

ESEA Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grants (SIG) LEA (District) Application

District Name: Schuyler Community School
County-District Number: 19-0123-000

Introduction

School Improvement Grants, authorized under Section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I or ESEA), are grants, through State educational agencies (SEA = Nebraska Department of Education or NDE), to local educational agencies (LEA = districts) for use in eligible schools 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 their students. Under the final requirements, as amended through the interim final requirements published in the Federal Register in January 2010, these school improvement funds are to be used to implement identified Intervention Models in the persistently lowest-achieving schools identified as:

Tier I Schools means the five (5) or 5% (whichever is greatest) of all lowest-achieving Title I schools identified to be in school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring plus any Title I served secondary school with a graduation rate of less than 75% over the three latest years that was not captured in the above five schools.

- For every year after the initial year, previously identified Tier III schools that have a Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grant will be included and Tier I schools with school improvement waivers that are implementing the Turnaround model will be excluded.

Tier II Schools shall mean the five (5) or 5% (whichever is greatest) lowest ranked secondary schools where the “all students” group meets the minimum n-size for AYP that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds plus any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that has a graduation rate of less than 75% over the three latest years and was not captured in the above schools.

- For every year after the initial year, previously identified Tier II schools that have a Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grant will be excluded and Tier III schools that fall within the bottom five (5) or 5% (whichever is greater of the pool of schools for Tier II will be included.

Tier III Schools means any Title I school identified to be in school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that is not a Tier I School and any school that is ranked as low as the Tier I and Tier II schools but has no groups of at least 30 students.

The procedure used to identify the persistently lowest-achieving schools, including the definitions used, is found in Appendix A of this application.

A District 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 District demonstrates that it lacks sufficient capacity to do so. If a district has a Tier I and Tier II school(s), it may elect to serve schools in both Tiers, but if it elects to serve only the Tier II school(s) and not the Tier I school(s), it must explain how it lacks the capacity to serve the Tier I school(s). If a district has Tier I and Tier III schools, it may not elect to serve only Tier III schools. Districts may submit applications that contain Tier III schools but all Tier I and Tier II schools in the state must be served, or demonstrate that districts lack the capacity to serve them, prior to any Tier III school being approved for funds.

Nebraska has applied for a waiver from section 1116(b)(12) of the ESEA. This waiver allows Tier I and Tier II Title I participating schools that will implement a turnaround or restart model to “start over” in the school improvement timeline. Nebraska has also applied for a waiver of the 40 percent poverty eligibility threshold in section 1114(a)(1) of the ESEA to permit Title I schools to implement a schoolwide program in a Tier I or Tier II Title I participating school that does not meet the poverty threshold.

Nebraska has applied for a waiver of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. § 1225(b)) to extend the period of availability of FY 2013 school improvement funds for the DEA and all of its LEAs to September 30, 2017.

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

To ensure commitment and support, the Cover Page of the district application must be signed by the President of the School Board and the Superintendent or Authorized Representative.

The guidance from the U. S. Department of Education for ESEA Section 1003(g) grants provides the information needed for understanding the requirements, the four intervention models and should be studied prior to completing this application. The guidance is on NDE’s Title IA School Improvement page at: http://www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/Title_1_Part_A_SIG.html

All district applications that are approved will be posted at the above url within 30 days of being approved. Additional information on the ESEA Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grants is also available on the U. S. Department of Education website at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.

Use of Funds

In the Tier I and Tier II schools a district chooses to serve, the district must use these funds to implement one of these four school intervention models: turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model. Section 2 of this application contains the description of the four intervention models taken from the U. S. Department of Education guidance. This description identifies all the requirements to be implemented and some permissible activities for each of the four models. These are the only activities that can be funded with the ESEA Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grants in Tier I and Tier II schools. Tier III schools that are Title I schools currently identified to be in school improvement, corrective action or restructuring can apply to use ESEA Section 1003(g) funds to implement one of these models or for other school improvement activities designed to support, expand, continue or complete school improvement activities included in its SIG application. Tier III schools that

are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds can apply for these funds to implement a variation of the Transformation intervention model. This variation of the Transformation model allows, but does not require, a school to replace the principal or the staff (Sections A and C of part (1)(i) of the model as defined in this application. This is also indicated on the Action Plans.)

Districts must demonstrate capacity to implement the selected intervention model in the first year and fully implement the model within the three years of funding of these grants. In addition to the requirements of each intervention model, Nebraska is requiring each school receiving ESEA Section 1003(g) funds to have a full-or part-time Intervention Project Manager (IPM). The intervention models are designed to turnaround a school and the requirements are numerous and specific. A school making a commitment to take on the major changes involved must have a person devoted solely to managing and coordinating the process. The Intervention Project Manager must be experienced and qualified to lead the effort and must be an employee of the district or on contract to the district. The IPM will have, at a minimum, a current Nebraska teaching certificate. The responsibilities of this person include: working with the school principal and district administrators to assist with coordinating implementation activities, conducting ongoing evaluations of progress, ensuring appropriate collection and management of data for reporting progress on the goals established for student achievement and leading indicators, and coordinating and reporting progress to the NDE. The costs of the Intervention Project Manager are to be included on the budgets for each school.

Available Funds

For the three-year grants that begin in 2014-15, approximately \$2,417,000 are available from ESEA for these Section 1003(g) funds. Depending on future appropriations from Congress, the State should continue to receive similar ESEA amounts in future years. ESEA funds available now must follow the requirements of this application which includes a waiver for use over three years –2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17.

A district may apply for the amount of funds needed to fully and effectively implement one of the four intervention models in a Tier I or Tier II school not to exceed two (2) million dollars a year for three years per school. There is a minimum of \$50,000 per year per school. This minimum amount is not required if a district can demonstrate that it can fully implement one of the intervention models with less funds. Applications must contain a budget for each of the three years identifying the costs of implementing an intervention model in each school. When budgeting for the three-year period, NDE would expect to see the budgets decrease each year. Keep this in mind when planning for sustainability after the grant period comes to an end. The NDE will award grants based on the proposals by school(s) within a district. This means a district could apply for funds for more than one school but may not be funded for all the schools included in the application. The amount requested may also be reduced based on funds available. Districts with Tier III schools can apply for the same or a lesser amount of funds per school. However, the State cannot award a grant to a district for a Tier III school unless and until all Tier I and Tier II schools in the State, that are eligible and have the capacity, receive funds.

Continued Funding

While the application will be approved for the full three years, it must be reviewed and approved for continued funding each year. There are three considerations for approval for continued funding in years two and three that will be applied on a school level basis: (1) demonstrating progress in student achievement and leading indicators, (2) being on target, or close to, meeting the timelines identified in

the Action Plans, and (3) spending the approved funds in a timely fashion. Each year's budget must reflect the amount of funds needed in that year. When budgeting for the three-year period, NDE would expect to see the budgets decrease each year. Keep this in mind when planning for sustainability after the grant period comes to an end. Budget forms are found in a separate EXCEL file at: http://www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/Title_1_Part_A_SIG.html

Supplement, Not Supplant

ESEA Section 1003(g) School Improvement Funds are supplemental funds (see pages 43-44 of March 1, 2012 USDE *Guidance on Fiscal Year 201 School Improvement Grants Under Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*) and as such must be in addition to the regular state and local funding provided to the school. Schools that are not currently Title I schoolwide projects must become a schoolwide project in order to implement one of the intervention models. A waiver that allows this is included in the application. The waiver also allows the planning for this application to replace the required year of planning for a schoolwide project.

Application Writing Assistance

NDE will provide meetings and/or conference calls to support the districts intending to apply. Districts are encouraged to review the "Reviewers Rating and Checklist" designed for application reviewers to ensure that all components are addressed. The Reviewers Rating and Checklist is found in Appendix B of this application.

Application Approval Process

Nebraska will convene a panel of NDE staff with experience and expertise in Title I and school improvement activities to review all applications. The scoring checklist is included as Appendix B to the District application. Each school's application will be reviewed and rated individually. Districts may submit an application that includes an application for more than one school and may include schools from any Tier. To ensure that the schools with the highest need are selected, the following process will be used to determine the applications to recommend to the State Board of Education for approval.

After the panel has reviewed and rated all applications, the score from Section 1 District information will be added to the score received by the school for Section 2 School Information for a "total score". For applications containing multiple schools, the district's score will be added to the score of each school for a "total score" for each school. The schools will be rank-ordered by the total scores. The highest ranking schools will determine the finalists, considering the amount of funds requested and the amount of funds available. NDE reserves the right to adjust budget requests, if needed, to increase the number of finalists or to ensure more equitable distribution of grants relative to size of school or geographic location.

Schools that are finalists must participate in a team interview conference call with NDE staff. This interview is an opportunity for NDE staff to validate application responses and evaluate school staff commitment and capacity before making the recommendations for final approval.

Applications Timelines

Applications are due by midnight (Central Daylight Time) on February 13, 2014 and should be submitted electronically to: randy.mcintyre@nebraska.gov. In addition, the District must submit a cover page signed by the District's authorized representative and the president of the school board. This document can either be scanned and submitted via email to the above email address or a hard copy can be mailed to:

Randy McIntyre, School Improvement Coordinator
Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South
PO BOX 94987
Lincoln, NE 68509

Application Contents

The ESEA Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grant application consists of

- Introduction
- Application Cover Page
- Section 1 – District Information
- Section 2 – School Level Information

Appendices are Included as Separate Documents

- Appendix A – PLAS Identification Process with Diagrams
- Appendix B –Reviewers Rating and Checklist
- Appendix C –Budget Forms. The link to all Budget Forms is found at:
http://www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/Title_1_Part_A_SIG.html

NOTE: When budgeting for the three-year period, NDE would expect to see the budgets decrease each year. Keep this in mind when planning for sustainability after the grant period comes to an end.

A completed application includes the following and should be submitted electronically to randy.mcintyre@nebraska.gov:

- Application Cover Page signed by the president of the school board and the authorized representative of the district.
- Section 1. District Information
- Section 2. School Level Information (Completed Section 2 for each school included in the application)
- Budget pages (EXCEL spreadsheet) for each school for each year of the grant

ESEA Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grants

APPLICATION COVER PAGE

District Name: Schuyler Community Schools County/District Number: 199-0123-000	District Mailing Address: 401 Adam Street Schuyler, NE 68661-2400
District Contact for the School Improvement Grant Name: Dr. Dan Hoelsing Position and Office: Superintendent Contact's Email Address: dhoelsing@esu7.org Contact's Mailing Address (If different from District Mailing Address listed above): Telephone: 402-352-3527 Fax: 402-352-5552	
President of the School Board (Printed Name): Lumir Jedlicka	Telephone: 402-615-0483
Signature of the President of the School Board X _____	Date: 02-20-2014
Authorized Representative of the District (Printed Name): Dr. Dan Hoelsing	Telephone: 402-352-3527 Email: dhoelsing@esu7.org
Signature of the Authorized Representative: X _____	Date: 02-20-2014
The district, 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 district receives through this application.	

