



# Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street – Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001  
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Governor

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April 2011

**TO:** *High Schools That Work (HSTW)*  
Project Directors

**FROM:** Mark Williams  
Division Administrator  
Career Development and Preparation

**SUBJECT:** **Fiscal Year 2012 (FY 12) HSTW Continuation Guidelines – Sixth Year and Eighth Year (Maintenance) Sites**

## General Information

**Eligible Applicants:** *High Schools That Work* – Sixth Year and Eighth Year (Maintenance) Sites

**Grant Period:** The grant period will begin no sooner than August 1, 2011, and will extend from the execution date of the grant until July 31, 2012. Funding will be available to grantees on a continuation basis contingent upon satisfactory completion of the activities in the preceding grant period and a sufficient appropriation for the program.

**Proposal Due Date:** Mail or deliver three copies, two bearing original signatures, to:

Illinois State Board of Education  
Career and Technical Education Division  
100 North First Street, E-240  
Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001

Ensure receipt no later than **5 p.m. on May 31, 2011. No FAX copies will be accepted.**

**Contact Person:** For more information on these guidelines, contact the grant administrator assigned to your site at 217-782-4620.

## Background and Program Specifications

In July 2003, the Illinois State Board of Education became a participant in the *High Schools That Work* Consortium, a framework for whole-school improvement. The mission of *HSTW* is to create a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement in high school and the middle grades. To achieve this mission, *HSTW* has several goals:

- Increase to 85 percent the percentages of high school students who meet the *HSTW* reading, mathematics and science performance goals on a National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)-referenced exam.
- Increase the percentages of *all* high school students who perform at the proficient level to at least 50 percent in reading, mathematics and science, as measured by the NAEP-referenced *HSTW* Assessment.
- Increase to 85 percent the percentages of high school graduates who complete college-preparatory courses in mathematics, science, English/language arts and social studies and a concentration in an academic area, a career/technical area or a blend of the two.
- Increase to 90 percent the percentages of high school students who enter grade nine and complete high school four years later.
- Advance state and local policies and leadership initiatives that sustain a continuous school improvement effort.
- Have all students leave high school with postsecondary credit or having met standards for postsecondary studies to avoid remedial courses.
- Work in the middle grades to increase annually the percentages of students entering high school prepared to succeed in college-preparatory courses.

The intent of the initiative is to assist school districts by integrating and upgrading the level of academic and career and technical studies students receive in their coursework. For more information on the *High Schools That Work* initiative, refer to <http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/hstwindex.asp>.

School districts that participate in the *High Schools That Work* initiative must make at least a five-year commitment to do the following:

- put certain key conditions in place (see Appendix A),
- implement key practices (see Appendix B), and
- eliminate the general track – one that is neither college preparatory nor career/technical – in favor of integrating academic subjects with career and technical education.

During the next funding cycle (August 1, 2011 through July 31, 2012), grantees will be implementing their action plan for the *High Schools That Work* initiative, participating in staff development opportunities to learn more about the initiative, and collecting assessment data to refine their action plan and focus plans for school improvement.

In each school, a coordinator must be appointed who will oversee *High Schools That Work* continuous planning, staff development and technical assistance; collect data; monitor progress; foster communication; and integrate the *High Schools That Work* initiative with other school improvement efforts. Each participating school must have a site leadership team and four focus teams (curriculum, guidance and public information, evaluation, and staff development) to develop and carry out a data-driven action plan for achieving the goals of the program.

Each participating school must also send representatives to the following events to be held during the grant period. Grant funds may be used to cover the costs associated with these events (e.g., travel, lodging, registration fees).

- State-sponsored staff development activities during the fall/winter of 2011, including a Data Workshop TBD; the *High Schools That Work* Forum on March 13, 2012 at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois (tentative date and location); the Connections Conference on March 14-15, 2012 at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, Illinois (tentative dates and location); and during spring/summer 2012 as needed (locations and dates to be determined).
- National staff development activities and the annual High Schools That Work Staff Development Conference on July 11-14, 2012 (tentative dates), in New Orleans, Louisiana. (One person from each participating school is automatically approved to attend this event; travel by additional staff requires prior approval by the State Board of Education.)
- A two-to three-day Technical Assistance Visit or Technical Review Visit to other *High Schools That Work* sites.

The sites, which are scheduled to have a Technical Assistance Visit or Technical Review Visit, must host the Technical Assistance Visit or Technical Review Visit.

