds throughout the period of fund availability as described in section D(4) of this application to further ensure LEA commitment is sustained.

B-1. ADDITIONAL EVALUATION CRITERIA: In addition to the evaluation criteria listed in Section B, the SEA must evaluate the following information in an LEA's budget and application:

Please note that Section B-1 is a new section added for the FY 2010 application.

(1) How will the SEA review an LEA's proposed budget with respect to activities carried out during the pre-implementation period² to help an LEA prepare for full implementation in the following school year?

(2) How will the SEA evaluate the LEA's proposed activities to be carried out during the pre-implementation period to determine whether they are allowable? (*For a description of allowable activities during the pre-implementation period, please refer to section J of the FY 2010 SIG Guidance.*)

² "Pre-implementation" enables an LEA to prepare for full implementation of a school intervention model at the start of the 2011–2012 school year. To help in its preparation, an LEA may use FY 2010 and/or FY 2009 carryover SIG funds in its SIG schools after the LEA has been awarded a SIG grant for those schools based on having a fully approvable application, consistent with the SIG final requirements. As soon as it receives the funds, the LEA may use part of its first-year allocation for SIG-related activities in schools that will be served with FY 2010 and/or FY 2009 carryover SIG funds. For a full description of pre-implementation, please refer to section J of the FY 2010 SIG Guidance.

Insert response to Section B-1 Additional Evaluation Criteria here:

(1) For LEAs that choose to conduct pre-implementation activities, budgets provided within the FY10 SIG LEA application will be reviewed to determine if pre-implementation activities and expenses are directly related to full and effective implementation of the selected intervention model, both reasonable and necessary for implementation, address the LEA identified needs, and help improve student academic achievement. In Section E of the LEA application, the LEA must provide appropriate budget codes from the DPI Chart of Accounts indicating how funds will be budgeted to demonstrate allowable use of funds through pre-implementation activities.

(2) Technical assistance will be provided by the SEA in February, 2011, with a statewide meeting for current and potential SIG schools. The session will include North Carolina partnering organizations that may provide resources and professional development in support of any pre-implementation activities aligned to SIG models. Partnering organizations will focus on the development of school improvement plans aligned to SIG models, enhanced parent and community involvement relative to the model selected, and recruiting and hiring instructional leaders in SIG schools. In Section C of the LEA application scoring rubric (attached as Appendix D-Revised), the LEA's proposed pre-implementation activities will be evaluated to determine alignment to local needs assessment outcomes, alignment of other resources with the intervention model, appropriate communication and collaboration with stakeholders, and modification of its practices or policies to fully support implementation of the selected intervention model, sustain the reform efforts, and improve student achievement.

C. CAPACITY: The SEA must explain how it will evaluate whether an LEA lacks capacity to implement a school intervention model in each Tier I school.

An LEA that applies for a School Improvement Grant must serve each of its Tier I schools using one of the four school intervention models unless the LEA demonstrates that it lacks sufficient capacity to do so. If an LEA claims it lacks sufficient capacity to serve each Tier I school, the SEA must evaluate the sufficiency of the LEA's claim. Claims of lack of capacity should be scrutinized carefully to ensure that LEAs effectively intervene in as many of their Tier I schools as possible.

The SEA must explain how it will evaluate whether an LEA lacks capacity to implement any of the school intervention models in its Tier I school(s). The SEA must also explain what it will do if it determines that an LEA has more capacity than the LEA demonstrates.

SEA is using the same evaluation criteria for capacity as FY 2009.

SEA has revised its evaluation criteria for capacity for FY 2010.

Insert response to Section C Capacity here:

To determine each LEAs capacity to support its schools, DPI annually reviews district capacity based on specific criteria as a part the Statewide System of Support. Capacity is measured by a combined index of the Disadvantaged Student Supplemental Funding (DSSF) index and the low wealth percentage. Capacity should not be equated to funding levels.

DSSF index combines weighted "community" variables that are correlated to low student performance. It provides information on the student population.

- Percentage of public school students living in a single parent household;
- Percentage of students eligible for federal ESEA Title I; and
- Percentage of public school students who have at least one parent with less than a high school diploma.

Low Wealth index combines weighted financial variables that are a reflection of the LEAs ability to generate their own funds as compared with the State average. LEAs that fall below the State average are eligible for supplemental state funds.

- Anticipated Total County Revenue
- Tax Base per Square Mile (Density)
- Per Capita Income

Although the initial screening process as described above determines general capacity, the LEA must demonstrate capacity in its application for SIG funds by sufficiently describing how:

- Existing resources are clearly aligned to selected interventions including district and school staff that will be used to implement intervention;
- Additional resources that will be needed to implement the intervention have been identified;
- Specific annual goals and measurable objectives for each intervention implemented in the

schools align to the intervention model and the school's identified needs;

- A monitoring plan for ongoing review of interventions will ensure the fidelity of implementation steps; and
- Periodic evaluation measures clearly align to all of the measurable objectives for each school's progress toward achieving its goals with timeline and persons responsible.

The SEA realizes that specific conditions often exist within an LEA that may result in the LEAs lack of capacity to implement the rigorous intervention models with SIG funds. For example, an LEA might be able to demonstrate a lack of capacity if it lacks a sufficient number of school leaders (e.g., principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders) capable of implementing one of the rigorous interventions. Additionally, an LEA might sufficiently describe that it can best impact student achievement by focusing resources heavily in a subset of Tier I schools, attempting to turn around some schools before proceeding to others.

If an LEA does not choose to serve an identified Tier I school, the LEA may describe why it lacks capacity to do so in its application. LEA applications that sufficiently justify a lack of capacity to serve all of its Tier I schools may still receive funds for the remaining Tier I or Tier II schools. If DPI determines that an LEA has more capacity than it claims in its application, DPI will require the LEA to provide additional information and/or data to substantiate its lack of capacity to serve its Tier I schools. If the LEA cannot substantiate a lack of such capacity, its SIG application will not be approved for funding.

D (PART 1). TIMELINE: An SEA must describe its process and timeline for approving LEA applications.

Please note that Section D has been reformatted to separate the timeline into a different section for the FY 2010 application.

