



Illinois State Board of Education

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Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

June 9, 2008

TO: Eligible Applicants

FROM: Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): FY 2009 School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g)

General Information

Eligible Applicants: School districts are eligible to apply for those schools that were identified in school year 2007-08 as being in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under Title I, Part A, Section 1116, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

An eligible school district will apply for a School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) on behalf of a qualifying school within its district (see http://www.isbe.net/sos/excel/school_status.xls for a list of qualifying schools) and is expected to work with that school in completing the application. A district can submit a proposal on behalf of more than one school, but a separate and complete application must be written for each school.

Grant Award: Individual grant awards will range from not less than \$50,000 to no more than \$500,000 per school, with grants averaging between \$50,000 and \$250,000. The total amount of funding that will be available is \$5,386,259.

Grants will be awarded on an equitable basis by system of support region; it is anticipated that approximately 25 to 35 schools sites will receive funding. The system of support regions are listed below and a map of the regions can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/respro_map.pdf.

- Area I-A Chicago
- Area I-B-B West Cook
- Area I-B-C South Cook
- Area I-B-D North Cook
- Area I-C Northeast
- Area II Northwest
- Area III West Central
- Area IV East Central

- Area V Southwest
- Area VI Southeast

Grant Period: The grant period will begin no sooner than August 15, 2008, and will extend from the executed date of the grant until September 30, 2009. All approved activities must be completed no later than September 30, 2009, and carryover funds are not permitted.

Subject to future appropriations by the U.S. Congress, the School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) may be renewed for two additional one-year periods provided that the funded schools are meeting the goals in their school improvement plans developed under Section 1116 of ESEA.

Application Deadline: Mail the original and five copies to Attention: Gina Hopper, Grants and Programs Division, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, N-242, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001, to ensure receipt no later than 4:00 p.m. on July 15, 2008.

Proposals also may be hand-delivered to the following location:

Springfield Office
Information Center
1st Floor
100 North First Street

Chicago Office
Reception Area
Suite 14-300
100 West Randolph Street

Bidders' Conference: An audio teleconference will be held Tuesday, June 24, 2008, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. To access this conference, dial (800)-559-2403 and enter the confirmation number: 21937766.

Letter of Intent to Apply: Proposals will only be considered from those applicants that provide a letter of intent to apply to the State Board of Education no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, June 27, 2008. Letters of intent to apply should be sent to the attention of Cynthia Newman by mail at the address above, by fax to 217/785-9031, or by email to cnewman@isbe.net. Please provide the name and number of the district, the name of the school to be included in the grant, and the contact information for the district or school, including name of the contact person, phone number, and email address.

Contact Person: For more information on this RFP, contact Martha A. (Marti) Woelfle, Grants and Programs, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 62777-0001, 217/524-4832, or by email at mwoelfle@isbe.net.

Background and Program Specifications

Title I, Part A, Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) provides funds to eligible school districts for the purpose of providing intensive assistance to schools identified as in need of improvement under Section 1116 of the [No Child Left Behind](#) reauthorization. The purpose of the School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) is to improve student achievement, increase the number of schools that make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and use data to inform decisions and create a system of continuous feedback and improvement.

School districts receiving grants under the program must use the funds in schools identified for improvement in order to implement research-based strategies and practices. Schools must use School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) funds to carry out the school improvement, corrective action or restructuring activities as described in Section 1116. Funds are to be spent on practices that are designed to improve student achievement and positively affect the following measurable outcomes.

1. The number and percentage of students who score proficient in reading/language arts and mathematics as measured by the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in grades 3 through 8 or the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) in grade 11 will increase in school districts and schools that receive School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) funds.
2. School districts and schools that receive School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) funds will make adequate yearly progress and move out of improvement status.
3. School districts and schools that receive School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) funds will make decisions regarding the use of these funds that are based on data and will create systems of continuous feedback and improvement.