The purpose of a Technical Assistance Visit is to determine the extent a school is currently implementing key, research-based practices and has certain key conditions in place supporting improved student achievement. During the visit, the team observes classrooms, reviews school data and holds in-depth interviews with teachers, administrators, students and parents. These activities enable a team to identify outstanding practices, determine next steps and pinpoint priority challenges the school faces. An oral report is given to the school leadership team at the conclusion of the visit. The school receives a written report summarizing the team's findings and a number of recommended actions the school can take to address specific challenges. The report includes an extensive list of personal contacts and materials the school can use as it develops its improvement plan.

The purpose of a Technical Review Visit is to review/assess actions taken to implement the recommendations indicated for each challenge in the most recent technical assistance report and appraise improvement in student achievement. During the visit, the team observes classrooms, reviews school data and holds in-depth interviews with teachers, administrators, counselors and students. These activities enable a team to identify progress made toward addressing the challenges and determining next steps. An oral report is given to the school leadership team at the conclusion of the visit. The school receives a written report summarizing the team's findings and a number of recommended actions the school can take to address specific challenges. The report includes personal contacts and materials the school can use as it develops its improvement plan.

Each grantee must participate in the *High Schools That Work* Assessment, which will be administered in January – February 2012. Grantees must identify 60 grade-12 students to take the assessment, which consists of tests in reading, mathematics and science, and a survey of students' course-taking patterns and academic experiences while in high school. If a school's enrollment in grade 12 exceeds 60, then students must be identified via a random sampling. If fewer than 60 students are available, the entire grade-12 class must participate. The assessment takes approximately four to five hours to administer.

Assessment results will be provided to grantees the summer after the assessment. These results give grantees the unique ability to connect information on school and classroom practices with student achievement. A teacher survey will also be conducted in conjunction with the student assessment.

Grantees must include in their proposed budgets the cost of the assessment of approximately \$2,500 for 60 students.

Each participating school must also agree to the following requirements:

- Refine their three- to five-year action plan. Grantees must submit their plan with their FY 12 continuation grant guidelines. State Board of Education staff will review the plan and make recommendations for improvement. This plan must become a part of the school's overall improvement plan and address staff development needs and structural changes in the school's organization necessary to successfully implement the *High Schools That Work* initiative.
- Make any revisions that may be desirable in the staff development plan for the school's staff based on input from the four focus teams and other educators in the school.
- Support academic and career and technical teachers with staff development, materials, and time to work together to implement the key practices.
- Give school leaders and teachers the support and flexibility to define problems and to change what and how they teach.
- Give students access to modern career and technical education courses, working closely with employers and postsecondary institutions.

## Fiscal Information

The maximum grant award will be \$10,000. Funding will be available to grantees on a continuation basis contingent upon satisfactory completion of the activities in the preceding grant period. Allocations are preliminary, and payment under this grant is subject to passage of a sufficient appropriation by the Illinois General Assembly or sufficient appropriation by the U.S. Congress for federal programs. Obligations of the State Board of Education will cease immediately without further obligation should the agency fail to receive sufficient state, federal, or other funds for this program.

Grant funds may be used for:

- the salary and benefits of the coordinator (no more than 50 percent of the grant);
- cost of substitutes and stipends for staff;
- consultant fees;
- travel (including conference registration);
- training supplies/materials;
- communication expenses (telephone, postage);
- photocopying; and
- food-related expenditures associated with achieving the intent of the grant.

Funds may not be used to purchase equipment.

For purposes of compliance with Section 511 of P.L. 101-166 (the “Stevens Amendment”), grantees are advised that 100 percent of the funds for this program are derived from federal sources. The total amount of federal funding involved is \$130,000 statewide.

## Proposal Format

Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please use the following as a checklist in assembling your completed proposal.

- \_\_\_ **1. Applicant Information (Attachment 1):** Must include applicant contact information.
- \_\_\_ **2. Continuation Agreement (Attachment 2):** Each applicant is required to submit three copies of this form, two of which must bear the original signature of the district superintendent or official legally authorized to submit the proposal.
- \_\_\_ **3. Certifications and Assurances (Attachments 3, 4 and 5):** Each applicant is required to submit three copies each of the forms listed below, two of which must bear the original signature of the district superintendent or official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its contents.
  - Certifications, Assurances and Standard Terms of the Grant (Attachment 3)
  - Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion (Attachment 4)
  - *High Schools That Work* Program-Specific Terms of the Grant (Attachment 5)
- \_\_\_ **4. General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (Attachment 6):** Each applicant must describe the steps that will be taken to overcome barriers to equitable program participation of students, teachers, and other beneficiaries with special needs.
- \_\_\_ **5. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) (Attachment 7):** Each applicant must provide a brief but succinct description of how the funding received will support the activities and actions to meet the purpose and goals of the Federal grant.
- \_\_\_ **6. Budget Summary (Attachment 8):** Must be submitted on the form provided and signed by the district superintendent or official legally authorized to submit the proposal.