SECTION 1. DISTRICT INFORMATION

PART A. SCHOOLS TO BE SERVED

- A.1 Complete the information in the table for each school in the district included in this application. Identify whether each school is in Tier I, II or III. **When Section 2 of this application is completed, indicate the intervention model to be implemented for each Tier I and Tier II school. Add rows as needed.**

School Name	NCES ID#	Tier I	Tier II	Tier III	Intervention Model (Tier I and Tier II Only)			
					Turnaround	Restart	Closure	Transformation
Schuyler Middle School	19-0123-008		X					X

- A.2 If the district has determined that a Tier I or Tier II school has implemented, in whole or in part, one of the intervention models within the last two years, the district must list that school here. Districts must also complete the Action Plans and Budgets required in Part B of this application to provide evidence to demonstrate that this school has met, or is in the process of meeting, each of the requirements of that model and will have the model fully implemented within the period of availability of these funds.

NOT APPLICABLE TO THE SCHOOL INCLUDED IN THIS APPLICATION

PART B. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION DISTRICT LEVEL

Analysis of Need and Capacity

ESEA Section 1003(g) requires an analysis of need at the district level and a determination of district's capacity to provide support to use these funds to provide adequate resources and related support to each Tier I and Tier II School in order to implement, fully and effectively, the required activities of the school intervention model it has selected. Districts are encouraged to look at existing sources of information while conducting the Analysis of Need for each school and the district. These might include profiles developed through a North Central/AdvancED Accreditation or Rule 10 Continuous Improvement accreditation process, Improvement Plans included in the NCLB Consolidated application, schoolwide plans, or other improvement processes or plans.

The district must design and implement intervention activities consistent with the final requirements of the models for all Tier I and Tier II schools. ESEA Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grant funds can only be used to implement one of four intervention models in any Tier I or Tier II school. Each intervention model has specific requirements that must be implemented. In Section 2, Descriptive Information School Level, Action Plans, and Budget forms have been designed to ensure that all the

requirements of the model selected are addressed for Tier I and Tier II schools. Action Plans and Budget forms have also been designed for Tier III schools. Section 2 of this application must be completed for each school.

B.1 Describe the district’s contribution to assist schools in their analysis of need and selection of an intervention model. The District must demonstrate that it has analyzed the needs of each school, such as instructional programs, school leadership and infrastructure, and selected interventions for each school aligned to the needs of each identified school. A district may request funds for LEA-level support of the efforts of their schools in implementing one of the intervention models. Requests for these funds must be included in a LEA-level budget (Part C) and are considered part of the limitations on funding (\$50,000 to \$2,000,000 per school per year). The description should clearly indicate how district contributions and support are separate and distinct from the school’s efforts and activities.

Schuyler is located approximately seventy miles west of Omaha and seventy miles north of Lincoln. The city of Schuyler has seen significant change over the past two decades. Census data of the community reflects similar patterns in the district’s student population. In 1990, the population of Schuyler was 4,052 with a very small minority population of approximately 2%. During the decade that followed, the city saw a 1,377% increase in minority population with 39% of the population identified as Hispanic.¹ Data from the 2010 census increased that percentage to 41% of the city’s 6,211 residents indicating they were of Hispanic origin.

Year	Population	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
1990	4052	2%	98%
2000	5371	38%	62%
2010	6211	58%	42%

School data for time period of 2010 – 2012 indicate a continued trend of large minority populations.

Year	Total Enrollment	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
2010-2011	1,777	75%	25%
2011-2012	1,779	76%	24%
2012-2013	1,841	79%	21%

Schuyler is one of the very few communities in Nebraska to have experienced such a significant change in population dynamics. In rural communities like Schuyler, population increases are not the norm. With that said, however, the population growth in Schuyler has created additional challenges not being experienced by other districts. Data taken from the Nebraska Department of Education’s website indicates in addition to an increase in enrollment, there has also been a significant increase in student need. Poverty levels have increased and the district reports an English Language Learner percentage nearly six times that of the state average.²

¹ Schuyler Plan: <http://schuylernebraska.net/schuylerPlan.pdf>

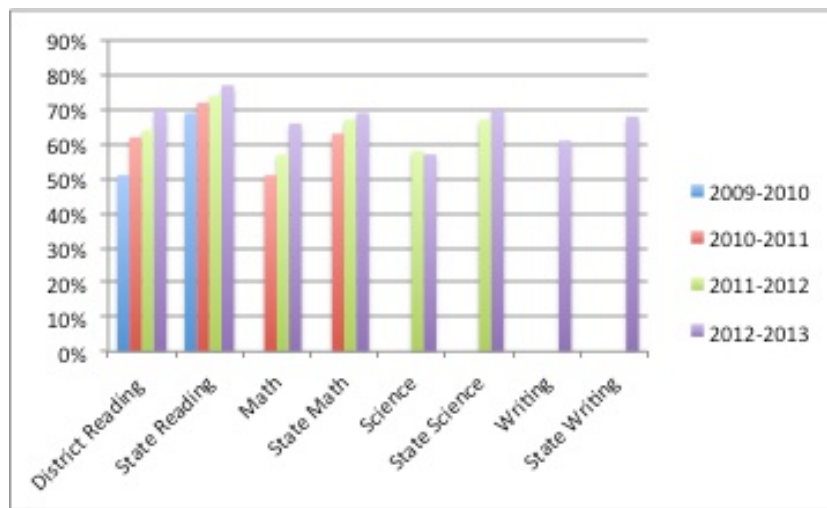
² NDE State of the Schools Report:

<http://reportcard.education.ne.gov/Default.aspx?AgencyID=19-0123-000>

Years	State	District
1998-1999	29.61%	19.01%
2012-2013	44.18%	62.68%

Year	State Average	District Average
2008-2009	6.31%	26.61%
2009-2010	6.56%	29.7%
2010-2011	6.72%	28.4%
2011-2012	6.47%	30.79%
2012-2013	5.96%	31.28%

The district as a whole, has been working with community leaders, leading employers, citizens, and educators to best address all aspects related to the increased needs of their students. Student achievement data indicates that Schuyler Community Schools are performing below the state average. The following graph shows that while there has been growth at the district level for the past several years, that growth still falls short of the state average.



Year	Reading	Math	Science	Writing
2009-2010	18%	N/A	N/A	N/A
2010-2011	10%	12%	N/A	N/A
2011-2012	10%	10%	9%	N/A
2012-2013	7%	3%	13%	7%

District personnel including the superintendent, principals, technology coordinator, counselors, teachers and curriculum director have all provided support in the continuous analysis of district needs. In addition to district personnel, additional stakeholder input was gained through

several other processes. Parents, board members, community partners, and service providers have all been included in data collection and analysis.

The district participates in the AdvancED Accreditation process and went through an external review in September of 2012.³ Recommendations and comments provided through that review process have provided the basis for continuous improvement activities at the district level, including, but not limited to, curriculum review, student achievement data review, and a review of professional development needs. In addition to this work, the district is currently conducting a formal strategic planning process.⁴

In addition to the strategic plan, the district has recently applied for a 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant. Through the strategic plan, the 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant application, AdvancEd external review report and continuous improvement process, the district has been working relentlessly on analyzing needs of Schuyler Community Schools. Through these combined efforts, the district identified that selecting a Transformation Model of Intervention at Schuyler Middle School best fits the needs of the building and district.

B.2 Describe factors that indicate the district has the capacity to use the school improvement funds to support each Tier I and Tier II school identified for intervention. Such factors must include: sufficient human and fiscal resources, past history of successful reform initiatives, credentials of staff, ability to recruit and employ a new principal and new teachers, support of parents, community and the teachers union. Indicate how the District will ensure that each Tier I and Tier II school that it commits to serve receives all of the State and local funds it would receive in the absence of the School Improvement Grant funds and that those resources are aligned with the interventions.

Schuyler Community Schools has demonstrated capacity to bring this project to scale and fully implement all aspects of the Transformation Model of Intervention at Schuyler Middle School.

The Board of Education formally adopted a resolution at the February 10th board meeting⁵ to support the application for a School Improvement Grant. The resolution clearly outlines the board's commitment to improving educational outcomes for students attending Schuyler Middle School.

Superintendent Dr. Dan Hoelsing has a long history of reform efforts in his thirty-three years of experience. Committed to student outcomes, Dr. Hoelsing has successfully led several school districts in strategic community-school partnerships.

The administrative staffs of SCS have a total of over 256 combined years of experience in education between ten administrative positions including superintendent, principals, activities director, technology coordinator, and curriculum director.

The district employs approximately 139 certificated staff and reports a total of 126.65 FTE on the Nebraska Department of Education's State of the Schools 2012-13 report. Analysis of the district's profile on the state's website indicates a slightly higher than state average of highly qualified teachers.

	SCS Courses	SCS NCLB Qualified	State NCLB Qualified
Content Area	#	%	%
CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT	12	100.00%	99.81%
ELEMENTARY	58	100.00%	99.96%

³ AdvancEd external review report may be found in the appendix of this application (Attachment A)

⁴ Strategic planning meeting agendas and supporting documents located in the Appendix of this application. (Attachment B)

⁵ SCS Board Resolution may be found in the appendix of this application. (Attachment C)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	323	100.00%	99.57%
FOREIGN LANGUAGES	50	100.00%	100.00%
HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY	109	100.00%	99.65%
MATHEMATICS	178	100.00%	99.49%
NATURAL SCIENCES	157	100.00%	99.63%
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS	88	100.00%	99.85%
OVERALL COUNT/AVERAGE	975	100.00%	99.70%

While SCS has a higher than state average of teachers who are considered highly qualified, it has a slightly lower than state average number of teachers who have earned a master's degree.

Years	Total Teacher FTE		Total Teacher Count with Masters Degrees		Percentage of Teacher Count with Master's Degrees	
	State	District	State	District	State	District
2008-2009	24,331.56	119.99	10,712	43	42.41%	35.54%
2009-2010	24,467.68	124.8	11,207	47	44.10%	37.30%
2010-2011	24,633.92	130	11,692	52	45.72%	40.00%
2011-2012	24,131.83	130.76	11,889	60	47.46%	45.45%
2012-2013	24,253.79	126.65	12,401	55	49.27%	42.97%

As mentioned in the previous section, the district is in the midst of a comprehensive strategic planning process. The district has expanded opportunities for working families to participate in the planning process. The capacity of the district to involve all stakeholders has included taking the process to Cargill. Cargill employees were provided the opportunity to participate in planning sessions at the work site during times that best met their needs. This practice is indicative of the efforts presently being executed to ensure all stakeholders are involved in the process.

In addition to district resources, SCS is building on already existing partnerships with organizations like the Central Nebraska Community Services and Educational Service Unit #7 in Columbus. Through these partnerships, the district is maximizing resources and support. Currently, SCS contracts with ESU #7 for several services including special education support, distance learning opportunities, and professional development. When necessary, SCS seeks out leaders in specific specialty areas to ensure that the best possible opportunities, strategies, and resources are being researched and reported back to the district. These types of opportunities include memberships in the state technology association (NETA), state school boards association, and other state, regional, and national organizations.