Schools must select one or more of the strategies required by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and listed below that it determines will be the most effective in building the school district's and funded school's capacity to improve student achievement and move the school out of improvement status. The selection of the strategies must be based on data that reflect the district's and school's individual circumstances. For instance, a district or school may look at each student subgroup not meeting AYP and investigate the research to determine which practice has the highest likelihood of increasing the achievement of that particular group of students. Those selected practices then become appropriate to be supported by School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) funds.

Each of the strategies is described below.

USDE Required Strategies

- 1. Schools will coordinate with Regional System of Support Providers (RESPRO) Support Teams to develop a professional development plan that is designed to build the capacity of the school staff and is informed by student achievement and outcome-related measures.**

Each school will work with a RESPRO team to create a professional development plan that takes into consideration the various needs of the entire instructional staff. The plan must be systemic in behavior-changing approaches that foster collaboration and increase teacher knowledge of best practices. The plan must:

- Include instructional teams that meet regularly to examine student work, collaborate on lesson design, and implement tiered instruction;
- Align with the National Staff Development Council Standards for Staff Development (see <http://www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm>) that focus on context, process, and content standards; and
- Provide time for all staff to collaborate and plan strategy implementation.

- 2. Schools will target research-based strategies to change instructional practice in order to address the academic achievement problems that led to the school being identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.**

Each school will develop a plan that clearly identifies the expected outcomes for students. Plans will include, but not be limited to, data retreats, professional learning communities and continual self-monitoring of individually targeted student progress.

Additionally, each school will explore tools that identify the local alignment of curricula, such as the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum, curriculum mapping, or other tools that align with the Illinois Learning Standards. This will provide the school with research-based data to focus on the curriculum areas that need improvement. From the curriculum gap analysis, the school will need to write strategies that support these efforts.

Schools will implement scientifically based research programs that will enable differentiated instruction. The school and the district must approach educating all students using progress-monitoring instruments, data analysis, collaborative decision-making, tiered and differentiated instruction, parental involvement, and access to a standards-aligned core curriculum.

3. Schools will create partnerships among external entities through the RESPROs or other external partners to obtain technical assistance, professional development, and management advice.

Through the RESPROs, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) currently works with three major organizations that provide professional development opportunities throughout Illinois, which are not financed with Title I funds: the Illinois Association of School Administrators, the Illinois Principals Association, and the Illinois Association of School Boards. Each organization provides important professional development in the area of school improvement, which will be made available to the School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) grantees. Grantees will be encouraged to create additional partnerships that can be cultivated to leverage assistance in meeting the individual needs of each school.

4. Schools must strengthen the parental involvement component of the school improvement plan and must work with their School Support Team members and other technical assistance providers to provide opportunities for parents to become more involved in the educational process.

The school improvement plan template in the Interactive Illinois Report Card (IIRC) includes parental involvement strategies for each objective of the plan. Parents will be informed of the school improvement process and through the School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) will be provided opportunities to become more involved in the education of their children. Schools will incorporate specific goals into their parental involvement component to:

- a. strengthen family-school connections,
- b. engage parents in children’s learning, and
- c. improve student academic and social learning.

5. Schools will implement other strategies determined by the school district, as appropriate, for which data indicate the strategy is likely to result in improved teaching and learning in schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

Schools will be required to plan for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting individualized student data in order to adjust the daily instruction to promote student outcomes. School improvement

teams at the local level will work with RESPROS to create a plan for how to use funds to provide differentiated instruction based on the data in each school.

Responsibilities of School Districts

Each **district** that receives School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) funds must commit to the following:

- Conduct a review of district reform strategies and efforts currently in place and leverage other federal, state, and local funds to support the school improvement efforts;
- Fulfill all LEA requirements of Section 1116 of NCLB, such as offering public school choice and supplemental educational services; taking corrective action; planning and/or implementing restructuring plans; and notifying parents;
- Coordinate district resources to support each funded school in its improvement efforts, including providing professional development to instructional staff and leaders, using student achievement data and instructional strategies to improve the academic achievement of the students in their schools, and assisting the school in implementing its school improvement plan;
- Support the funded school's Title I improvement goals, as well as relevant school improvement or restructuring plans and professional development plans.