Insert response to Section D (Part 1) Timeline here:

The timeline for SIG funds is as follows:

- *February 24, 2011 – School Improvement Forum
- *February 25, 2011 – Letter of Intent for Tier I and Tier II schools due to DPI
- *April 15, 2011 – LEA Applications for Tier I and Tier II schools due to DPI
- *April 21, 2011 – Final Approval of LEA Applications for Tier I and Tier II schools
- *May 2, 2011 – LEA PRC 117/143 posted on BUDS
- *May 27, 2011 – (If funds are available) LEA Applications for Tier III schools due to DPI
- *June 30, 2011 – Final Approval of LEA Applications for Tier III schools

D (PARTS 2-8). DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION:

(2) Describe the SEA’s process for reviewing an LEA’s annual goals for student achievement for its Tier I and Tier II schools and how the SEA will determine whether to renew an LEA’s School Improvement Grant with respect to one or more Tier I or Tier II schools in the LEA that are not meeting those goals and making progress on the leading indicators in section III of the final requirements.

(3) Describe the SEA’s process for reviewing the goals an LEA establishes for its Tier III schools (subject to approval by the SEA) and how the SEA will determine whether to renew an LEA’s School Improvement Grant with respect to one or more Tier III schools in the LEA that are not meeting those goals.

(4) Describe how the SEA will monitor each LEA that receives a School Improvement Grant to ensure that it is implementing a school intervention model fully and effectively in the Tier I and Tier II schools the LEA is approved to serve.

(5) Describe how the SEA will prioritize School Improvement Grants to LEAs if the SEA does not have sufficient school improvement funds to serve all eligible schools for which each LEA applies.

(6) Describe the criteria, if any, that the SEA intends to use to prioritize among Tier III schools.

(7) If the SEA intends to take over any Tier I or Tier II schools, identify those schools and indicate the school intervention model the SEA will implement in each school.

(8) If the SEA intends to provide services directly to any schools in the absence of a takeover, identify those schools and, for Tier I or Tier II schools, indicate the school intervention model the SEA will implement in each school and provide evidence of the LEA’s approval to have the SEA provide the services directly.³

³ If, at the time an SEA submits its application, it has not yet determined whether it will provide services directly to any schools in the absence of a takeover, it may omit this information from its application. However, if the SEA later decides that it will provide such services, it must amend its application to provide the required information.

SEA is using the same descriptive information as FY 2009.

SEA has revised its descriptive information for FY 2010.

Insert response to Section D (Parts 2-8) Descriptive Information here:

(1) LEA Applications for School Improvement Grant funds will be reviewed by a team of internal and external reviewers with expertise in school reform initiatives such as comprehensive needs assessments, curriculum alignment, school leadership, and teacher evaluation. Each application will be independently reviewed by two (2) members of the review team.

If funds remain after DPI determines that sufficient funding is available to support the proposed plans for LEAs committing to serve its Tier I and Tier II schools, then the remaining SIG funds will be made available to LEAs with Tier III schools. Funds for Tier III schools will be prioritized according to criteria outlined in D(6). An LEA requesting to serve its identified Tier III schools will submit an LEA SIG Application for Tier III schools specifically to describe the needs, activities, and budgets for each of the Tier III schools it commits to serve.

Applications for all LEA Tier I and Tier II proposals will be reviewed by a team of DPI staff in order of priority to determine if sufficient funds remain to approve additional LEA applications for Tier III schools. LEA applications and budgets will be reviewed utilizing the criteria outlined in the Scoring Rubric provided in Appendix D of this application to determine if the LEA has sufficiently met the requirements for the use of SIG funds. Final approvals will be made prior to April 21, 2011.

DPI carried over 25 percent of its FY 2009 funds, and will combine those funds with FY 2010 school improvement funds (depending on the availability of appropriations), and award those funds to eligible LEAs consistent with the final requirements.

(2) Each LEA receiving SIG funds for Tier I and Tier II schools must annually report on the progress of meeting its goals. DPI will review required reports on an annual basis to determine if the LEAs School Improvement Grant requires revision.

The LEA must demonstrate progress with appropriate increases (e.g., increased the percentage of students that are proficient on state reading assessments), or appropriate decreases (e.g., decreased the total number of tardies in grade 6) on each measurable objective described in its application. Progress on locally established goals and objectives will be reported to DPI in June of each year of funding. Student outcomes will be reviewed after state assessments are administered on an annual basis.

For LEAs with schools not meeting annual goals as described in the initial application, the LEA must revise the implementation plan outlining specific steps that will be taken to ensure the success of selected interventions. Revisions and budget amendments along with annual progress reports will be reviewed to determine if the LEAs SIG funds will be renewed.

(3) Each LEA receiving SIG funds for Tier III schools must annually report on the progress of meeting its goals. DPI will review each school's progress on specific school-level data related to the use of SIG funds and the impact of the specific interventions implemented to determine if the LEAs School Improvement Grant requires revision. The general categories of review are as follows:

- Student Achievement Outcomes (average scale scores on State assessments, in the aggregate and disaggregated by subgroup and number of students enrolled in advanced coursework); and
- Progress on the goals and outcomes as listed in the LEA Application for Tier III Schools.

The LEA must demonstrate progress with appropriate increases (e.g., increased the percentage of students that are proficient on state reading assessments), or appropriate decreases (e.g., decreased the total number of tardies in grade 6) on each measurable objective described in its application. Progress on locally established goals and objectives will be reported to DPI in June of each year of funding. Student outcomes will be reviewed after state assessments are administered at the end of each school year.

For LEAs serving Tier III schools not meeting annual goals as described in the initial application, the LEA must commit to implementing interventions in Tier III schools aligned to the SIG models in order to continue receiving SIG funding for its Tier III schools. The LEA must revise the implementation plan outlining specific steps that will be taken to ensure the success of activities supported with SIG funds. Revisions and budget amendments along with annual progress reports will be reviewed to determine if the LEAs SIG funds will be renewed.

(4) The monitoring plan for SIG funds consists of the following elements.

Application and Assurances

In order to be eligible to receive funds, each LEA signs and submits to DPI the “Assurances for SIG Funds” which is included in this application. This list includes assurances which address the Recovery Act requirements for expenditures and reporting. Applications are reviewed by a regional consultant with final approval from the Section Chief of Program Monitoring.