Through these connections, SCS knows that systematic change requires thoughtful planning and research that includes stakeholder support. The district adopted a formal and comprehensive accreditation and school improvement policy handbook at the January 14, 2013 school board meeting.⁶ The policy outlines the district's capacity for continuous improvement based on the recommendations of the September 2012 AdvancED external review. The beginning stages of this process are proof of the commitment to continuous improvement that is necessary to accomplish a comprehensive project like this school improvement grant. The plan calls for the following:

⁶ SCS Accreditation and school improvement policy handbook may be found in the appendix of this application. (Appendix D)

- Development of a district steering committee
- Committee meets monthly
- Committee coordinates activities
- Posting of Improvement process to district website.
- Collection and analysis of district, school, and student data
- Development of goals

It is clear that SCS is committed to move from plans to systemic actions. According to Lee Jenkins, there are four components to systems thinking; appreciation for a system, knowledge about variation, theory of knowledge, and psychology. As educators, it is imperative that systems are developed and supported that best fit the needs of all stakeholders. It is through these systems that educators will be able to identify variations and then use knowledge and psychology to address the variations. The district has clearly begun the work of systems thinking, is in the capacity building stages, and ready to take the process to the next level. The high level of leadership from the administration and board provides that support necessary to support this process.

B.3 *If the district is not applying to serve each Tier I school in the district, provide an explanation as to why it lacks the capacity to do so. Lack of capacity must address the same factors listed above: sufficient human and fiscal resources, past history of successful reform initiatives, credentials of staff, ability to recruit and employ a new principal and new teachers, support of parents, community and the teachers union. A district with both Tier I and Tier III schools may not elect to serve only Tier III schools.*

THERE IS NO TIER 1 SCHOOL IN THE DISTRICT – THIS APPLICATION WILL SERVE A TIER II SCHOOL

B.4 *ESEA Section 1003(g) funds are intended to turn around a low-performing school. Major changes required in such a turnaround may require external assistance from a person(s) or a company(s). External assistance might be desirable to assist with specific activities to meet the requirements of the intervention model selected. If a district elects to have an external provider, the district must identify the provider(s) by name or company; the reasons or rationale for selecting this provider; the specific services to be provided; the qualifications, including expertise and experience of the provider; and the procurement method used for securing and selecting the provider(s). Note: The Intervention Project Manager is not considered an external provider since he/she must be an employee of or on contract with the district and work full or part-time in the school.*

EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE

Community Training & Assistance Center (CTAC)⁷

Because Schuyler Community Schools is committed to systemic interventions, it was determined that should the grant be awarded, Schuyler Middle School will require the support of an organization with extensive experience in leading systemic transformations of schools. Research for the purpose of this application indicated that the best possible action is to work with one of the nation's leading experts in educational and organizational change. The vendor selected was the organization that has led reform efforts of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District for the past

⁷ <http://www.ctacusa.com/>

several years. In part due to their leadership, Charlotte-Mecklenburg was named 2013 recipient of the National School Boards Association's (NSBA) Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) Annual Award for Urban School Board Excellence. In addition, and most notably, the district also received The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation 2011 Broad Prize for Urban Education, the largest education prize in the country. The annual prize honors school **districts that have shown the greatest gains in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps for poor and minority pupils**. Due to Schuyler's unique demographics in comparison to other Nebraska schools, it was determined that support from a vendor with specific skills in supporting minority and low-income students would best serve the district. Most importantly, however, is the commitment of this organization to facilitate work in conjunction WITH stakeholders and not TO stakeholders.

CTAC has decades of experience working with states, school districts, and individual schools throughout the country to address their most challenging problems. By identifying the root causes of underperformance and engaging all constituencies in developing, implementing, and evaluating solutions, CTAC will help SMS achieve significant, sustainable improvements that have a real impact on student growth.

Through their assistance, CTAC will help Schuyler Middle School achieve dramatic results by identifying and addressing the root causes of persistent underperformance.

Their approach is based on leading national research on organizational improvement in the fields of education, community development, and the corporate sector. Their approach is markedly effective because it:

- Focuses on causes, not symptoms, of underperformance
- Engages the entire school community, including administrators, teachers, students, and parents
- Employs data on student academic growth as well as data on organizational conditions, as viewed by all stakeholders

At the heart of the process is the principle that progress is driven and judged by its impact on student achievement. CTAC provides assistance and tools that will enable the school to identify underlying causes of organizational needs and take targeted action for school improvement.

The process includes:

- Additional comprehensive data analysis. CTAC analyzes data from a range of sources, presenting information in user-friendly formats designed to foster insights. While some of this initial work has been done in preparation of this application, additional technical assistance and training to develop effective data systems and interpret the data will be conducted.
- Additional organizational assessment. This process engages all constituents in analyzing the school's core organizational conditions—from climate, curriculum and teacher quality to principal effectiveness, district office support, and parental involvement.
- Additional comprehensive school profile. CTAC summarizes findings of the data analysis and organizational assessment, and their implications. They then facilitate carefully guided analyses among school staff and improvement teams, the community and district staff to pinpoint the root causes of achievement gaps.
- Systemic school improvement planning and implementation. Using insights gained, CTAC will work with staff and leadership teams to develop and implement effective school change strategies. Throughout the process, they will provide intensive on-site technical assistance and training—to school teams, principals, district office staff, the community, and school board—to ensure a successful school transformation.

Lee J. Rutledge, Program Specialist for National School Reform at CTAC, will facilitate the process. Lee also provides technical assistance to State Education Agencies (SEAs) through the federally funded Northeast Comprehensive Center. In that role, he is working with both Maine and Vermont on personalized learning initiatives so will be instrumental in leading SMS through the process.

Implementing the Standard Bearer Schools Process

The SBS process unfolds through a series of phases. In the initial Diagnostics phase, CTAC works with school leaders to gather the school, student, and teacher data that comprise the Comprehensive Data Analysis. CTAC disseminates The Organizational Assessment Survey and prepares results for review. This is a period of study as CTAC begins to understand the school context and current status of student performance. At the same time, CTAC fosters collaborative relationships with all stakeholder groups and work with the school to organize the working team at the school. As a more complete picture of the current status of the school emerges, CTAC guides the school-based team in the development of the School Profile. This summary view of the school is used in the Root Cause Analysis phase, where the goals are to identify gaps in student learning and to set priorities for next steps. School leaders and teachers examine these priorities and collaborate to develop a Plan of Action in the next phase. The school plan is adapted and strategies for promoting success are outlined. In the final phase, the new plan is Shared, Revised, and Implemented.

The steps undertaken in each phase are outlined in Figure 1 below. The descriptors accompanying each step identify typical actions that take place during that step. They are not intended for use as a checklist but rather as a heuristic or prompt to assist the planning team in being thorough in their analysis. The focus of the analysis is based on work completed by CTAC and all team members during the initial diagnostic phase. A vital early step, once areas of need have been identified, is to prioritize the most important issues to be addressed in the school. The foci of this work can include, but are not exclusive to, working more closely with special needs students or those with limited English proficiency, eliminating barriers to school performance, addressing staff professional development needs, or developing new strategies for improving parental engagement. The example below includes ten steps, but the process can be divided into fewer steps. Nonetheless, as good teachers know, when mastering a new process, it is often better to break it into several smaller steps.

Figure 1: Ten Step Process	
Phase 1: Diagnostics	<p>Step One: Establish norms and set purpose.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop working norms for the group. Include considerations to build group trust and prepare to share findings with the wider school community. ▪ Revisit standards as the primary benchmark for student learning. ▪ Revise, as needed, the alignment among standards, materials, teaching practices, and assessments. ▪ Develop a statement of purpose based on increasing student learning.
	<p>Step Two: Analyze perceptual data from stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider the population of the school and community. ▪ Examine their perceptions about the school using the Organizational Assessment Survey and other sources. ▪ Develop objective statements about what the data show.
	<p>Step Three: Analyze student data coinciding with conditions shown in the OAS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disaggregate the annual achievement data by income, ethnicity, program, gender, grade level, language, teacher and other demographic or program categories that may help explain achievement outcomes. ▪ Look for patterns in data at the school, grade, and student level. Look at the clusters or subtopics in the assessment for greater specificity. ▪ Look at other assessments of the same students for parallel findings. ▪ Look at other data, including but not limited to perceptual data, behavioral data, school program and process data.
	<p>Step Four: Analyze student data coinciding with conditions shown in the OAS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disaggregate the annual achievement data by income, ethnicity, program, gender, grade level, language, teacher and other demographic or program categories that may help explain achievement outcomes. ▪ Look for patterns in data at the school, grade, and student level. Look at the clusters or subtopics in the assessment for greater specificity. ▪ Look at other assessments of the same students for parallel findings. ▪ Look at other data, including but not limited to perceptual data, behavioral data, school program and process data.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use tests of statistical significance to determine if the differences matter.
Phase 2: Root Cause Analysis	Step Four: Identify critical issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine through data analysis and then select those areas where significant groups of students are achieving below standard and/or that show student achievement is flat or has declined over time. ▪ Record issues that emerge from observable patterns in the data. ▪ Look for similar trends in multiple years of data. ▪ Compare with state, district and demographically similar schools. ▪ Identify areas of growth and/or strength in student achievement patterns. ▪ Examine relationships among or between critical issues and events (e.g., math scores are down; new learning standards adopted during the previous year).
	Step Five: Probe for causation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to ask questions about observable patterns in the data and about the character of the data with regard to the critical issues identified. ▪ Develop hypotheses about the possible reasons for the observed patterns and trends. ▪ Use perceptual, program, and teacher data to test hypotheses and to probe for possible causes. ▪ Collect additional data and input if needed (e.g., conducting interviews or focus groups with students, parents, and/or teachers on a topic).
	Step Six: Determine priorities for improvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine what the school <i>can change</i> (programs, processes, professional knowledge and skills); what it <i>may influence</i> (behavior, parent involvement, communication); and where it <i>may need to intervene</i> (pre-school, tutorials, parent visits, etc.). ▪ Select a manageable number of priorities as the focus of school improvement. The priorities should be grounded in the root causes of the critical issues identified above.
Phase 3: Develop a Plan of Action	Step Seven: Develop strategies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Search for potential strategies to address the priority improvement areas. ▪ Use educational research findings or best practices as a decision-making tool when selecting and developing strategies. ▪ Plan strategies to address the priority improvement areas. ▪ Determine when professional development is the strategy itself and when it is a support for the implementation of another strategy. ▪ Consider conducting small action research projects to test out strategies before deciding on full implementation. ▪ Consider how you will know that a strategy is producing the desired result.
	Step Eight: Review and revise the school plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate with stakeholders about the planning process and opportunities for input. ▪ Evaluate the progress on previous improvement plan activities. ▪ Consider how the new priorities fit into the current plan. ▪ Ascertain that the budget will support the improvement priorities. ▪ Draft a proposal for the revision of the school plan that includes the rationale for any change and the impact on resources (staff and funds). ▪ Include a description of the rationale for implementing a new strategy, the expected results, and the planned evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategy.
	Step Nine: Share decisions and revise again as needed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share the key elements and actions of the draft plan and solicit input from representatives of the stakeholders. ▪ Ascertain from the process any implementation needs of staff members. ▪ Agree on and record implementation activities, dates, and timelines for completion.
Phase 4: Share, Revise and Implement the Plan	Step Ten: Implement the new plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Begin the new school term with a review of the plan priorities and strategies. ▪ Designate plan monitors to help the school stay on task, provide updates, and celebrate milestones. ▪ Review the new achievement data from the spring assessment and begin the process again.