Responsibilities of Funded Schools

Schools must agree to:

- Review and analyze school data, including pupil scores and parent, staff, student and community surveys; identify and prioritize needs; and establish strategies needed to improve academic achievement and make progress toward making AYP;
- Ensure that staff participates in ongoing, intensive professional development. Professional development should use student achievement data that are focused on instructional strategies to improve the academic achievement of the students, with particular emphasis on content areas and subgroups failing to make AYP;
- Establish research-based interventions that support a strong relationship with student achievement (e.g., tiered instruction, extending learning day, rigorous standards-aligned curriculum); and
- Track progress toward meeting plan goals and benchmarks.

Fiscal Information

The total amount of funding that will be available for the School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) in FY 2009 is \$5,386,259. Individual grant awards will range from not less than \$50,000 to no more than \$500,000 per school, with grants averaging between \$50,000 and \$250,000.

Grantees may apply for two additional one-year periods of level funding, subject to appropriations by U.S. Congress and each funded school meeting the goals in its school improvement plans developed under Section 1116 of NCLB.

USES OF FUNDS

School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) funds must be used to supplement the level of funds that, in the absence of the Title I monies, would be made available from non-federal sources for the education of children participating in Title I programs. Therefore, **funds cannot supplant non-federal funds or be used to replace existing services.**

Improvement funds *must be tracked separately* from the Title I Basic Grant and the Section 1003(a) School Improvement Grant. Local fiscal agents are to place improvement funds in a Title I account assigned for school improvement. [This funding number must not be the same number as is used for the Title I Basic Grant award or Section 1003(a) School Improvement Grant.] Carryover funds are not permitted.

Since these are school improvement funds, districts may not combine funds into one account, and the amount awarded to each school must be spent on improvement initiatives at that school.

The CFDA (Code of Federal Domestic Assistance) Number for this grant is #84.377A.

School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) funds may be used for the following purposes, to include, but not be limited to:

- **Improving instruction for students**
 - Increase time in the school day spent on English language arts (ELA) and/or mathematics instruction.
 - Increase the length of the school day or the number of days in school and use the increased time to focus on ELA and/or math.
 - Hire instructional coaches in the areas of mathematics and/or reading.
 - Improve instruction at the high school level, including providing access to high-quality, standards-aligned curriculum and equity for all students.

- **Improving opportunities for parental involvement**
 - Increase opportunities for parents to participate in the school.
 - Increase parental involvement in school governance.
 - Assist parents in knowing how to help their children academically at home.

- **Providing choices for parents and students**
 - Increase opportunities for public school choice.
 - Increase opportunities for supplemental educational services for eligible students.

- **Implement corrective actions or restructuring options**
 - Appoint one or more outside experts to advise the school on how to revise and strengthen the improvement plan it created while in school improvement status and address the specific issues underlying the school’s continued inability to make AYP.
 - Institute a new curriculum grounded in scientifically based research and provide appropriate professional development to support its implementation.
 - Implement an alternative governance arrangement as allowable under NCLB and approved by ISBE.
 - Address curriculum mapping and alignment, and/or conduct curriculum audits.
 - Contract with an outside entity to provide professional development in areas relating to the cause(s) of AYP status.
 - Contract a turnaround coach/specialist with documented record of success of improving student achievement.
 - Contract with a school improvement specialist to implement and monitor the improvement planning process and efforts towards achieving School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) goals.

- **Professional Development for School Staff**
 - Use coaches (literacy, math) to support school improvement in the area(s) not making adequate yearly progress.
 - Assist in the improvement of the written and taught curriculum and assessments.
 - Contract with outside entity to provide support to the established and approved professional development plan that has been reviewed by the RESPRO.