Allotment

SIG funds are allocated to LEAs in accordance with SB 202, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Funds Appropriated, Section 6.6C. SIG funds are allotted in Program Report Codes (PRC) 117 and 143 to distinguish these funds from all other funds at the LEA. In general, allotments are issued to sub-recipients at the beginning of the school year and through the year as additional federal program budgets are approved or additional funds become available.

Budgeting Process

Budgets for federal programs, including SIG funds, are submitted to DPI via the Budget Utilization and Development (BUD) System. In BUD, SIG funds are budgeted according to purpose and object, using a chart of accounts aligned to federal requirements and limitations on the allowable use of funds. The BUD system also captures detail for salary line items, such as number of positions and monthly salary, and detail on equipment items over \$5,000. Federal program budgets are submitted annually through the BUD System, and amended as necessary during the year. DPI Federal program administrators are responsible for approving budgets for their programs. The Program Monitoring Section approves budgets for SIG funds.

Onsite and Desk Review Monitoring

Federal program consultants monitor federal grant sub-recipients on an annual basis. For LEAs receiving SIG funds, federal program staff will conduct on-site and desk reviews to determine the quality of interventions being implemented at each school identified in the LEAs initial application for funding. All LEAs receiving SIG funds will be monitored through on-site and desk reviews once per year beginning with the 2010-11 monitoring cycle. On-site and desk

reviews will be conducted for all schools in the LEA receiving SIG funds or participating in LEA-level activities provided with SIG funds. During on-site visits, DPI conducts documentation review, observation of interventions, and interviews with appropriate staff. Desk reviews will include documentation review, a comparison of the budget versus the expenditures aligned to the approved plan, and virtual interviews (e.g., phone conference, webinars, etc.) as appropriate.

In addition, monitoring will be conducted as a component of the North Carolina Statewide System of Support and in coordination with its pending Race to the Top grant plan. Some LEAs identified as having the least capacity and lowest performing schools, are encouraged to enter into a three-year agreement with DPI to provide intense resources and support. DPI staff members are assigned to assist the LEA on-site throughout each of three (3) years with ongoing need assessments, budget analysis, resource allocation, plan implementation, and program evaluation. For these LEAs, DPI coordinates monitoring efforts through a three-prong roundtable structure that provides for cross-agency collaboration and coordination of both monitoring and support.

Regional Roundtables consisting of appropriate DPI and Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) staff meet on a monthly basis to coordinate monitoring and support for districts and schools. For those districts serving schools with SIG funds, a function of the Regional Roundtable will be to ensure that interventions with SIG funds are implemented fully and effectively for the Tier I and Tier II schools as identified in the LEA application.

Monitoring of Expenditures

DPI monitoring of expenditures involves the use of several established systems and reports within DPI. These systems and reports are described below:

UERS: The acronym for the Uniform Education Reporting System. It is the legislated required accounting system specifications and processes designed to help ensure standard, accurate, reporting of accounting activity by the school systems in order to maintain uniform reporting of the use of various funds to the state.

Uniform Chart of Accounts: All LEAs are required to use the Uniform Chart of Accounts. This chart is administered and controlled at the State level. When a new grant or program is funded by the State or federal government, the initial chart is created, conferring with the program staff to ensure that only allowable expenditures are included in the chart. LEAs may request additions to the chart after the initial set up. These requests are made in writing and are only added at the approval of the DPI financial and program staff.

Financial Data Collection: On a monthly basis, each LEA is required to submit all financial data in a required file layout. The financial data include all expenditures from state, federal and local account, detail of all checks written and all payroll records by social security. All the LEAs financial data are run through a series of UERS edits to determine if the data are in compliance with accounting specifications. After the data have passed the UERS edits, they are validated against our Uniform Chart of Accounts to determine which expenditures, if any, have been coded to account codes that are unallowable or invalid. A monitoring letter is provided electronically to the LEAs listing all the invalid codes. LEAs are required to correct all errors.

Salary Audit: A large percentage of education funds are expended on certified personnel (principals, teachers and instructional support). In order to ensure that personnel expenditures are appropriate, DPI audits expenditures coded to certified personnel. All monthly payroll detail is loaded in to a Salary/Licensure database at DPI. This system audits combines the salary paid, the license of individuals and the chart of accounts. The audit process ensures the following:

- The person coded from the grant is certified in the appropriate license area;
- The salary paid from the fund is allowable according to State law; and
- Only persons with specific license areas can be paid from certain budget codes.

All LEAs have access to the audit exception list via a web application. DPI has two salary audit personnel to consult with LEAs and monitor the exceptions. All audit exceptions must be cleared.

Communication and Reports Back to the LEAs: A monitoring letter is provided electronically to the LEAs listing all the invalid codes. LEAs are required to correct all errors.

The following monthly reports are made available to the LEAs:

- Budget Balance Report (JHA305EG): This is the primary report used to reconcile expenditures which have been posted for the Federal Funds (by grant) for each LEA. The report shows the most recent total budget amount for the year, current month expenditures, current month adjustments and refunds, year-to-date expenditures, and remaining budget balance. If the expenditures do not have a corresponding budget, then the LEA will need to complete a budget amendment through the BUD system and the Program section to correct this.
- Cash Balance Report (JHA314EG): This is the primary report used to reconcile the cash certifications which have posted for the Federal Funds. It is in two parts; year-to-date figures (R01), and monthly figures (R03). This report shows the beginning of the fiscal year cash balance, the certifications recorded, the cash expenditures recorded, and the ending calculated cash balance. It also shows the amount of dollars still available (Authority to Draw) to be requested for the PRC.
- Federal Cash Zero-out Report (JHA903EG): This report is used to notify the LEA of the amount of the monthly cash zero-out for the Federal funds, by program. It is a summary report by PRC.
- Monthly Financial Reports:
 - DBS/MFR Match Report (JHA899EG): This report shows the comparison month-to-date and year-to-date between the DBS/MSA data (datafile) and the MFR data (LEA general ledger). Any differences on this report should be reconciled monthly.
 - MFR Error Messages Issued Report (PGA10RP4-E): This report provides all errors that must be corrected (in all funds).
 - MFR Verification Messages Issued Report (PGA10RP4-V): This report notifies the LEA of unusual transactions/conditions. Items on this report do not have to be corrected if they are valid transactions. If they are not valid transactions, then the LEA only needs to correct its general ledger. It is not necessary to notify DPI of these

corrections.