As is evident from the illustration, school improvement planning is a cyclical process. It requires a leader with strong management, analytic, and communication skills, all of which are

developed through the process itself with assistance from CTAC staff. It is important to recognize that this process is *recursive* so that the planning team may return to an earlier step or phase for clarification, focus, or re-direction. It is this recursive nature of whole school reform planning and implementation that allows schools to “get it right,” to make mid-course corrections as needed. It is also possible, that multiple teams within the school could be working on separate needs simultaneously.

Through the Standard Bearer Schools’ data analysis, organizational assessments, and inclusive planning processes, the school teams are better equipped to develop strategies and priorities, and to realign management systems based on actual data on student achievement and school conditions. Teachers will be able to utilize data in a more powerful way to closely monitor the progress of their students and to effectively reach out to other teachers and professionals for best and effective practices for meeting educational challenges that they may be facing. This creates a pathway for site improvement that is comprehensive, coherent and fully focused on student achievement.

CTAC has extensive experience working with several content providers, including all the providers selected in this application. CTAC has worked with Discovery Education and Marzano Research Laboratories in other large transformational models. The role of CTAC is to ensure that all vendors/processes operating in the school are working together as a comprehensive system and not pockets of isolated practices. Through CTAC’s leadership, the school will build capacity to sustain the necessary systems long after grant funding is expended.

Personalized Learning BlendEd Content Provider

As Schuyler Middle School has identified a need to personalize learning paths for students, it will be necessary to identify specific software systems that will integrate student assessment data, curriculum mapping, instructional resources, and student information into systems that will support individualized learning for students in a truly personalized BlendEd format.

While the state ESUs have begun the process of promoting personalized learning environments, the current capacity necessary to provide a comprehensive process is not fully functional. Therefore, for the purposes of this project, SMS has selected a vendor that can bring together all aspects of a truly personalized learning platform that includes matching and mapping of standards-based curriculum with digital resources, formative assessment systems that generate results that then push out content to students based on assessment results, and capability to store and disseminate student and teacher created content.

After extensive research, SMS has selected Discovery Education (DE) as the personalized learning BlendEd content provider. Through Discovery’s resources, SMS will utilize SIG funds to build a personalized system that will revolutionize individual learning paths for all students.

The process being proposed is a true digital transformation that will map resources with student needs based on solid learning protocols. The first step in the process will be the mapping and pacing of digital resources to the school’s standards-aligned curriculum. Each of the core content areas, English-Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies will be mapped. Teachers and administrators will work to identify not only Discovery content, but also open digital learning resources, state and ESU provided resources, and teacher-made resources. These resources will then be mapped and tagged with appropriate standard and curriculum objectives. Teachers will also be taught how to revise the mapped curriculum as it is updated and revised to ensure sustainability beyond the grant.

In addition to the mapping and pacing process, teachers will also begin the process of developing assessment practices tied to the curriculum resources. Discovery assessment tools provide interim and formative tools that have the ability to compare data for individual students, classes, teachers, grade levels, districts, state, and national norms to help teachers identify trends and areas requiring additional focus. The valid and reliable measures of state standards allow

teachers to see student growth and monitor progress. The system includes a universal screener that accurately predicts student proficiency and “at-risk” status allowing for both intervention and enrichment opportunities. And most importantly, assessment results push content to students based on student need and teacher input from the library of digital resources that have been aligned to SMS’s curriculum and state standards through the curriculum mapping process. **This assessment system will work in conjunction with district-wide assessment protocols and not serve as a replacement of the Rule 10 required national assessment.** Discovery assessments are meant to provide frequent opportunities for feedback concerning individual student learning and as such, become a natural part of a student’s experience that allows them to fully maximize digital learning resources.

The process of digital transformation relies on the commitment and support of the educators involved in the process. Too many times, districts have invested in technology tools but done little in investing in the processes and support necessary to fully support a true transformation. This is why this project will focus on not only the tools and resources necessary for this transformation but the professional development and long-term support necessary to ensure that all educators, students, and parents are capable of maximizing the learning potential associated with such a project.

Discovery Education professional development is well equipped to provide the professional development necessary to make the transition from digitizing traditional learning methods to truly reimaging learning. This cannot be accomplished in four or five days of set and get workshops during the summer, but rather, will require on-going job-embedded support. In addition to the introductory digital transformation boot camp, teachers will be supported IN the classroom. We are proposing a professional development model that will bring digital learning experts into the classroom to model lessons and then work with individual teachers to assist them with lesson development, best practices, and resource deployment. These personalized relationships will support each teacher as individuals, just as teachers support the individual needs of students. In addition, this model of professional develop will work to build capacity for the teachers of this school to coach and support each other beyond the grant.

In addition to supporting digital transformations, DE has extensive experience in providing expanded learning opportunities for students, parents, and community members. Data from the strategic planning process clearly identified that students needed expanded opportunities in high-interest areas and parents are craving opportunities to be involved with school and to develop a greater understanding of how technology is playing a role in their child’s education. This SIG project will provide for a communications/parent liaison. Discovery Education has agreed to provide support and guidance to this liaison and to assist in the delivery of community engagement events as a value added service. Because of the special demographic features of Schuyler, DE has committed to providing bilingual services for these community engagement services.

To support expanded learning opportunities for students, DE will work with SMS teachers to develop and deploy STEM summer and after-school camps for students. These camps will not only provide expanded learning for students but will also provide incentives to teachers by allowing them the opportunity to staff the camps. Once the format has been established in partnership with DE, the camps can become self-sustaining beyond the period of the grant through community partnerships with organizations like Cargill, Strategic Air and Space Museum, Henry Doorley Zoo, and other local, state, and regional providers.

And finally, Discovery Education will provide continuous feedback about leadership through the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED) process. VAL-Ed is a 360-degree evaluation tool that provides comprehensive, constructive feedback to the school principals that they need to become better leaders.

Pre-implementation funds will be expended to begin the digital transformation work during the summer. Curriculum mapping and on-going professional development will begin in the fall. Because seeing is believing, teams will visit schools that have successfully implemented personalized learning including Mooreseville⁸ NC, School of One in NYC,⁹ and Charlotte-

⁸ <http://www.mgsd.k12.nc.us/MGSD/Home.html>

Mecklenburg, NC.¹⁰ Each of the districts mentioned has implemented some or all aspects of Discovery Education's curriculum and assessment systems to truly transform learning for students.

Teacher-Principal Evaluation System and Instructional Coaching Consultants

As part of developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness, Schuyler Middle School will develop and deploy a new teacher-principal evaluation system. The SIG planning committee has determined that for the purpose of principal evaluation, VAL-ED will be utilized. (Description provided in DE external provider description). For the purpose of teacher evaluation, the committee has chosen Marzano Research Labs to develop teacher leaders and develop proven evaluation tools.¹¹

Schuyler Middle School will build on the work already been done at the district level with Marzano's theory of Reflective Teaching. The SIG planning committee recognized that progress for effective teaching was being made through the work currently being done in conjunction with Marzano. It was determined that due to this early success, SMS will expand and pilot new systems and processes designed to positively impact student learning. In addition, CTAC has experience in working with Marzano systems and processes.

SMS will focus on two specific processes. The first process is to develop instructional coaches. The first year of the SIG project will employ one full time instructional coach. In addition, other teacher leaders will be developed through the Marzano system. Reducing the grant liability for the coaching position to a .75 FTE in year 2 and a .5 FTE in year three will support the sustainability of instructional coaching. It is planned that by the end of the SIG period, teacher coaches will emerge from within the current teaching staff and the need for a separate instructional coaching position will no longer be necessary. This staff member will be assigned other teaching duties as instructional needs are identified.

The second process to be led by the Marzano Research Group will be the development and implementation of a robust teacher evaluation and supervision process. Utilizing the four domains, SMS educators will work with Marzano consultants to create systems and processes that will inform and improve quality instruction based on student needs and outcomes. The following plan will be adopted:

Step 1: Coaching Teacher Leaders (Years 1-3)

MRL Recommendations:

- Marzano High Reliability Schools Level One & Level 2 Survey Administration & Analysis
- High Reliability Schools Leading Indicators
- On-site PD for teacher leaders (i.e., train the trainers)
- Instructional Rounds
- Small Group and One on one coaching
- Resources: Coaching Classroom Instruction, Effective Supervision books

Step 2: Creating a System of Shared Leadership (Years 1-3)

Goal is to have a system that distributes leadership across school leaders and teacher leaders and uses the best available data to make critical decisions at the individual teacher level and school level.

MRL Recommendations:

- Enhancing the Art & Science of Teaching with Technology on-site workshop to demonstrate how evaluation is used to enhance the Marzano instructional framework and improve student-learning outcomes. Tie in with work with Discovery Education resource alignment
- Continue work to develop teachers who aspire to or are selected to become leaders in the system (new from previous year)

⁹ http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/9435AD08-90F3-42AA-838C-6372C3B5D2E6/0/SchoolofOneBrochure_FINAL.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/Pages/default.aspx>

¹¹ <http://www.marzanoevaluation.com/>

- Provide on-going coaching for teacher leaders, school leaders and district leaders.

As mentioned in the previous provider section, VAL-ED will be utilized for principal evaluation. VAL-ED is a research-based evaluation tool that measures the effectiveness of school leaders by providing a detailed assessment of a principal's performance. The VAL-ED focuses on learning-centered leadership behaviors that influence teachers, staff, and most importantly, student achievement. It is a 360 assessment, intended to be taken by not only the principal, but by teachers and the principal's supervisor, ensuring that the very best information is available.

Regional and National Enrichment Providers

The recent strategic planning process has identified that expanded opportunities for student engagement for all learners is lacking. By adopting a BlendEd and personalized learning format, students with high ability will be able to move beyond traditional targets through on-line as well as hands-on opportunities. In addition, students need a variety of instructional formats to ensure personal and individualized learning styles and methods are available.

The current Schuler Middle School STEM lab that was just installed in the fall of 2013 will be expanded. In addition, specific content providers like the Strategic Air and Space Museum, the Durham Museum, Joslyn Art Museum, Henry Doorly Zoo, as well as several on-line video conferencing providers will be contracted to provide rigor and engagement to learners.

Students of poverty have limited experiences. By contracting with these content providers, students will be provided opportunities to experience activities that will build content knowledge, vocabulary and communication skills in application and activity based formats. These experiences will be conducted during expanded learning opportunities including summer enrichment camps, special school programs, and evening family activities.

Educational Service Units #7 and #2

Schuyler Community Schools has a long history of working with ESU #7 as a member school. Within the normal parameters of this relationship, the district has benefitted from support in technology, distance learning, professional development, and special education services. ESU #7 is a member of the Northeast Nebraska Distance Learning Consortium (NNEC) with ESUs 1,2,8 and 17. As a consortium, the NNEC has led many regional projects.

In particular, Schuyler is committed to providing personalized learning paths for students that are supported through comprehensive technology resources and assessment systems that provide individualized content assignment based on assessment results. The system is based on two of the three ESU goals of BlendEd and the Data Dashboard. ESU #7 and ESU #2 have state leaders in both of these initiatives. Beth Kabes and Otis Pierce from ESU #7 and Diane Wolfe and Mike Danahy from ESU #2 are key members of both BlendEd and Data Dashboard projects. Schuyler Middle School will consult and work with not only these four individuals but also additional ESU staff in order to facilitate vendor presentations, resource allocation, and professional development in key aspects of personalized learning strategies, technology integration, and data systems.