For purposes of compliance with Section 511 of P.L. 101-166 (the “Stevens Amendment”), applicants are advised that 100 percent of the funds for this program are derived from federal sources. The total amount of federal funding involved is \$5,386,259.

Proposal Format

The applicant must complete a separate and complete application for each school to be included in its proposal. The school is to develop the proposal in coordination and consultation with the submitting district.

Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please use the following as a checklist in assembling completed proposal for each school to be included.

- ___ **1. Cover Page (Attachment 1):** Must be signed by the principal of the school and the school district superintendent.

- ___ **2. Proposal Abstract (Attachment 2):** Briefly describe the overall objectives and activities of the project. This is not to exceed one page.

- ___ **3. Proposal Narrative (Attachment 2A – limit to 10 pages):** Use Attachment 2A to address each of the following Narrative Requirements in the order as presented below. The narrative should be completed by or in consultation with staff from the school proposed for funding and

by district personnel where applicable. Please note that the point values correspond to the “Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals”, beginning on page 10, and applicants are encouraged to review those criteria before completing their narratives.

The Proposal Narrative should be limited to no more than 10 pages, excluding required appendices, using the following standards: 1) a “page” is 8.5” x 11” on one side only, with 1” margins at the top, bottom, and both sides; 2) double space all text; 3) use a 12-point or larger font; and 4) number the pages consecutively. Please label each response with the number of the section and number of the question (example: I.1., I.2., I.3). Label any optional appendices consecutively as they appear in the proposal.

SECTION I: NEED (25 points)

Both the district and the school must provide evidence of greatest need by focusing on improvement status; reading and math achievement results, as measured by the ISAT or the PSAE; poverty level; and the school’s ability to leverage the resources currently available to the district.

1. Describe the procedure that the district used to select the school to receive funding under the grant.
2. Explain the rationale for the school’s inclusion in this application and its need to improve student achievement.
3. Explain how subgroups within the school are performing and possible areas to target for improvement.
4. Describe the ability of the school to leverage all funds (in particular, other ESEA funds) and resources to work together to support school improvement efforts.
5. Include as Appendix A the school’s academic status and poverty level, as copied from the IIRC charts, Section I-A: Data & Analysis - Report Card Data, Item I and Item 3 (see <http://iirc.niu.edu/>).

SECTION II: COMMITMENT (45 points)

Evidence of strongest commitment will be demonstrated through district and school staff’s commitment to implement the plan; school district support; and commitment to the use of scientifically based research, collaboration, and parental involvement.

1. Describe the school staff’s support of the school improvement application and their support of the proposed efforts to effect change in the school. Include as Appendix B a letter signed by at least 80 percent of the school’s staff supporting the proposed changes to be made under the grant. Additional evidence of support, as applicable, may also be included in Appendix B.
2. Explain the school district’s ability to support systemic change and what the current reality for needed change is at the school.
3. Describe the school’s academic growth for the past five years as determined by the ISAT or PSAE. Include as Appendix C the academic results, including reading and mathematics, as copied from the IIRC charts, Section 1-A: Data & Analysis – Report Card Data, Item 8.

4. Describe the commitment of each school to using data and scientifically-based research to guide tiered instruction for all students to learn.
5. Discuss how each school will provide time for collaboration and develop a schedule that promotes collaboration. Include as Appendix D a school schedule showing time for these activities.
6. Describe the school's collaboration and involvement of parents and the community.

SECTION III: PROPOSED ACTIVITIES (30 points)

1. Describe at least one of the five USDE school improvement strategies that the school will use as a focus for its school improvement plan (see "Background and Program Specifications", beginning on page 3).
2. Explain how each school will use data to plan and guide decision-making. Include an outline of assessments used by grade level. A chart may be included as an appendix that summarizes this information.
3. Discuss how the school will use data to develop improvement goals based on AYP groups in need.
4. Discuss how the school has a clearly defined procedure in place for writing a professional development plan that aligns to the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) Standards for Staff Development (<http://www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm>) that focuses on context standards, process standards and content standards.
5. Describe how the school plans to adjust instruction based on progress monitoring and data results collected. Include how the school will ensure that all administrators and teachers are able to access and monitor each student's progress and analyze the results.
6. Describe how the school will collect, analyze and share data with internal and external users. Include how the information gathered from each assessment will be used to inform instruction and design professional development.
7. List the individuals and job titles of the central office and school personnel who will oversee a school receiving School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) funds. Include the percentage of time dedicated to oversight of the school. Job descriptions may be included as an appendix.
8. Explain specific school improvement technical assistance and evaluation responsibilities needed. Include personnel who will be responsible for coordinating such services.