MFR Revenue & Expenditure Summary Report (PGA10RP5): This report is grouped by PRC. It shows all revenue and expenditure codes categorized by Fund: State, Federal, and Local. Each fund shows Total Revenues, Total Expenditures, and any Difference. Revenues and Expenditures should equal for State and Federal funds.

Monthly Zero-Out Process

DPI utilizes a zero-out process to prevent subrecipients from keeping cash on hand above the amount of reported expenditures. Each month the LEAs' federal fund balances are compared against expenditures reported. If there is excess cash above expenditures, the cash balance is returned to DPI. If more expenditures have been reported than cash requested, the LEA receives cash to cover the expenditures up to the periods authorized funding limit. In this way, cash balances are kept to a minimum.

Independent Audit and Single Audit Review

A single audit is required annually by the various federal and state agencies. This requires an outside, independent auditor to come into the school system to audit their books and records in accordance with the requirements of the program. The audit compliance supplement directs this audit. A State Compliance Supplement is prepared for programs funded by state or federal funds. Auditors utilize the Federal compliance supplements in OMB Circular A-133, as well as the State compliance supplements. In the State supplements, DPI can direct auditors to review certain areas for compliance with state or federal requirements. The auditor informs the user of the audit if the entity audited is using funds according to the grant specifications. If the auditor finds problems referred to as deficiency or a material finding, the issues are explained in the audit.

The Single Audit accountant at DPI reviews the single audits from all LEAs. When the independent auditor reports a material audit finding, DPI requests an action plan. When a Significant Deficiency or a Material Finding is reported on a Federal Program in the audit, the Single Audit Accountant makes a copy of the finding for the Federal Program involved. DPI may ask the auditor for the working papers on these for further review. In addition the school system may be provided with technical assistance to review and help correct the problem. In some cases, DPI will ask the school system to repay the money they received because they used the funds improperly.

All questioned costs (subject to a threshold that varies with the program) are presented to the appropriate DPI program administrator for review. The DPI program administrator has 30 days to review the cost and report back to the Monitoring & Compliance Section. The Monitoring & Compliance Section follows the recommendation of the DPI program administrator. If recommended, the questioned cost is recovered from the proper party. The Single Audit Accountant updates a tracking table at each step in the process, to provide for follow up.

(5) School Improvement grants will be allotted to districts committing to serve its Tier I and Tier II schools. If after funding all Tier I and Tier II schools DPI determines that sufficient funds remain to approve additional LEA applications, funds will be made available to LEAs for Tier III

schools. LEAs with Tier I schools, but have not committed to serving those schools may not apply for SIG funds for Tier III schools only.

LEA Applications will be reviewed and rated as described in Part 1 of section B in this application. LEAs that receive the highest rating as determined by the identified criteria in the Scoring Rubric will receive priority for funds. An LEA Application that receives a rating of 0 for any required component in accordance with SIG final rules will not be approved.

The SEA may determine that SIG funds allocated to an LEA may be less than what the LEA budget indicates is requested if the SEA determines that a lesser amount is needed to implement the proposed intervention(s) or if the SEA determines the LEA does not have the capacity to implement the proposed intervention(s). Final funding will be determined in consideration of the overall distribution of funds relative to geographical regions of the state.

(6) In order to serve Tier III schools demonstrating the greatest need, the SEA will allocate funds for Tier III schools in following order of priority:

- First - Title I eligible non-secondary schools that are in the bottom 20% of all schools in the State based on proficiency rates
- Second - Title I eligible secondary schools that are in the bottom 20% of all schools in the State based on proficiency rates
- Third - Title I schools in Restructuring
- Fourth - Title I schools in Corrective Action
- Fifth - Title I schools in School Improvement

(7) DPI does not intend to take over any Tier I or Tier II schools.

(8) In coordination with the North Carolina Statewide System of Support, DPI will provide direct services to LEAs for which the following apply:

The SEA has determined the LEA does not have sufficient capacity for implementing the interventions identified for its schools; and

The LEA enters into an agreement with DPI to allow the SEA to provide direct services.

While the SEA will not assume responsibility for implementing the intervention models, SEA services will provide support for the implementation of the models including data analysis, budget review, identifying resources for sustainability, and facilitation of professional development needs for staff.

Beginning June, 2010, DPI will develop and facilitate a statewide Title I teacher leadership program as described in section F of this application.

E. ASSURANCES

By submitting this application, the SEA assures that it will do the following (check each box):

- Comply with the final requirements and ensure that each LEA carries out its responsibilities.
- Award each approved LEA a School Improvement Grant in an amount that is of sufficient size and scope to implement the selected intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school that the SEA approves the LEA to serve.
- Ensure, if the SEA is participating in the Department's differentiated accountability pilot, that its LEAs will use school improvement funds consistent with the final requirements.
- Monitor each LEA's implementation of the "rigorous review process" of recruiting, screening, and selecting external providers as well as the interventions supported with school improvement funds.
- To the extent a Tier I or Tier II school implementing the restart model becomes a charter school LEA, hold the charter school operator or charter management organization accountable, or ensure that the charter school authorizer holds the respective entity accountable, for meeting the final requirements.
- Post on its Web site, within 30 days of awarding School Improvement Grants, all final LEA applications and a summary of the grants that includes the following information: name and NCES identification number of each LEA awarded a grant; total amount of the three year grant listed by each year of implementation; name and NCES identification number of each school to be served; and type of intervention to be implemented in each Tier I and Tier II school.
- Report the specific school-level data required in section III of the final requirements.

F. SEA RESERVATION: The SEA may reserve an amount not to exceed five percent of its School Improvement Grant for administration, evaluation, and technical assistance expenses.

The SEA must briefly describe the activities related to administration, evaluation, and technical assistance that the SEA plans to conduct with any State-level funds it chooses to reserve from its School Improvement Grant allocation.

Insert response to Section F SEA Reservation here:

DPI will reserve five (5) percent of the School Improvement Grant for administration, evaluation, and monitoring of its SIG funded implementations. Funds will be used as follows:

- Provide technical assistance to LEAs to assist with the plan development including the statewide meeting with current and potential SIG schools;
- Increase resources to support the application review process and monitoring requirements including contracts with outside experts;
- Enhance existing DPI data systems to include required SIG data reporting elements;
- Complete the evaluation process on an annual basis for each LEA receiving SIG funds;
- Increase direct services for LEAs determined to have low capacity for implementing interventions in coordination with the Statewide System of Support and the Race to the Top initiative; and
- Continue full implementation of the teacher leadership program as indicated in the 2009-10 application.

G. CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS: The SEA must consult with its Committee of Practitioners and is encouraged to consult with other stakeholders regarding its application for a School Improvement Grant.

Before submitting its application for a School Improvement Grant to the Department, the SEA must consult with its Committee of Practitioners established under section 1903(b) of the ESEA regarding the rules and policies contained therein.

The SEA has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its application.

The SEA may also consult with other stakeholders that have an interest in its application.

The SEA has consulted with other relevant stakeholders, including

H. WAIVERS: SEAs are invited to request waivers of the requirements set forth below. An SEA must check the corresponding box(es) to indicate which waiver(s) it is requesting.

WAIVERS OF SEA REQUIREMENTS

Enter State Name Here requests a waiver of the State-level requirements it has indicated below. The State believes that the requested waiver(s) will increase its ability to implement the SIG program effectively in eligible schools in the State in order to improve the quality of instruction and raise the academic achievement of students in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools.

Waiver 1: Tier II waiver

In order to enable the State to generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools for its FY 2010 competition, waive paragraph (a)(2) of the definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools” in Section I.A.3 of the SIG final requirements and incorporation of that definition in identifying Tier II schools under Section I.A.1(b) of those requirements to permit the State to include, in the pool of secondary schools from which it determines those that are the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the State, secondary schools participating under Title I, Part A of the ESEA that have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) for at least two consecutive years or are in the State’s lowest quintile of performance based on proficiency rates on the State’s assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics combined.

Assurance

The State assures that it will include in the pool of schools from which it identifies its Tier II schools all Title I secondary schools not identified in Tier I that either (1) have not made AYP for at least two consecutive years; or (2) are in the State’s lowest quintile of performance based on proficiency rates on the State’s assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics combined. Within that pool, the State assures that it will identify as Tier II schools the persistently lowest-achieving schools in accordance with its approved definition. The State is attaching the list of schools and their level of achievement (as determined under paragraph (b) of the definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools”) that would be identified as Tier II schools without the waiver and those that would be identified with the waiver. The State assures that it will ensure that any LEA that chooses to use SIG funds in a Title I secondary school that becomes an eligible Tier II school based on this waiver will comply with the SIG final requirements for serving that school.

Note: An SEA that requested and received the Tier II waiver for its FY 2009 definition of “persistently lowest achieving schools” should request the waiver again only if it is generating new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools.

Waiver 2: n-size waiver

In order to enable the State to generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools for its FY 2010 competition, waive the definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools” in Section I.A.3 of the SIG final requirements and the use of that definition in Section I.A.1(a) and (b) of those requirements to permit the State to exclude, from the pool of schools from which it identifies the persistently lowest-achieving schools for Tier I and Tier II, any school in which the total number of students in the “all students” group in the grades assessed is less than **[Please indicate number]** .

Assurance

The State assures that it determined whether it needs to identify five percent of schools or five schools in each tier prior to excluding small schools below its “minimum n.” The State is attaching, and will post on its Web site, a list of the schools in each tier that it will exclude under this waiver and the number of students in each school on which that determination is based. The State will include its “minimum n” in its definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools.” In addition, the State will include in its list of Tier III schools any schools excluded from the pool of schools from which it identified the persistently lowest-achieving schools in accordance with this waiver.

Note: An SEA that requested and received the n-size waiver for its FY 2009 definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools” should request the waiver again only if it is generating new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools.

Waiver 3: New list waiver

Because the State neither must nor elects to generate new lists of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools, waive Sections I.A.1 and II.B.10 of the SIG final requirements to permit the State to use the same Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III lists it used for its FY 2009 competition.

Assurance

The State assures that it has five or more unserved Tier I schools on its FY 2009 list.

WAIVERS OF LEA REQUIREMENTS

Enter State Name Here North Carolina requests a waiver of the requirements it has indicated below. These waivers would allow any local educational agency (LEA) in the State that receives a School Improvement Grant to use those funds in accordance with the final requirements for School Improvement Grants and the LEA’s application for a grant.

The State believes that the requested waiver(s) will increase the quality of instruction for students and improve the academic achievement of students in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools by enabling an LEA to use more effectively the school improvement funds to implement one of the four school intervention models in its Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III schools. The four school intervention models are specifically designed to raise substantially the achievement of students in the State’s Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools.

Waiver 4: School improvement timeline waiver

Waive section 1116(b)(12) of the ESEA to permit LEAs to allow their Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III Title I participating schools that will fully implement a turnaround or restart model beginning in the 2011–2012 school year to “start over” in the school improvement timeline.

Assurances

The State assures that it will permit an LEA to implement this waiver only if the LEA receives a School Improvement Grant and requests the waiver in its application as part of a plan to implement the turnaround or restart model beginning in 2011–2012 in a school that the SEA has approved it to serve. As such, the LEA may only implement the waiver in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools, as applicable, included in its application.

The State assures that, if it is granted this waiver, it will submit to the U.S. Department of Education a report that sets forth the name and NCES District Identification Number for each LEA implementing a waiver.

Note: An SEA that requested and received the school improvement timeline waiver for the FY 2009 competition and wishes to also receive the waiver for the FY 2010 competition must request the waiver again in this application.

Schools that started implementation of a turnaround or restart model in the 2010-2011 school year cannot

request this waiver to “start over” their school improvement timeline again.

Waiver 5: Schoolwide program waiver

Waive the 40 percent poverty eligibility threshold in section 1114(a)(1) of the ESEA to permit LEAs to implement a schoolwide program in a Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III Title I participating school that does not meet the poverty threshold and is fully implementing one of the four school intervention models.

Assurances

The State assures that it will permit an LEA to implement this waiver only if the LEA receives a School Improvement Grant and requests to implement the waiver in its application. As such, the LEA may only implement the waiver in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools, as applicable, included in its application.

The State assures that, if it is granted this waiver, it will submit to the U.S. Department of Education a report that sets forth the name and NCES District Identification Number for each LEA implementing a waiver.

Note: An SEA that requested and received the schoolwide program waiver for the FY 2009 competition and wishes to also receive the waiver for the FY 2010 competition must request the waiver again in this application.