ESU funding constraints may limit the number of contract days staff members may be able to provide to Schuyler Middle School. These ESUs are being listed as external providers as it may be necessary to commit extended contract days for these personnel to accommodate additional support for this project.

B.5 Since each Tier I or Tier II school receiving ESEA Section 1003(g) funds will be a schoolwide project, all programs and services provided in the school should be aligned to the selected intervention model. The school level Analysis of Need section of this application should involve staff from the various programs and services in the school. Describe the steps the district will

take to ensure that other programs and resources are aligned to support the school in implementing an intervention model. Identify the specific programs and sources of funds.

Previous sections of this application had identified additional district supports. The district will provide support for the Schuyler Middle School's Transformational Model of Intervention through several key components. These components may include but are not limited to:

- Curriculum alignment, pacing and implementation
- Professional development
- Professional learning communities
- Teacher and leadership evaluation
- Data systems that support student learning
- Expanded learning opportunities for students and families

In addition to this school improvement grant, the district will support the efforts through district funds, Title 1 and Title 1 accountability funds, 21st Century Community Learning Centers funding. The SIG project will be aligned with other district initiatives to maximize systemic processes and limited resources.

B.6 *If the selected intervention model includes increasing school time, changing governance at the school level, etc., the district may need to modify existing practices or policies to enable its schools to implement the interventions fully and effectively. Describe the steps the district will take, if necessary, to modify policies and practices.*

- *Some changes may require approval of the local union*

Schuyler Community Schools provides support for individual school building flexibility. Decisions regarding extended learning opportunities will be at the discretion of the school with final approval by the superintendent and board of education. The district agrees to support Schuyler Middle School in the implementation of the SIG project through district policy and board action as necessary to meet all requirements of the proposal.

B.7 *Describe the steps the district is prepared to take to sustain the intervention model(s) in the selected school(s) after the ESEA Section 1003(g) funds are no longer available. The response might include how the district will institutionalize changes made to meet requirements, adopt changes throughout other schools, or support the school or school(s) throughout the process to fully implement the selected intervention model(s).*

The project being proposed will have maximum sustainability due to the systemic nature of the proposal. The project is based on developing systems that support continuous improvement based on data systems and instructional resources. Once the system is developed and deployed, the process will be in place to move the school forward, monitoring and adjusting practices as dictated by data.

In addition to developing these systems, the process will be highly transparent to all stakeholders. By involving parents, teachers, leadership, and the community, the needs of the school will be clearly articulated. When families and community members are involved in the decision making process, they are more likely to sustain processes they were involved in developing. The school will be deploying a communications/parent liaison as part of this project.

The district is committed to provide support of on-going positions that are determined to be fundamental to student and teacher success including the possibility of retaining a part-time technology integration specialist to support the digital transformation this project will embrace.

And finally, through normal attrition and retirements, the district will absorb the administrative position supported through this SIG. The position must be supported through this project in order to fully support the transformational changes being proposed.

B.8 The District must describe its consultation, as appropriate, with relevant stakeholders regarding the District’s application and implementation of the school improvement models in its Tier I and Tier II schools. The district must establish annual goals for student achievement on the State’s assessments in both Reading and Mathematics and the leading indicators in order to monitor schools that receive these school improvement funds. The chart below provides the minimum goal for each student achievement and leading indicator. The district may decide to accept these minimum goals or set higher goals. If Tier III schools are included in this application, the district will be held accountable for setting rigorous goals or adopting these goals if using the variation of the Transformation model. If the district goal will be the same as the State goal, complete the district column with “Same”.

Area	State Goal	District Goal
Reading	The gains for “all students” group and for each subgroup must meet or exceed the statewide average gain (unless the statewide average is zero then the gain must be at least zero). Progress is MET if a majority of the groups demonstrate an increase.	same
Math	The gains for “all students” group and for each subgroup must meet or exceed the statewide average gain (unless the statewide average is zero then the gain must be at least zero). Progress is MET if a majority of the groups demonstrate an increase.	same

Leading Indicators

Leading Indicator	State Goals	District Goals
AYP Status (includes both Reading and Math)	Fewer NOT MET AYP decisions	same
Graduation rate (high schools only)	Measurable increase from the previous year	N/A
College enrollment rate (high schools only)	Measurable increase from the previous year	N/A

English proficiency	Increase in percentage of English Language Learners that reach Levels 4 or 5 on ELDA (if applicable)	same
Leading Indicators (includes dropout rate, student attendance, number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework (high school only), discipline incidents, truancy)	Measurable improvement from previous year (or baseline for initial year of grant)	N/A
Teacher attendance and teacher performance	Measurable improvement from previous year (or baseline data for initial year of grant)	N/A

Statewide Average Change (2012-13 AYP Data)				
Group	Reading		Math	
	Percentage	District	Percentage	District
All Students	2.50	same	1.69	same
American Indian / Alaska Native	3.81	same	2.79	same
Asian	1.47	same	0.69	same
Black or African American	3.77	same	0.96	same
English Language Learners	3.66	same	0.54	same
Hispanic	4.26	same	2.20	same
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	7.43	same	-2.11	same
Special Education Students	2.22	same	0.14	same
Students Eligible for Free and Reduced	3.15	same	1.62	same
Two or More Races	3.14	same	2.13	same
White	2.16	same	1.85	same

B.9 Describe the process used by the district to assist its schools in developing this application. Include the district level staff, by position, that were involved in developing this application and who will be involved in supporting the implementation of the intervention models.

The district began a SIG planning committee upon notification of the eligibility of SIG funds. The following people were involved in the planning process:

- Superintendent: Dr. Dan Hoelsing
- Principal: Stephen Grammar
- Curriculum Director: David Gibbons
- Teacher: Mark Brady

- Teacher: Guillermo Gutierrez
- ESU #7 Representative: Larianne Polk
- ESU #2 Representative: Diane Wolfe
- Schuyler Community Schools Board
- Conference Calls with Representatives from Discovery Education, Marzano Research Laboratories, CTAC
- Input from strategic planning members that included all staff/parents/community members

When the grant is funded, the district will hire an Intervention Manager and a new middle school principal. A SIG leadership team will be formed and will include members involved in the planning process as well as the addition of a parent/community member. The SIG leadership group will meet a minimum of once a week upon announcement of the award until full implementation begins. Meeting minutes will be posted to the school website. Upon full implementation, the SIG LT will formally meet twice each month.

- B.10 *Pre-implementation activities/costs are allowable for this grant. Districts must identify the amount and provide a description of the use of any funds awarded under this application for Year 1 activities that are proposed to be spent between approval by the State Board (April) and July 1. See page 79 of the guidance at:*
http://www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/Title_1_Part_A_SIG.html

A budget line for “Pre-Implementation Activities” is included on the budget pages.

Pre-Implementation activities will be evaluated based on: (a) relevance to the plan as a whole, (b) whether the activities are reasonable and necessary and directly related to the requirements of the selected model, (c) address the identified needs from the Analysis of Need, (d) have promise for improving student academic achievement, and (e) meet the “supplement not supplant” requirement.

Allowable activities for pre-implementation costs include:

- *Family and Community Engagement: holding parent and community meetings to review school performance, discuss intervention models and develop school improvement plans;*
- *Rigorous review of external providers;*
- *Staffing: recruiting and hiring a new principal and new teachers;*
- *Instructional Programs: providing remediation and enrichment sessions during the summer of 2013 in schools that will adopt an intervention model at the start of the 2013-14 school year;*
- *Professional development and support: providing professional development to help staff implement new or revised instructional programs aligned with the school’s plan and SIG intervention model; and*
- *Preparation for Accountability measure: developing and piloting a data system for use in SIG funded schools, analyzing data, developing and adopting interim assessments, etc.*

Pre-Implementation funds will be utilized to carry out the following activities:

- Funds to support summer CTAC Standard Bearers Activities. Staff will be brought in for up to 5 days of work to begin phases one, two and three of the process outlined in section B.4. Funds to be spent will be first 25% of CTAC contract and staff salary. (\$66,200)
- Funds to begin digital transformation through professional development lead by Discovery Education. Teachers will attend up to five days of technology boot camps to begin the process of integrating digital resources into personalized learning strategies. Funds to be spent will be the first 25% of Discovery Education Professional Development funds and staff salary. (\$44,350)
- Funds to advertise for the position of building principal. (\$1,000)

PART C. LEA-LEVEL BUDGET

A LEA-level budget is needed only if the district is requesting funds for LEA-level support for the school(s) to assist in implementing one of the models as identified in question B.1. above. LEA-level costs are allowable but cannot cause the entire application to exceed the established funding limitations (\$50,000 to \$2,000,000) per school and must clearly be LEA-level activities and necessary to assist the school(s) to implement one of the models.

- C.1 *Describe the proposed activities, including the pre-implementation activities, and how the activities will assist the school(s) to implement, fully and effectively, one of the intervention models within the time period of this grant. See B.10 above for requirements, allowable uses, and evaluation of pre-implementation costs included in LEA-level budgets.*

The LEA is not requesting any funds. All funds will be expended at the school building level.

- C.2. *The District may choose to complete the optional LEA-level Budget for District-level support among all Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools receiving a School Improvement Grant. If a District is submitting an application for only one building, costs for LEA-level activities designed to support implementation of the selected school intervention model in a Tier I, Tier II or Tier III school may be included in the budget for the building. The link to the Budget Form is: <http://www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/Documents/Title%20I/Title%20IG%20School%20Improvement/SIG%20Budget%20MASTER%201.16.2013.xlsx> The EXCEL Spreadsheet contains all budget pages, for all three years, including a summary budget for the entire application. Appendix C contains a sample budget page for the LEA.*

NOTE: When budgeting for the three-year period, NDE would expect to see the budgets decrease each year. Keep this in mind when planning for sustainability after the grant period comes to an end.

The LEA is not requesting any funds. All funds will be expended at the school building level.

PART D. ASSURANCES

By submitting this application, the District assures it will do the following (Double-click the box and select "Checked."):

- (1) Use its School Improvement Grant to implement fully and effectively an intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school that the district 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 NDE) to hold accountable its Tier III schools that receive school improvement funds;
- (3) Ensure that each Tier I, Tier II and Tier III school that it commits to serve receives all of the State and local funds it would receive in the absence of school improvement grant funds and that those resources are aligned with the interventions;
- (4) 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;
- (5) Monitor and evaluate the actions schools have taken, as outlined in the approved SIG applications, to recruit, select and provide oversight to external providers to ensure their quality;
- (6) Monitor and evaluate the actions schools have taken, as outlined in the approved SIG application, to sustain the reforms after the funding period ends and that it will provide technical assistance to schools on how they can sustain progress in the absence of SIG funding; and
- (6) Report to the NDE the school-level data required under section III of the final requirements.

PART E. WAIVERS

Check each waiver that the district will implement. (Double-click the box and select “Checked.”)

- “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.

Section 2. SCHOOL LEVEL INFORMATION

Complete a Section 2 for each school included in the application.

PART A. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION SCHOOL LEVEL

Each school must conduct and complete the Analysis of Need (A.1.). That information should be used to select an intervention model. Action Plans (A.2.) and Budget forms are designed for each intervention model. Applicants should duplicate forms as needed and delete unnecessary forms before submitting.