- ___ **4. Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 3):** This must be submitted on the form provided and signed by the district superintendent. The payment schedule should be based on the projected date of expenditures. Salaries and fringe benefits should be requested in equal intervals on the schedule. Supplies, equipment, contracted services and professional development should be requested in the month for which the expenditure is anticipated.
- ___ **5. Budget Breakdown (Attachment 4):** Must include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Budget Summary. Must include subcontract information, if applicable (see item 7 of the document titled "Certification and Assurances, and Standard Terms of the Grant," Attachment 5).
- ___ **6. Certifications and Assurances (Attachment 5 through 9):** Each school district is required to submit the certification forms attached ("Certification and Assurances, and Standard Terms of the Grant", "Certification Regarding Debarment", "Certification Regarding Lobbying", and

“School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) Program-Specific Terms of the Grant”). These must be signed by the official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its contents.

7. **Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (Attachment 9):** Include a statement of how the School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) program will promote equity, including a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to overcome barriers to equitable program participation for students, teachers, and other beneficiaries with special needs, as required under Section 427 of the *General Education Provisions Act* (GEPA).

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

Each school’s proposal will be reviewed and evaluated in comparison to other proposals received from all schools located in a particular system of support region (see http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/respro_map.pdf) according to the criteria listed below. Total possible points is 100. A high school proposed for funding may be awarded 10 bonus points if its student achievement scores, as measured by the PSAE, are in the bottom 3 percent of all high schools statewide and the school is in improvement status.

Need (25 points)

Academic Status and Poverty Level (20 points)

State Board of Education staff will assign points as indicated below relative to the academic status and poverty level of each school included in the proposal. The ranking will be conducted using data from the 2007-2008 school year that the applicant has provided from the IIRC.

Improvement Status	Points Awarded	Math Achievement	Points Awarded	Reading Achievement	Points Awarded	Poverty	Points Awarded
Restructuring Implementation	5	< 25% meets/exceeds	5	< 25% meets/exceeds	5	>75%	5
Restructuring Planning	3	25-50% meets/exceeds	3	25-50% meets/exceeds	3	50-74%	3
Corrective Action	1	51-74% meets/exceeds	1	51-74% meets/exceeds	1	35-49%	1
		>75% meets/exceeds	0	>75% meets/exceeds	0	<35%	0

School Selection Process and Ability to Leverage Resources (5 points)

STRONG 25-18 points	MODERATE 17-10 points	LIMITED 9-1 points	NOT PROVIDED 0 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedure for selecting the school for the application is clearly explained with specific discussion and data provided of the student achievement results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedure for selecting school is provided. Data are provided but one of the elements is not provided (AYP, student achievement in math and reading). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explanation for process is not justified or supported by data provided. Weak or missing rationale for school application. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence is not provided.

STRONG 25-18 points	MODERATE 17-10 points	LIMITED 9-1 points	NOT PROVIDED 0 points
<p>and current AYP status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The rationale for how the school will be included is clear and the subgroups are discussed with specificity that allows the reader to understand the current achievement in the school. ♦ Possible areas for targeted improvement are discussed. ♦ Specific poverty data are included for the school. ♦ Strong description of the school's ability to leverage funds and resources to support this effort. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Rationale is provided with some discussion of what the current reality is. ♦ Areas of targeted improvement are mentioned briefly. ♦ Poverty data are mentioned. ♦ Minimal discussion is provided of the school's ability to leverage resources, but funds are mentioned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ District seems to lack oversight of school applying. ♦ Brief discussion of poverty. ♦ School's ability to leverage resources and funds are simply stated. 	