PERIOD OF AVAILABILITY WAIVER

Enter State Name Here North Carolina requests a waiver of the requirement indicated below. The State believes that the requested waiver will increase its ability to implement the SIG program effectively in eligible schools in the State in order to improve the quality of instruction and improve the academic achievement of students in Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools.

Waiver 6: Period of availability of FY 2009 carryover funds waiver

Waive section 421(b) of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. § 1225(b)) to extend the period of availability of FY 2009 carryover school improvement funds for the SEA and all of its LEAs to September 30, 2014.

Note: This waiver only applies to FY 2009 carryover funds. An SEA that requested and received this waiver for the FY 2009 competition and wishes to also receive the waiver to apply to FY 2009 carryover funds in order to make them available for three full years for schools awarded SIG funds through the FY 2010 competition must request the waiver again in this application.

ASSURANCE OF NOTICE AND COMMENT PERIOD – APPLIES TO ALL WAIVER REQUESTS
(Must check if requesting one or more waivers)

The State assures that, prior to submitting its School Improvement Grant application, the State provided all LEAs in the State that are eligible to receive a School Improvement Grant with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on its waiver request(s) and has attached a copy of that notice as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs. The State also assures that it provided notice and information regarding the above waiver request(s) to the public in the manner in which the State customarily provides such notice and information to the public (e.g., by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its Web site) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice.

PART II: LEA REQUIREMENTS

An SEA must develop an LEA application form that it will use to make subgrants of school improvement funds to eligible LEAs. That application must contain, at a minimum, the information set forth below. An SEA may include other information that it deems necessary in order to award school improvement funds to its LEAs.

Please note that for FY 2010, an SEA must develop or update its LEA application form to include information on any activities, as well as the budget for those activities, that LEAs plan to carry out during the pre-implementation period to help prepare for full implementation in the following school year.

The SEA must submit its LEA application form with its application to the Department for a School Improvement Grant. The SEA should attach the LEA application form in a separate document.

LEA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

A. SCHOOLS TO BE SERVED: An LEA must include the following information with respect to the schools it will serve with a School Improvement Grant.

An LEA must identify each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III school the LEA commits to serve and identify the model that the LEA will use in each Tier I and Tier II school.

SCHOOL NAME	NCES ID #	TIER I	TIER II	TIER III	INTERVENTION (TIER I AND II ONLY)			
					turnaround	restart	closure	transformation

Note: An LEA that has nine or more Tier I and Tier II schools may not implement the transformation model in more than 50 percent of those schools.

B. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION: An LEA must include the following information in its application for a School Improvement Grant.

- (1) For each Tier I and Tier II school that the LEA commits to serve, the LEA must demonstrate that—
 - The LEA has analyzed the needs of each school and selected an intervention for each school; and
 - The LEA has the capacity to use school improvement funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA’s application in order to implement, fully and effectively, the required activities of the school intervention model it has selected.
- (2) If the LEA is not applying to serve each Tier I school, the LEA must explain why it lacks capacity to serve each Tier I school.
- (3) The LEA must describe actions it has taken, or will take, to—
 - Design and implement interventions consistent with the final requirements;
 - Recruit, screen, and select external providers, if applicable, to ensure their quality;
 - Align other resources with the interventions;
 - Modify its practices or policies, if necessary, to enable its schools to implement the interventions fully and effectively; and
 - Sustain the reforms after the funding period ends.
- (4) The LEA must include a timeline delineating the steps it will take to implement the selected intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school identified in the LEA’s application.
- (5) The LEA must describe the annual goals for student achievement on the State’s assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics that it has established in order to monitor its Tier I and Tier II schools that receive school improvement funds.
- (6) For each Tier III school the LEA commits to serve, the LEA must identify the services the school will receive or the activities the school will implement.
- (7) The LEA must describe the goals it has established (subject to approval by the SEA) in order to hold accountable its Tier III schools that receive school improvement funds.
- (8) As appropriate, the LEA must consult with relevant stakeholders regarding the LEA’s application and implementation of school improvement models in its Tier I and Tier II schools.

C. BUDGET: An LEA must include a budget that indicates the amount of school improvement funds the LEA will use each year in each Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III school it commits to serve.

The LEA must provide a budget that indicates the amount of school improvement funds the LEA will use each year to—

- Implement the selected model in each Tier I and Tier II school it commits to serve;
- Conduct LEA-level activities designed to support implementation of the selected school intervention models in the LEA’s Tier I and Tier II schools; and
- Support school improvement activities, at the school or LEA level, for each Tier III school identified in the LEA’s application.

Note: An LEA’s budget should cover three years of full implementation and be of sufficient size and scope to implement the selected school intervention model in each Tier I and Tier II school the LEA commits to serve. Any funding for activities during the pre-implementation period must be included in the first year of the LEA’s three-year budget plan.

An LEA’s budget for each year may not exceed the number of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools it commits to serve multiplied by \$2,000,000 or no more than \$6,000,000 over three years.

Example:

LEA XX BUDGET					
	Year 1 Budget		Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Three-Year Total
	Pre-implementation	Year 1 - Full Implementation			
Tier I ES #1	\$257,000	\$1,156,000	\$1,325,000	\$1,200,000	\$3,938,000
Tier I ES #2	\$125,500	\$890,500	\$846,500	\$795,000	\$2,657,500
Tier I MS #1	\$304,250	\$1,295,750	\$1,600,000	\$1,600,000	\$4,800,000
Tier II HS #1	\$530,000	\$1,470,000	\$1,960,000	\$1,775,000	\$5,735,000
LEA-level Activities	\$250,000		\$250,000	\$250,000	\$750,000
Total Budget	\$6,279,000		\$5,981,500	\$5,620,000	\$17,880,500

D. ASSURANCES: An LEA must include the following assurances in its application for a School Improvement Grant.

The LEA must assure that it will—

- (1) Use its School Improvement Grant to implement fully and effectively an intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school that the LEA commits to serve consistent with the final requirements;
- (2) Establish annual goals for student achievement on the State’s assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics and measure progress on the leading indicators in section III of the final requirements in order to monitor each Tier I and Tier II school that it serves with school improvement funds, and establish goals (approved by the SEA) to hold accountable its Tier III schools that receive school improvement funds;
- (3) If it implements a restart model in a Tier I or Tier II school, include in its contract or agreement terms and provisions to hold the charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization accountable for complying with the final requirements; and
- (4) Report to the SEA the school-level data required under section III of the final requirements.