- \_\_\_ 7. **Budget Summary Breakdown (Attachment 9):** Must include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Budget Summary.
- \_\_\_ 8. **Proposal Abstract (Attachment 10) – Not to exceed two pages:** Must include school district/high school, principal, project director, site coordinator, site leadership team and focus teams composition, summary of work and expected impact on students.
- \_\_\_ 9. **Program Work Plan (Attachment 11):** Select, at a minimum, your **three highest priority** actions for FY 12 and **complete a Program Work Plan sheet for each.** The school, team responsible, chair(s), area for improvement, key conditions and key practices being addressed, school improvement goals being addressed, action needed, measurable objective and data supporting need must be included. Indicate activities, persons responsible, timeline, resources, monitoring and staff development needs in order to implement your action step.
- \_\_\_ 10. **Three-to Five Year Plan:** Include a copy of your three-to five year action plan with your proposal. This plan should be incorporated within your School Improvement Plan with the HSTW activities highlighted.

**Key Conditions  
for Raising Student Achievement**

- **A clear, functional mission statement:** Schools need a clear, functional mission statement to prepare middle grades students for challenging secondary studies and high school students for success in postsecondary education and the workplace.
- **Strong leadership:** Each district and school needs strong and committed leaders to improve, align and benchmark curriculums to high standards, to improve the quality of instruction and to raise student achievement in grades six through 12. At each high school and middle grades school, create a leadership team consisting of the principal, assistant principal and teacher leaders. **School and district teams participate annually in a series of leadership development workshops aimed at more fully implementing the *HSTW* design.**
- **Plan for continuous improvement:** District and school leaders create an organizational structure and process that ensures continuous involvement with faculty on what to teach, how to teach it, what students are expected to learn, how to assess what they have learned, and how they relate to each other, to the students and to the home and community.
- **Qualified teachers:** Middle grades and high school teachers have in-depth knowledge of their subject areas and of teaching strategies appropriate to students' grade levels. Middle grades teachers lacking majors in their subject areas are supported by the district to acquire them. The school and district employ teachers who have depth in their teaching fields and support them in learning how to teach well.
- **Commitment to goals:** School leaders and teachers are committed to achieving the *HSTW* Goals and implementing the Key Practices. School boards are committed to having all students complete a demanding academic core and either an academic or career/technical concentration. **Continuous review of local policies and practices ensures that a strong message of high expectations is sent to both the high schools and the middle grades.**
- **Flexible scheduling:** School superintendents and school boards permit high schools to adopt flexible schedules enabling students to earn more credits.
- **Support for professional development:** District and school leaders provide teachers with instructional materials, planning time and professional development for implementing new curriculums and research-based instructional methods.

## Key Practices for Accelerating Student Achievement

*High Schools That Work* sites are committed to finding ways to carry out the following practices.

- **High expectations** — Motivate more students to meet high expectations by integrating high expectations into classroom practices and giving students frequent feedback.
- **Program of study** — Require each student to complete an upgraded academic core and a concentration.
- **Academic studies** — Teach more students the essential concepts of the college-preparatory curriculum by encouraging them to apply academic content and skills to real—world problems and projects.
- **Career/technical studies** — Provide more students access to intellectually challenging career/technical studies in high-demand fields that emphasize the higher-level mathematics, science, literacy and problem-solving skills needed in the workplace and in further education.
- **Work-based learning** — Enable students and their parents to choose from programs that integrate challenging high school studies and work-based learning and are planned by educators, employers and students.
- **Teachers working together** — Provide teams of teachers from several disciplines the time and support to work together to help students succeed in challenging academic and career/technical studies. Integrate reading, writing and speaking as strategies for learning into all parts of the curriculum and integrate mathematics into science and career/technical classrooms.
- **Students actively engaged** — Engage students in academic and career/technical classrooms in rigorous and challenging proficient-level assignments using research—based instructional strategies and technology.
- **Guidance** — Involve students and their parents in a guidance and advisement system that develops positive relationships and ensures completion of an accelerated program of study with an academic or career/technical concentration. Provide each student with the same mentor throughout high school to assist with setting goals, selecting courses, reviewing the student’s progress and suggesting appropriate interventions as necessary.
- **Extra help** — Provide a structured system of extra help to assist students in completing accelerated programs of study with high-level academic and technical content.
- **Culture of continuous improvement** — Use student assessment and program evaluation data to continuously improve school culture, organization, management, curriculum and instruction to advance student learning.