Commitment (45 points)

Staff Support and Academic Growth (15 points)

Staff Support	Award Points	Academic Growth Over Previous Years	Award Points
Staff commitment $\geq 80\%$		$\geq 10\%$	5
Yes	10	6-9%	3
No	0	1-5%	1
		<0%	0

Evidence of Commitment (30 points)

STRONG 30-21 points	MODERATE 20-11 points	LIMITED 10-1 points	NOT PROVIDED 0 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The support for implementing systemic change is clearly articulated. ♦ There is strong evidence that the school will use data-driven decision-making to inform best practices and school goals. ♦ The school is able to provide sufficient time for collaboration, as evidenced by the proposed school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The school district's ability to implement systematic change is briefly described. ♦ The description of the use of data and scientifically based and research-supported instructional strategies is limited. ♦ The school has a proposed schedule that will provided minimal time for collaboration. ♦ Parents are involved in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Documentation of staff commitment and/or support is limited. ♦ The explanation of implementing systematic change is brief and does not demonstrate that the school district's efforts will be successful. ♦ The discussion on the use of data and the identified instructional strategies that will help all students learn is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ No evidence provided.

STRONG 30-21 points	MODERATE 20-11 points	LIMITED 10-1 points	NOT PROVIDED 0 points
<p>schedule included as an appendix to the application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The community and parents are actively involved in the school's improvement efforts. 	<p>school-based activities.</p>	<p>brief or weak.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Involvement of the community and/or parents is minimal. 	

Proposed Activities (30 points)

STRONG 30-21 points	MODERATE 20-11 points	LIMITED 10-1 points	NOT PROVIDED 0 points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ There is a clear description of which of the five USDE school improvement strategies are to be targeted in the school's application. ♦ There is specific mention of how the school will collect and use data to improve the school's decision-making on all levels of school improvement. ♦ The school understands the need to use data to guide instruction. ♦ These will be used to guide decision-making. ♦ It is clearly articulated that the professional development plan will include the NSDC's Staff Development Standards to align the professional development to context, process and content standards. ♦ There is a strong understanding of the need to adjust instruction in a timely way to improve individual student performance. ♦ The narrative provides a clear plan for how it will collect, analyze, interpret and disseminate data to internal and external users. ♦ The school district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ A description of the selected USDE school improvement strategies is provided. ♦ Data will be collected as part of the school improvement process. ♦ A description of the use of data as a component of the school improvement process is provided. ♦ The NSDC's Staff Development Standards are referenced in the professional development plan. ♦ Instructional needs of students are reviewed and considered during the scheduled planning sessions. ♦ A description of the collection of data, analysis, and use of data to improve instruction to internal users is provided. ♦ Central office personnel will provide technical assistance as needed to ensure implementation of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The narrative does not clearly define and/or describe which of the USDE school improvement strategies have been selected for implementation in the targeted school. ♦ The collection or use of data to inform decision-making is weak or missing. ♦ Professional development is provided based on individual need. ♦ The discussion on revisions to instruction to meet individual needs is limited. ♦ The description of the collection, analysis and use of data by district personnel is limited. ♦ Central office personnel assistance is not clearly defined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ No evidence provided.

STRONG 30-21 points	MODERATE 20-11 points	LIMITED 10-1 points	NOT PROVIDED 0 points
<p>clearly supports the need for systemic change in the school by committing sufficient central office staff and resources to oversee the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ There is specific mention of district personnel who will provide oversight for data collection and technical assistance to the school applying for funds. 			

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How may grant funds be used?

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), in consultation with the Title I Committee of Practitioners, and as approved by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), has decided to make items 1-5 allowable in School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) application for funds. Each school district will select the strategy or strategies it determines will be the most effective, based on data that reflect their individual circumstances, the district's and school's capacity to improve student achievement and move the school out of improvement.