E. WAIVERS: If the SEA has requested any waivers of requirements applicable to the LEA’s School Improvement Grant, an LEA must indicate which of those waivers it intends to implement.

The LEA must check each waiver that the LEA will implement. If the LEA does not intend to implement the waiver with respect to each applicable school, the LEA must indicate for which schools it will implement the waiver.

- “Starting over” in the school improvement timeline for Tier I and Tier II Title I participating schools implementing a turnaround or restart model.
- Implementing a schoolwide program in a Tier I or Tier II Title I participating school that does not meet the 40 percent poverty eligibility threshold.

APPENDIX A

SEA ALLOCATIONS TO LEAS AND LEA BUDGETS

Continuing Impact of ARRA School Improvement Grant Funding in FY 2010

Congress appropriated \$546 million for School Improvement Grants in FY 2010. In addition, most States will be carrying over a portion of their FY 2009 SIG allocations, primarily due to the requirement in section II.B.9(a) of the SIG final requirements that if not every Tier I school in a State was served with FY 2009 SIG funds, the State was required to carry over 25 percent of its FY 2009 SIG allocation, combine those funds with the State's FY 2010 SIG allocation, and award the combined funding to eligible LEAs consistent with the SIG final requirements. In FY 2009, the combination of \$3 billion in School Improvement Grant funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and \$546 million from the regular FY 2009 appropriation created a unique opportunity for the program to provide the substantial funding over a multi-year period to support the implementation of school intervention models. In response to this opportunity, the Department encouraged States to apply for a waiver extending the period of availability of FY 2009 SIG funds until September 30, 2013 so that States could use these funds to make three-year grant awards to LEAs to support the full and effective implementation of school intervention models in their Tier I and Tier II schools. All States with approved FY 2009 SIG applications applied for and received this waiver to extend the period of availability of FY 2009 SIG funds and, consistent with the final SIG requirements, are using FY 2009 funds to provide a full three years of funding (aka, "frontloading") to support the implementation of school intervention models in Tier I and Tier II schools.

The Department encouraged frontloading in FY 2009 because the extraordinary amount of SIG funding available in FY 2009 meant that, if those funds had been used to fund only the first year of implementation of a school intervention model, *i.e.*, to make first-year only awards, there would not have been sufficient funding for continuation awards in years two and three of the SIG award period (*i.e.*, SIG funding in FY 2009 was seven times the amount provided through the regular appropriation). Similarly, the estimated nearly \$1.4 billion in total SIG funding available in FY 2010 (an estimated \$825 million in FY 2009 SIG carryover funds plus the \$546 million FY 2010 SIG appropriation) is larger than the expected annual SIG appropriation over the next two fiscal years; if all funds available in FY 2010 were used to make the first year of three-year awards to LEAs for services to eligible Tier I and Tier II schools, there would not be sufficient funds to make continuation awards in subsequent fiscal years.

Maximizing the Impact of Regular FY 2010 SIG Allocations

Continuing the practice of frontloading SIG funds in FY 2010 with respect to all SIG funds that are available for the FY 2010 competition (FY 2009 carryover funds plus the FY 2010 appropriation) would, in many States, limit the number of Tier I and Tier II schools that can be served as a result of the FY 2010 SIG competition. For this reason, the Department believes that, for most States, the most effective method of awarding FY 2010 SIG funds to serve the maximum number of Tier I and Tier II schools that have the capacity to fully and effectively implement a school intervention model is to frontload FY 2009 carryover funds while using FY 2010 SIG funds to make first-year only awards.

For example, if a State has \$36 million in FY 2009 carryover SIG funds and \$21 million in FY 2010 funds, and awards each school implementing a school intervention model an average of \$1 million per year over three years, the SEA would be able to fund 12 schools with FY 2009 carryover funds (*i.e.*, the \$36 million would cover all three years of funding for those 12 schools), plus an additional 21 schools with FY 2010 funds (*i.e.*, the \$21 million would cover the first year of funding for each of those schools, and the second and third years would be funded through continuation grants from subsequent SIG appropriations). Thus, the State would be able to support interventions in a total of 33 schools. However, if the same State elected to frontload all funds available for its FY 2010 SIG competition (FY 2009 carryover funds and its FY 2010 allocation), it would be able to fund interventions in only 19 schools (\$57 million divided by \$3 million per school over three years).

LEAs that receive first-year only awards would continue to implement intervention models in Tier I and Tier II schools over a three-year award period; however, second- and third-year continuation grants would be awarded from SIG appropriations in subsequent fiscal years. This practice of making first-year awards from one year's appropriation and continuation awards from funds appropriated in subsequent fiscal years is similar to the practice used for many U.S. Department of Education discretionary grant programs.

States with FY 2009 SIG carryover funds are invited to apply, as in their FY 2009 applications, for the waiver to extend the period of availability of these funds for one additional year to September 30, 2014. States that did not carry over FY 2009 SIG funds, or that carried over only a small amount of such funds, need not apply for this waiver; such States will use all available FY 2010 SIG funds to make first-year awards to LEAs in their FY 2010 SIG competitions.

Continuation of \$2 Million Annual Per School Cap

For FY 2010, States continue to have flexibility to award up to \$2 million annually for each participating school. This flexibility applies both to funds that are frontloaded and those that are used for first-year only awards. As in FY 2009, this higher limit will permit an SEA to award the amount that the Department believes typically would be required for the successful

implementation of the turnaround, restart, or transformation model in a Tier I or Tier II school (*e.g.*, a school of 500 students might require \$1 million annually, whereas a large, comprehensive high school might require the full \$2 million annually).

In addition, the annual \$2 million per school cap, which permits total per-school funding of up to \$6 million over three years, reflects the continuing priority on serving Tier I or Tier II schools. An SEA must ensure that all Tier I and Tier II schools across the State that its LEAs commit to serve, and that the SEA determines its LEAs have capacity to serve, are awarded sufficient school improvement funding to fully and effectively implement the selected school intervention models over the period of availability of the funds before the SEA awards any funds for Tier III schools.

The following describes the requirements and priorities that apply to LEA budgets and SEA allocations.