School Level Information for Tier III Schools

- *Tier III schools that are Title I schools in school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring have the option to use these funds to support, expand, continue or complete the schools Needs Improvement plan. These schools must complete the Action Plan (A.3.).*
- *Tier III schools that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds can only apply to use these funds for a variation of the Transformation intervention model. The school must meet all of the requirements EXCEPT requirements A1 and C1. The Action Plans note this option for these Tier III schools.*

The intervention models are designed to turnaround a school and the requirements are numerous and specific. A school making a commitment to take on the major changes involved must have a person devoted solely to managing and coordinating the process. In addition to the requirements of each intervention model, Nebraska is requiring each school receiving ESEA Section 1003(g) funds to have a full-or part-time Intervention Project Manager (IPM). The IPM will have, at a minimum, a current Nebraska teaching certificate. The position will be at the school level. The Intervention Project Manager (IPM) must be experienced and qualified to lead the effort and must be an employee of the district or on contract to the district. The responsibilities of this person include: working with the school principal and district administrators to assist with coordinating implementation activities, conducting ongoing evaluations of progress, ensuring appropriate collection and management of data for reporting progress on the goals established for student achievement and leading indicators, and coordinating and reporting progress to the NDE. The costs of the Intervention Project Manager are to be included on the budgets for each school.

Prior to completing the school Level Information, it is important to read the Guidance provided by the U. S. Department of Education. The guidance for ESEA Section 1003(g) grants provides the information needed for understanding the requirements, the four intervention models and is on NDE's Title I-A school improvement homepage at: http://www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/Title_1_Part_A_SIG.html

A.1. Analysis of Need

Information gained from a thorough analysis of need is used to identify the most appropriate intervention model and activities for each requirement. The analysis of need includes (a) Student Achievement and Leading Indicators; (b) Services/Programs Profile; (c) Staff Profile; (d) Curriculum/Instructional Practices Profile; (e) System Profile; and (f) a description of the stakeholders involved and the process used. Schools are encouraged to use information on identified needs from other sources like data retreats, school improvement processes, schoolwide project plans, and Improvement Plans included in the NCLB Consolidated application, if available.

Student Achievement and Leading Indicators

This analysis must include information on the following student achievement and leading indicators for each school included in the application. Annual reporting is required of each district receiving an ESEA Section 1003(g) School Improvement Grant on both. The data submitted in this application will be the baseline data for measuring progress in each of the three years of the grant.

School Level Analysis of Need:

Schuyler Middle School currently serves students in grades 6-8. NeSA data for years 2008-2012 include students in grades 5-8. During the 2012-13 school year, fifth grade students were moved to the Schuyler Elementary facility. The move of the fifth grade led to some minor changes in the demographics of the school. In years 2010-11 and 2011-12 the middle school boasted an 84% Hispanic population with 19.88% and 18.25% of the students identified as ELL. In 2012-13, the school reported an 86% Hispanic population and a 15.91% ELL population. While it may be difficult to identify significant growth in population for the building due to the movement of the fifth grade, between the years 2010-11 and 2011-12 enrollment increased by 3%.

During the same time period, Schuyler Middle School had a free and reduced rate of between 75 and 80%, nearly double that of the state average. The district reports a lower than state average for special education students with only 8.37% compared to the state's percentage of 14.66%. A striking comparison, however, is the evaluation of high ability learner data. The state reports a 15% high ability learner average compared to Schuyler's percentage of only 5.73%. Even more telling is the discrepancy of high ability learners between races. Of the identified HAL learners reported, only 15% are Hispanic in a district that reports an 84% Hispanic enrollment.

The following paragraphs address the needs of the building in terms of student achievement, programming, staffing, curriculum, and systems in more detail.

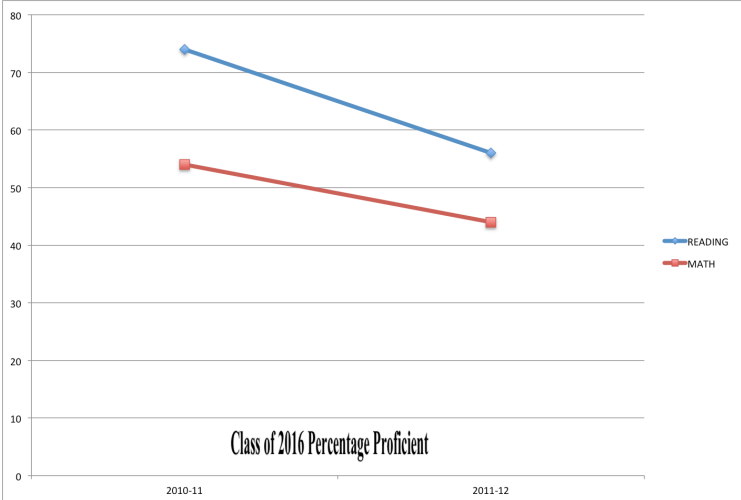
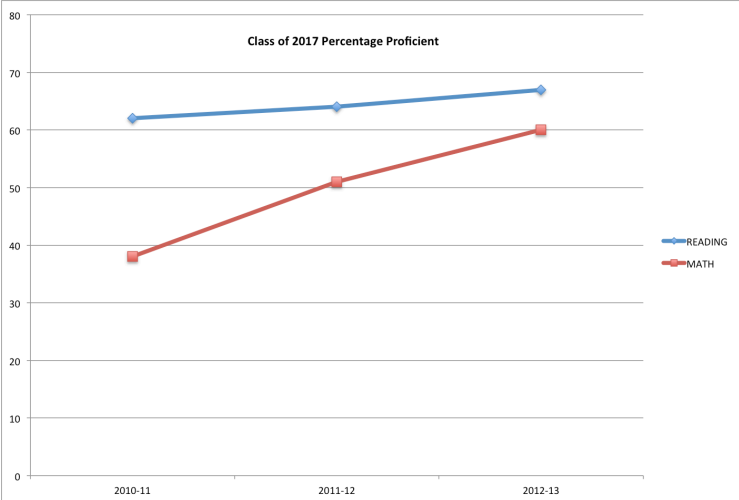
Complete the table below using 2012-13 data. Provide an explanation if any data is not available.

Reporting Metrics for the School Improvement Grants	
Student Achievement not captured on the Profile from the State of the Schools Report	
(1) Percentage of limited English proficient students (of all ELL students that were tested) who attained a Level 4 or 5 on the ELDA	32%
(2) Graduation rate (AYP graduation rate for high schools only)	N/A
(3) College enrollment rate (high schools only)	N/A
Leading Indicators	
(4) Number of minutes within the school year	69,996
(5) Number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework, early-college high schools or dual enrollment classes (high schools only)	N/A
(6) Dropout rate (total for high schools only)	N/A
(7) Student attendance rate	97.84%
(8) Discipline incidents (suspensions, expulsions as reported to NDE)	8
(9) Truants (although this is a required Metric, districts do not need to report baseline data at this time)	
(10) Distribution of teachers by performance level on district's teacher evaluation system	

(11) Teacher attendance rate (although this is a required Metric, districts do not need to report baseline data at this time)	
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(a) *Student Achievement and Leading Indicators - List identified areas of need. Compare the identified areas of need to the intervention models and the required activities for each model. How will the intervention model selected help the school to meet the needs identified from the Student Achievement and Leading Indicators Profile? Provide an explanation for any missing data (excluding numbers 9 – 11).*

An analysis of Schuyler Middle School’s NeSA data indicates that student achievement falls well below the state average in all four core tested areas. In particular, following students who were in grade six in 2010-11 through their eighth grade year in 2012-13, there is minimal growth. Following seventh grade students in 2010-11 to their eighth grade year of 2011-12 there is an actual decrease in achievement in both reading and math.



In addition to reading and math, both writing and science achievement data indicate that Schuyler Middle School students are achieving far below the state average. In addition, there has been little to no progress made in decreasing the achievement gap between students at Schuyler Middle School and the state average. In fact, between the years of 2010-11 and 2011-12, there was a significant increase in the achievement gap in reading.

Year	MS Reading	State Reading	MS Math	State Math	MS Science	State Science	MS Writing	State Writing
2009-2010	48%	69%						
2010-2011	60%	72%	41%	63%				
2011-2012	54%	74%	47%	67%	55%	67%		
2012-2013	60%	77%	48%	69%	58%	70%	59%	68%

Middle School Differences	Reading	Math	Science	Writing
2009-2010	21%	N/A	N/A	N/A

2010-2011	12%	22%	N/A	N/A
2011-2012	20%	20%	12%	N/A
2012-2013	17%	21%	12%	9%

There are several factors that play a role in student performance. Any given factor has the ability to positively or negatively impact student achievement and most likely, the combination of several factors make it difficult to specifically identify which strategy, resource, or practice makes the difference between success and failure of any given student. There are so many variables involved that the process of transforming this building will require the assistance of several providers, resources, interventions, and processes that individually, have the potential to improve student outcomes. Working together, however, they will create an entire system that will propel this building forward.

This project will work to improve student achievement in all core academic areas through highly engaging personalized learning formats aligned to robust standards-based curriculum and digital resources.

The first step in the process will be to work with CTAC to identify the root causes of student underperformance. Following the first three phases of the standard bearer schools process, the educators of SMS will work during the summer of 2014 to begin specific interventions as identified during the process.

Schuyler Middle School educators know that at the base of all great systems there are highly trained and effective teachers, quality curriculum and content, and engaging instruction. With support of CTAC, SMS educators will begin the work of aligning all of these aspects of quality education.

(b) Programs/Services Profile – This profile identifies programs/services that support academic achievement for struggling students and might include summer school, tutoring programs, before and after school services; parent and family engagement; community partners, social workers, etc. List identified areas of need. Compare the identified areas of need to the intervention models and the required activities for each model. How will the intervention model selected help the school to meet the needs identified from the Programs/Services profile?

In the past, Schuyler Middle School has done little outside of the normal school day to support students and families. In the past two years, however, a family resource center has been established at SMS. This resource center is operated through district funds and community donations. The center provides translation services, ELL instruction for adults, and community education including cooking classes, income tax assistance, GED classes, Tai Chi, and computer classes.

In addition to the family and community support, the district provides some limited summer school programming. Summer school for special education students is held each summer. As part of the ESU #7 migrant cooperative, migrant students are offered some summer programming. And finally, the summer of 2014 will mark the first Title 1 summer school offering for students identified as needing additional summer assistance.

After-school tutoring and homework help are provided through district and Title 1 funding. The tutoring program is a mandatory after-school assignment for students who are failing courses. During the 2012-13 school year, 100 students in grades 6-8 were assigned to tutoring at least once during the year. Homework Zone is a voluntary program where students seek homework assistance after school. During the 2012-13 school year, the homework zone saw as many as 237 students in October to only 10 students in April. The program has been continued with mild attendance this year.

For students in grades 7 and 8 there are additional extra-curricular activities available, however, not all students participate and aside from sports, there is little available for students.

Activity	Number Involved	Percent
Band	51	23%
Vocal	40	18%
Fall Sports	130	58%
Winter Sports	152	68%
Spring Sports	125	56%

There are currently no extra-curricular activities for sixth grade students.

Data collected from the strategic planning process indicates that extended opportunities for students attending SMS is an extremely high need and was the basis for the district applying for a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant. Should the grant be funded, an after-school and summer program will be implemented at SMS.