- Provide customized technical assistance and/or professional development that is designed to build the capacity of school district and school staff to improve the school and is informed by student achievement and other outcome-related measures. Individual needs will be determined and assistance may include data analysis as related to problems with classroom instruction, professional development, and parental involvement; identification and implementation of high-quality strategies supported in the school improvement plan; and analysis of budgets and resources to augment reform efforts.
- Utilize research based strategies or practices to change instructional practice to address the academic achievement problems that caused the school to be identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring. This strategy was selected because of the responsibility school districts bear for assisting schools in improvement. The July 2006 LEA and School Improvement Non-Regulatory Guidance, D-2 states:

The LEA must help the school choose effective instructional strategies and methods and ensure that the school staff receives high-quality professional development relevant to their implementation. The chosen strategies must be grounded in scientifically based research and address the specific instructional issues that caused the school to be identified for improvement.

Source: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/schoolimprovementguid.doc>

- Create partnerships among the ISBE, school districts and other entities for the purpose of delivering technical assistance, professional development, and management advice. ISBE, school districts, and other entities would benefit from a collaborative effort of consultation and service delivery.
- Provide professional development to enhance the capacity of School Support Team members and other technical assistance providers who are part of the statewide system of support and that is informed by student achievement and other outcome-related measures.
- Implement other strategies determined by the school district, and approved by ISBE as appropriate, for which data indicate the strategy is likely to result in improved teaching and learning in schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. This strategy remains in the proposed School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) application for funds on the grounds that districts should have the flexibility to propose additional

strategies specific to a unique need or to address areas not directly covered in items #1-4. ISBE retains approval authority.

2. How will funds be awarded?

After consultation with the Title I Committee of Practitioners, ISBE will allow school districts to access section School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) funds through a **competitive grant process**. This process will include an expert panel of reviewers and specific criteria for selection. ISBE will award funds to school districts with the greatest need and greatest commitment for improvement that can demonstrate evidence of successful implementation. The school district will be required to present a well-documented plan for meeting specific educational needs in their school to demonstrate their commitment for successful implementation. School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) funds will be allocated separately from Part A, Section 1003(a), but both funding sources must show programmatic coordination. Grant award amounts to school districts will ensure that each grant is of sufficient size and scope to support the activities required under Sections 1116 and 1117, and will award not less than \$50,000.00 or more than \$500,000.00 per school. Grants will be awarded to 25 to 35 schools sites within the ten regions of the Systems of Support. A district can have more than one school apply, but an individual application must be written for each school.

System of Support Areas are as follows:

- Area I-A Chicago
- Area I-B-B West Cook
- Area I-B-C South Cook
- Area I-B-D North Cook
- Area I-C Northeast
- Area II Northwest
- Area III West Central
- Area IV East Central
- Area V Southwest
- Area VI Southeast

3. When will grant funds be available?

The first payment of the grant funds will be distributed once the grant agreement has been signed by both the grantee and ISBE.

4. Are these funds renewable?

Yes. Subject to future appropriations by the U.S. Congress, ISBE may renew a school district's grant of School Improvement Grant – Section 1003(g) funds for two additional one-year periods if the school in the district is meeting the goals in their school improvement plans developed under Section 1116.

5. If a school district has multiple schools in improvement, may more than one school apply for funds?

Yes. As part of the application process, school districts must describe the procedure the district used to select the school(s) to apply for funds, explain the rationale for an eligible school's

inclusion in this application, and describe the school(s) capacity and commitment to long-term improvement efforts in each individual school application.

6. Who will conduct the required outside evaluation?

ISBE will identify and select the outside evaluator. Schools approved for funding will be notified and given further direction regarding data collection.

8. What is the deadline to apply?

4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 15, 2008.

**ALL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANT – SECTION 1003(g) APPLICATIONS
MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 4:00 P.M. ON JULY 15, 2008.**