LEA Budgets

An LEA's proposed budget should cover a three-year period and should take into account the following:

1. The number of Tier I and Tier II schools that the LEA commits to serve and the intervention model (turnaround, restart, closure, or transformation) selected for each school.
2. The budget request for each Tier I and Tier II school must be of sufficient size and scope to support full and effective implementation of the selected intervention over a period of three years. First-year budgets may be higher than in subsequent years due to one-time start-up costs.
3. The portion of school closure costs covered with school improvement funds may be significantly lower than the amount required for the other models and would typically cover only one year.
4. The LEA may request funding for LEA-level activities that will support the implementation of school intervention models in Tier I and Tier II schools.
5. The number of Tier III schools that the LEA commits to serve, if any, and the services or benefits the LEA plans to provide to these schools over the three-year grant period.
6. The maximum funding available to the LEA each year is determined by multiplying the total number of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools that the LEA is approved to serve by \$2 million (the maximum amount that an SEA may award to an LEA for each participating school).

SEA Allocations to LEAs

An SEA must allocate the LEA share of school improvement funds (*i.e.*, 95 percent of the SEA's allocation from the Department) in accordance with the following requirements:

1. The SEA must give priority to LEAs that apply to serve Tier I or Tier II schools.
2. An SEA may not award funds to any LEA for Tier III schools unless and until the SEA has awarded funds to serve all Tier I and Tier II schools across the State that its LEAs commit to serve and that the SEA determines its LEAs have capacity to serve.
3. An LEA with one or more Tier I schools may not receive funds to serve only its Tier III schools.
4. In making awards consistent with these requirements, an SEA must take into account LEA capacity to implement the selected school interventions, and also may take into account other factors, such as the number of schools served in each tier and the overall quality of LEA applications.
5. An SEA that does not have sufficient school improvement funds to allow each LEA with a Tier I or Tier II school to implement fully the selected intervention models may take into account the distribution of Tier I and Tier II schools among such LEAs in the State to ensure that Tier I and Tier II schools throughout the State can be served.
6. Consistent with the final requirements, an SEA may award an LEA less funding than it requests. For example, an SEA that does not have sufficient funds to serve fully all of its Tier I and Tier II schools may approve an LEA's application with respect to only a portion of the LEA's Tier I or Tier II schools to enable the SEA to award school improvement funds to Tier I and Tier II schools across the State. Similarly, an SEA may award an LEA funds sufficient to serve only a portion of the Tier III schools the LEA requests to serve.
7. Note that the requirement in section II.B.9(a) of the SIG requirements, under which an SEA that does not serve all of its Tier I schools must carry over 25 percent of its FY 2009 SIG allocation to the following year, does not apply to FY 2010 SIG funds.

An SEA's School Improvement Grant award to an LEA must:

1. Include not less than \$50,000 or more than \$2 million per year for each participating school (*i.e.*, the Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools that the LEA commits to serve and that the SEA approves the LEA to serve).
2. Provide sufficient school improvement funds to implement fully and effectively one of the four intervention models in each Tier I and Tier II school the SEA approves the LEA to serve or close, as well as sufficient funds for serving participating Tier III schools. An

SEA may reduce an LEA's requested budget by any amounts proposed for interventions in one or more schools that the SEA does not approve the LEA to serve (*i.e.*, because the LEA does not have the capacity to serve the school or because the SEA is approving only a portion of Tier I and Tier II schools in certain LEAs in order to serve Tier I and Tier II schools across the State). An SEA also may reduce award amounts if it determines that an LEA can implement its planned interventions with less than the amount of funding requested in its budget.

3. Consistent with the priority in the final requirements, provide funds for Tier III schools only if the SEA has already awarded funds for all Tier I and Tier II schools across the State that its LEAs commit to serve and that the SEA determines its LEAs have capacity to serve.
4. Include any requested funds for LEA-level activities that support implementation of the school intervention models.
5. Apportion any FY 2009 carryover school improvement funds so as to provide funding to LEAs over three years (assuming the SEA has requested and received a waiver to extend the period of availability to September 30, 2014).
6. Use FY 2010 school improvement funds to make the first year of three-year grant awards to LEAs (unless the SEA has received a waiver of the period of availability for its FY 2010 funds). Continuation awards for years 2 and 3 would come from SIG appropriations in subsequent fiscal years.

APPENDIX B

	Schools an SEA MUST identify in each tier	Newly eligible schools an SEA MAY identify in each tier
Tier I	Schools that meet the criteria in paragraph (a)(1) in the definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools.” [‡]	Title I eligible [§] elementary schools that are no higher achieving than the highest-achieving school that meets the criteria in paragraph (a)(1)(i) in the definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools” <u>and</u> that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the bottom 20% of all schools in the State based on proficiency rates; <u>or</u> • have not made AYP for two consecutive years.
Tier II	Schools that meet the criteria in paragraph (a)(2) in the definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools.”	Title I eligible secondary schools that are (1) no higher achieving than the highest-achieving school that meets the criteria in paragraph (a)(2)(i) in the definition of “persistently lowest-achieving schools” or (2) high schools that have had a graduation rate of less than 60 percent over a number of years <u>and</u> that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the bottom 20% of all schools in the State based on proficiency rates; <u>or</u> • have not made AYP for two consecutive years.
Tier III	Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that are not in Tier I. ^{**}	Title I eligible schools that do not meet the requirements to be in Tier I or Tier II <u>and</u> that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the bottom 20% of all schools in the State based on proficiency rates; <u>or</u> • have not made AYP for two years.

[‡] “Persistently lowest-achieving schools” means, as determined by the State--

(a)(1) Any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that--

- (i) Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater; or
- (ii) Is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; and

(2) Any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that--

- (i) Is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the lowest-achieving five secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, whichever number of schools is greater; or
- (ii) Is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years.

[§] For the purposes of schools that may be added to Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III, “Title I eligible” schools may be schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I, Part A funds or schools that are Title I participating (i.e., schools that are eligible for and do receive Title I, Part A funds).

^{**} Certain Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that are not in Tier I may be in Tier II rather than Tier III. In particular, certain Title I secondary schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that are not in Tier I may be in Tier II if an SEA receives a waiver to include them in the pool of schools from which Tier II schools are selected or if they meet the criteria in section I.A.1(b)(ii)(A)(2) and (B) and an SEA chooses to include them in Tier II.