In addition to the 21st Century plans, **the SIG grant will provide additional summer and after-school programming.** As data from the needs analysis indicates, students need additional support in all core subjects. In particular, math and science scores will be supported through the implementation of specific STEM projects and camps. Working with staff from Discovery and the Strategic Air and Space Museum, the district will expand current programming and resources to focus on science, technology, engineering and math concepts.

Reading and writing will also be supported and expanded through the integration of highly engaging activities that include digital publishing, vocabulary development through digital systems, and reading and writing student tutors through programs like Learning Together.¹²

- (c) *Staff Profile – An analysis of need might include a profile of teachers in the school (years of experience, education attained, etc.); professional development provided; teacher evaluation system; etc. List identified areas of need. Compare the identified areas of need to the intervention models and the required activities for each model. How will the intervention model selected help the school to meet the needs identified from the Staff Profile?*

Schuyler Middle School reports 25.55 FTE for the 2012-13 school year. Of those reported, only 10 have master’s degrees. This is far below the state average and the lowest percentage of the district.

	Total	Percentage with Master's Degrees
State	24,253.79	49.27%
District	126.65	42.97%
Schuyler Middle School	25.55	35.71%
Schuyler Elementary	52.10	37.74%
Schuyler High School	35.70	56.41%

The average years of service for SMS teachers is nearly 16 years (15.86), which is slightly higher than the state average of 15.03.

¹² www.learningtogether.com

Data from the strategic planning process indicates that the SMS teachers are extremely concerned about the use of technology in the classroom. While the district adopted a 1:1 I-pad initiative for grades 8-12, little teacher training and support has been provided. The strategic planning data reveals that the top three areas of concern for SMS teachers are:

- Provide training and support for staff, students and parents to acquire the skills necessary to effectively use technology to improve learning. (12 votes)
- Provide a well-rounded curriculum that promotes critical thinking skills, creativity, and 21st century skills (11 votes)
- Provide a strong vocational program at the middle and high school levels to build job skills and prepare students for post-secondary education and/or the workforce. (10 votes)

(d) *Curriculum/Instructional Practices Profile – An analysis of instructional practices might include alignment of curriculum to content standards; vertical alignment of instructional approaches; use of formative and summative assessment data to inform instruction; differentiated curriculum, etc. List identified areas of need. Compare the identified areas of need to the intervention models and the required activities for each model. How will the intervention model selected help the school to meet the needs identified in the Instructional Practices Profile?*

Following the September 2012 AdvancED visitation, the district began work on several instructional practices based on the results of the external visitation report. Beginning in the fall of 2013, the district's calendar reflected a Friday early dismissal to support curriculum work and professional learning communities (PLC). Based on the work of Rick DuFour, the staff of SMS has been conducting PLCs. In addition to PLC work, the staff has received professional development on Marzano's Reflective Teaching strategies. This work will continue at the district level. The SIG grant, however, will build on these processes. Additional summer work will be necessary to begin the CTAC process to clearly articulate the additional interventions and timelines necessary to fully transform the school.

In addition to the district level work, SMS teachers will also begin work on a new teacher evaluation system and the development of teacher coaches. Both interventions will follow the Marzano format of quality instruction.

Teachers will also begin the work to improve the school's curriculum and resources. Currently, individual technology devices are only available to students in grade eight. The SIG will expand this to grades six and seven. In addition, teachers need continued support to fully implement a personalized learning format for students that matches student needs with digital resources and highly engaged learning formats. Discovery Education will lead two major components of this process. First, teachers will be provided several levels of professional development in technology tool usage. During the summer of 2014, teachers will attend technology boot camp where they will receive individual and group instruction in how to utilize the technology tools in their classrooms.

Secondly, beginning in the fall of 2014, each curriculum area will initiate the process of mapping and pacing the school's curriculum. The process will include not only articulating each indicator but also the very important task of identifying digital and traditional resources that support each indicator. And finally, each indicator and resource will be mapped to specific assessment items and protocols. This alignment of all resources and assessment tools will provide a robust repository that will align student need with available resources.

Next, professional development for using digital tools will continue through in-classroom support from Discovery distinguished educator leaders. These leaders will work individually with each teacher to model classroom lessons, support the planning and lesson development process, and provide

feedback for lessons. This one-on-one coaching-modeling will mirror the Marzano teacher-leader and coaching work being done at the same time.

And finally, SMS educators will be given the opportunity to expand their knowledge of other systems and processes through individual and small group professional development opportunities. Seeing is believing and networking with other successful schools will strengthen the process. Teams will visit other highly effective schools to observe and ask questions of their teachers and leaders involved with extreme school transformations.

CTAC will facilitate all intervention processes to ensure that all systems are working towards the identified outcomes in systemic fashion and not as isolated pockets of haphazard and random strategies. A key component of this process is the on-going and continued reflection of student data, teacher input, community involvement and professional guidance.

- (e) *System Profile – Indicators of system support might include alignment of school improvement efforts and plans (NCA, Rule 10, Accountability Grants, Schoolwide Plans, etc.); extending the length of instructional time, school day, etc.; governance flexibility at the school level; etc. List identified areas of need. Compare the identified areas of need to the intervention models and the required activities for each model. How will the intervention model selected help the school to meet the needs identified in the System Profile?*

The district adopted a formal and comprehensive accreditation and school improvement policy handbook at the January 14, 2013 school board meeting.¹³ The policy outlines the district's capacity for continuous improvement based on the recommendations of the September 2012 AdvancED external review. The beginning stages of this process are proof of the commitment to continuous improvement that is necessary to accomplish a comprehensive project like this school improvement grant. The plan calls for the following:

- Development of a district steering committee
- Committee meets monthly
- Committee coordinates activities
- Posting of Improvement process to district website.
- Collection and analysis of district, school, and student data
- Development of goals

It is clear that SCS is committed to move from plans to systemic actions. According to Lee Jenkins, there are four components to systems thinking; appreciation for a system, knowledge about variation, theory of knowledge, and psychology. As educators, it is imperative that systems are developed and supported that best fit the needs of all stakeholders. It is through these systems that educators will be able to identify variations and then use knowledge and psychology to address the variations. The district has clearly begun the work of systems thinking, is in the capacity building stages, and ready to take the process to the next level. The high level of leadership from the administration and board provides that support necessary to support this process.

Previous sections of this application have already outlined several of the processes that have been identified to support this SIG. They include but are not limited to:

- Professional development activities during the summer to support SIG activities/work
- Summer and after-school programming for students

¹³ SCS Accreditation and school improvement policy handbook may be found in the appendix of this application. (Appendix D)

- In-class professional development and coaching from outside providers
- Parent-school liaison and communications position
- Hiring of new school principal
- Robust and clearly articulated curriculum alignment with resources, mapping, and pacing
- On-line assessment formative assessment system that will assign appropriate content to individual students based on needs
- Technology integration specialist position
- Instructional coaching model to support in-house support/coaching
- Parent involvement activities/supports
- On-going data analysis/goal setting through a formalized process developed through the assistance of CTAC

Because of the extensive work being done with CTAC, all school systems and resources will be examined in the ten-step standard bearers schools process. This will ensure an alignment of all school resources and processes to ensure a truly systemic approach to school transformation. Included in the examination will be a study of AdvancED, Rule 10, Title 1, Accountability grants, 21st Century, Migrant Education programing, and district policies.

(f) Describe the process used, the participants involved, and the involvement of stakeholders in analyzing the needs of this school and selecting the intervention model.

The district began a SIG planning committee upon notification of the eligibility of SIG funds. The following people were involved in the planning process:

- Superintendent: Dr. Dan Hoelsing
- Principal: Stephen Grammar
- Curriculum Director: David Gibbons
- Teacher: Mark Brady
- Teacher: Guillermo Gutierrez
- ESU #7 Representative: Larianne Polk
- ESU #2 Representative: Diane Wolfe
- Schuyler Community Schools Board
- Conference Calls with Representatives from Discovery Education, Marzano Research Laboratories, CTAC
- Input from strategic planning members that included all staff/parents/community members

When the grant is funded, the district will hire an Intervention Manager and a new middle school principal. A SIG leadership team will be formed and will include members involved in the planning process as well as the addition a of a parent/community member. The SIG leadership group will meet a minimum of once a week upon announcement of the award until full implementation begins. Meeting minutes will be posted to the school website. Upon full implementation, the SIG LT will formally meet twice each month.

A.2. Action Plans

When the analysis of need is completed, the school must select one of the four intervention models, based on the identified needs, and develop plans to implement the model, fully and effectively, within the three years of this grant. It is critical to read and understand the requirements of each model before making this decision. The guidance from the U. S. Department of Education provides information, explanations, and the definitions of the four models provided below.

Completing the Action Plans

Since all requirements of the intervention model selected must be implemented, Action Plans have been designed to ensure that each requirement is addressed. Each requirement in the intervention model selected for this school has an Action Plan. Add tables for permissible activities if implementing more than one for each requirement. Delete the Action Plans for the other intervention models.

Activity – Not all requirements will need a “new” activity. If the school has already started implementing an activity **within the last two years**, that meets the intervention requirement, it should be described. Instead of new Start and Implementation dates, it should be noted that it is or was already being implemented. Existing activities may or may not have costs from this School Improvement Grant. See question G-1 of the U. S. Department of Education Guidance.

The Key Steps must identify the short- and long-term steps needed to implement the intervention model. Major “Activities” should have sufficient detail in the Key Steps to allow a reviewer to determine whether the school has given serious consideration to the pieces that need to be accomplished in order to implement the intervention.

Action Plans are to cover the three-year period that the School Improvement Grant is available. Optional Pre-Implementation activities should be included in the Action Plans, if applicable, and would be included in the Year-1 budget. The Action Plans contain a Start Date and an Implementation Date. The Start Date should identify when the school will begin the activity. The Implementation Date is the expected date when the intervention will be operational. NOTE: The three year availability of these funds, contingent upon an annual review and approval for continued funding, means that activities can span the entire three years. However, it is expected that schools will begin meeting the requirements as soon as possible. The Action Plans must indicate that the school will be able to implement the intervention model in the first year and to fully implement the model within the three years of funding.

In addition to asking schools to identify, by position, the person(s) responsible for each activity, the Action Plans ask for a description of how the school will monitor progress and evaluate the process of implementation. Each school is required to have an Intervention Project Manager who would, most likely, be the person to monitor and report progress on implementation activities.

Each Action Plan contains a field for an estimated cost over the three years. This was included to ensure that costs are being considered as plans are being developed. The estimated cost over the three years will not be cross-matched to the final figures on the budget pages. It is intended to help schools identify costs by requirement since the budget forms require costs to be separated and identified by each requirement of the intervention model selected.

NOTE: When budgeting for the three-year period, NDE would expect to see the budgets decrease each year. Keep this in mind when planning for sustainability after the grant period comes to an end.

Pre-Implementation Action Plan 1 Transformation Intervention Model	
Pre-Implementation Activities are Optional and may include (1) Family and Community Engagement activities, (2) Rigorous Review of External Providers, (3) Staffing, (4) Instructional Programs, (5) Professional Development & Support, and/or (6) Preparation for Accountability Measures.	
Activity	Begin Standard Bearers Schools Process
Key steps	Contract with Community Training & Assistance Center (CTAC) Schedule Summer work with teachers Develop and approve policy for extended duty/incentive pay for teachers for SIG process Conduct phases 1 -3 of Standard Bearer process in June of 2014
Start Date	April 2014
Full implementation date	July 2014
Person(s) responsible	Superintendent
Monitor and evaluate	Survey of teachers of the process, development of SIG plan/process to be delivered to board of education in June of 2014.
Cost	\$66,200
Pre-Implementation Action Plan 2 Transformation Intervention Model (Add Additional Lines as Needed)	
Activity	Begin Staff development technology professional development
Key steps	Contract with Discovery for summer staff development Schedule summer work with teacher Conduct days 1-5 of technology boot camp for teachers
Start Date	April 2014
Full implementation date	July 2014
Person(s) responsible	Superintendent, building principal
Monitor and evaluate	Teacher surveys, pre-post assessment of teacher skills/perceptions
Cost	\$44,350
Pre-Implementation Action Plan 2 Transformation Intervention Model (Add Additional Lines as Needed)	
Activity	Begin search for new building principal
Key steps	Develop job description Advertise for position Conduct interviews Hire new principal
Start Date	April 2014
Full implementation date	July 2014
Person(s) responsible	Superintendent
Monitor and evaluate	Successful hiring of new principal
Cost	\$1,000
Action Plan Transformation Intervention Model - 1	
Requirement (1A): Developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness (A) Replace the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the	

transformation model NOTE: This requirement is an option for Tier III schools.	
Activity	Replace current principal
Key steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise for position • Interview candidates • Select candidate
Start Date	April 2014
Full implementation date	July 2014
Person(s) responsible	Superintendent
Monitor and evaluate	Annual principal evaluation tool
Cost for three years	\$344,944
Action Plan Transformation Intervention Model - 2	
<p>Requirement (1B): Developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness</p> <p>(B) Use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals that--</p> <p>(1) Take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor as well as other factors such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high school graduations rates; and</p> <p>(2) Are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement</p>	
Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Marzano Research Laboratory to develop teacher evaluation tool 2. Contract with Discovery to implement the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED)
Key steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop evaluation team • Contract with Marzano Research Laboratory • Develop evaluation instrument • Pilot instrument • Refine instrument • Adopt new evaluation system for teachers 2. Principal Evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with VAL-ED • Identify evaluation team (who will complete evaluation) • Pilot process • Refine process • Adopt new principal evaluation
Start Date	September 2014
Full implementation date	September 2016
Person(s) responsible	SIG leadership team, Intervention Project Manager, Middle School Principal, Superintendent, Association representatives.
Monitor and evaluate	Minutes of each meeting/work session will be completed Review by CTAC

	Review by Marzano
Cost for three years	\$20,299
Action Plan Transformation Intervention Model - 3	
Requirement (1C): Developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness (C) Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who, in implementing this model, have increased student achievement and high school graduation rates and identify and remove those who, after ample opportunities have been provided for them to improve their professional practice, have not done so NOTE: This requirement is an option for Tier III schools.	
Activity	1. Staff who succeeds in participating in non-contract summer and weekend work will be compensated up to \$200/day.
Key steps	Develop incentive/extra-duty pay policy Have policy approved by the teacher's association and school board.
Start Date	June 2014
Full implementation date	September 2016
Person(s) responsible	SIG leadership team, Intervention Manager, Superintendent, Building Principal
Monitor and evaluate	The process will be monitored and evaluated by the SIG leadership team and CTAC.
Cost for three years	\$186,000
Action Plan Transformation Intervention Model - 4	
Requirement (1D): Developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness (D) Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded professional development (e.g., regarding subject-specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school, or differentiated instruction) that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies	
Activity	1. Provide staff development for technology-rich instruction 2. Continue work with Marzano Reflective Teaching* 3. Hire .5 FTE Technology Intervention Specialist (position will likely be .5 FTE Intervention Manager and .5 FTE Technology Integration Specialist.) *(district-wide plan – no cost to the SIG grant)
Key steps	1. Provide staff development for technology-rich instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with Discovery Education • Begin summer technology boot-camp workshops • Deploy in-classroom mentoring/coaching from Discovery educators 2. Continue work with Marzano Reflective Teaching* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly PLC work on instruction • Continue district-wide Marzano workshops

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Hire .5 FTE Technology Intervention Specialist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop job description • Advertise for the position • Hire position • Develop schedule and goals
Start Date	June 2014
Full implementation date	September 2015
Person(s) responsible	Intervention Manager, Intervention specialist, building principal, superintendent,
Monitor and evaluate	CTAC will evaluate process, teacher-student surveys
Cost for three years	\$359,235
Action Plan Transformation Intervention Model - 5	
Requirement (1E): Developing and increasing teacher and school leader effectiveness (E) Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in a transformation school	
Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff who volunteers to serve on work groups/committees will be provided opportunities to attend personalized professional development (conferences) and/or school visits.
Key steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop professional development and visitation policy. • Have policy approved by building principal, superintendent, and school board.
Start Date	September 2014
Full implementation date	September 2014
Person(s) responsible	SIG leadership team, school principal, superintendent, school board
Monitor and evaluate	CTAC will monitor and evaluate effectiveness
Cost for three years	\$46,023
Action Plan Transformation Intervention Model - 6	
Requirement (2A): Comprehensive Instructional reform strategies (A) Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards	
Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create teacher coaches 2. Align, map and pace school curriculum with digital and traditional resources 3. Deploy formative assessment system aligned to curriculum that individualizes resources based on student need. 4. Adopt digital resources necessary to support on-line digital conversion and content delivery.
Key steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create teacher coaches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with Marzano • Hire instructional lead coach • Develop teacher coaching criteria and application process

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify school instructional coaches • Train and develop instructional coaches <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Align, map and pace school curriculum with digital and traditional resources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with Discovery to lead mapping, alignment, and pacing • Develop schedule for work • Identify teachers for each curriculum area • Complete work • Implement new resources with instruction 3. Deploy formative assessment system aligned to curriculum that individualizes resources based on student need. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with Discovery to align assessment with curriculum and content. • Develop schedule for work • Train teachers in system • Deploy system 4. Adopt digital resources necessary to support on-line digital conversion and content delivery. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with Discovery for on-line content • Develop schedule for work • Identify teachers for each curriculum content area • Train teachers in use of content • Implement new resources with instruction
Start Date	September 2014
Full implementation date	September 2016
Person(s) responsible	Intervention manager, curriculum director, building principal,
Monitor and evaluate	CTAC will monitor progress based on timeline developed by SIG leadership team.
Cost for three years	\$621,505
Action Plan Transformation Intervention Model - 7	
Requirement (2B): Comprehensive Instructional reform strategies (B) Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students	
Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement Standard Bearer Schools Process 2. Deploy Discovery Assessment System 3. Yearly Data retreat
Key steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement Standard Bearer Schools Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with CTAC • Schedule summer work • Begin process in June of 2014 • Continue process through on-site work by CTAC and weekly video-conferencing with teachers/leaders during the year 2. Deploy Discovery Assessment System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with Discovery

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct assessment alignment with curriculum • Train staff • Pilot system • Revise system • Adopt system <p>3. Yearly Data Retreat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data system part of the Standard Bearer process • Conduct continuous data evaluation as part of CTAC system
Start Date	June 2014
Full implementation date	September 2016
Person(s) responsible	Intervention manager, SIG leadership group, building principal, superintendent
Monitor and evaluate	The CTAC system will evaluate the process, state SIG evaluation and monitoring, board reports,
Cost for three years	\$7,392 (additional costs included in Model 11 for CTAC contract)
Action Plan Transformation Intervention Model - 8	
Requirement(3A): Increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools (A) Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time (as defined in the USDE guidance)	
Activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff who succeeds in supporting curriculum alignment and mapping of math and science content may apply to lead summer and after-school STEM programs. 2. Staff who succeeds in supporting curriculum alignment and mapping of language arts, social studies, or other content may apply to lead extra-duty clubs/activities for extra-duty compensation.
Key steps	Develop summer/after-school opportunities and have them approved by the SIG leadership team, school principal, superintendent, and school board
Start Date	June 2015
Full implementation date	June 2016
Person(s) responsible	SIG leadership team, school principal, Intervention manager, superintendent, staff conducting camps
Monitor and evaluate	Enrollment data of activities, student surveys, pre-post assessments, CTAC review
Cost for three years	\$30,000
Action Plan Transformation Intervention Model - 9	
Requirement(3B): Increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools (B) Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement	
Activity	Provide for school-parent-community communications liaison and system
Key steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop job description 2. Advertise for position 3. Hire for position 4. Begin community outreach including web page updates, cable broadcasts, webinars in English and Spanish, home visits

	5. Begin student news to be broadcast on cable network.
Start Date	July 2014
Full implementation date	September 2014
Person(s) responsible	Superintendent, Building Principal
Monitor and evaluate	SIG leadership team will work with CTAC to develop surveys, attendance at parent/community events,
Cost for three years	\$164,146
Action Plan Transformation Intervention Model - 10	
Requirement(4A): Providing operational flexibility and sustained support (A) Give the school sufficient operational flexibility (such as staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates	
Activity	Early dismissal for teacher work and professional development
Key steps	The calendar has been adjusted to allow early dismissal each week for teacher work.
Start Date	September 2013
Full implementation date	September 2013
Person(s) responsible	Superintendent, school board
Monitor and evaluate	PLC templates to be completed each week, meeting agendas
Cost for three years	No cost to SIG – this is a district expense
Action Plan Transformation Intervention Model - 11	
Requirement(4B): Providing operational flexibility and sustained support (B) Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, the SEA, or a designated external lead partner organization (such as a school turnaround organization or an EMO)	
Activity	Contract with Community Training & Assistance Center (CTAC)
Key steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract with CTAC to provide leadership and coaching for administrators, teachers, staff, and community for school transformation. • CTAC will work with the SIG leadership team and school administration to develop key timelines, strategies, and work agendas to lead the transformation process.
Start Date	April 2014
Full implementation date	September 2013
Person(s) responsible	School superintendent, SIG leadership team, school board
Monitor and evaluate	CTAC will prepare a yearly review and present findings to board of education, state SIG leaders, and building staff
Cost for three years	\$433,900

List staff positions below that are anticipated to be paid with SIG funds to support the Transformation Intervention Model. (Add more lines if needed)
Building Principal
Intervention Manager

Technology Integration Specialist
Instructional Coach
Community-Parent communications liaison

PART B. BUDGETS

Budget forms have been designed to assist Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III schools in budgeting, by intervention model, for each of the three years of funds availability. Total amounts for each object code are calculated for each year and also transferred automatically to the three year Summary Budget and District Summary Budget form.

NOTE: When budgeting for the three-year period, NDE would expect to see the budgets decrease each year. Keep this in mind when planning for sustainability after the grant period comes to an end.

Budget forms are found in a separate EXCEL file at:

<http://www.education.ne.gov/federalprograms/Documents/Title%20I/Title%20IG%20School%20Improvement/SIG%20Budget%20MASTER%201.16.2013.xlsx>

Appendices (Included as a Separate Documents)

- **Appendix A: NDE Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools (PLAS) Selection Process**
- **Appendix B: Reviewers Rating Rubric and Checklist**
- **Appendix C: Budget Pages**