

## **School Improvement Grant (SIG) Cohort IV Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

The SIG IV is a competitive federal grant designed to assist Priority and Focus schools, with Title I status or Title I eligible, on the 2014 Top-to-Bottom list in turning around student performance. This FAQ has been designed to address the multitude of questions from the schools that may or may not be eligible to apply. If your question is not addressed within this compilation, please contact us at [mde-sig@michigan.gov](mailto:mde-sig@michigan.gov) so we can be of assistance to you.

**1. Is it a requirement to hire an Education Service Provider (ESP)?**

*ESP's are not a requirement, unless you have chosen the Whole School Reform model. The Whole School Reform mode requires that you partner with a Strategy Developer.*

**2. The grant requires three SIG funded positions (coordinator, data coach and a family liaison). What if we already have a family liaison?**

*If you already have a family liaison, you could add additional staff that are specific to the SIG. Another option is to use SIG funds to pay a portion of an existing family liaison's compensation based on the amount of time they work on the SIG.*

**3. If we are a priority school and not currently Title I participating, can we apply for the grant?**

*If you are eligible for Title I now and not choosing to participate, you must convert to Title I participating if you are awarded a SIG grant.*

**4. For awarded grantees, funds will be available for drawdown on October 1st, how do we cover expense that occur prior to that date?**

*Grantees may obligate from the day they receive their award notice (anticipated in August). They can use other funds to pay for SIG related expenses incurred up until such time they can draw SIG funds and use them to reimburse the other funds originally used.*

**5. We have four schools on the eligibility list and are applying for all four schools. Is it possible that some of the schools might be funded and not all four?**

*Yes. Each school building applying must complete its own section of the application. These are reviewed independently from the district section and are scored based on the individual school responses.*

**6. We have focus and priority schools applying to the same district. Do we submit two separate applications, one for priority and one for focus? Or do we submit one application with both focus and priority schools included in the one application?**

*Each district is allowed one application which must include each school applying for the grant, regardless of priority/focus status.*

**7. My Intervention Specialist said that we could contract individually for math and reading PD. He states that we are not required to work with entities from the ESP list. Is that correct?**

*No. Any entity working with a school receiving a SIG must be registered with the State of Michigan SIG Provider Registry. Information on that process will be released shortly.*

**8. How much could be allocated for the physical allowable with SIG Funds outlay of our building (if any at all)?**

Capital improvements are generally not allowable with SIG funds.

- 9. If a person is hired under SIG, could they also be expected to complete tasks outside of what the SIG governs?**  
*SIG funded positions can be co-funded to include work outside of SIG. Personnel Activity Reports (PARS) and Semi-Annual Certifications must be completed as appropriate.*
- 10. For question number 9 (Annual Goals) in the School portion of the application, are the SIG years listed correct? For example, are the goals for 2015-2016 the goals for the first year of the grant? If so, wouldn't that be 2014-2015?**  
*The goal years are correct in the grant application. The goals should be set for after the 1st year of implementation, which will be School year 2015-2016.*
- 11. Are there formatting requirements including font style, font size and margins for the SIG application?**  
*No, there are no formatting requirements.*
- 12. Can you please help define the timeframe for question 4 (page 6 of the paper application). It reads, "Include a timeline delineating the steps to be taken to implement the selected intervention in each Priority school identified in the LEA's application."**  
*Include the action steps to be taken, who is responsible, start and end dates, and the metric to be used to determine completion."*
- 13. Do we include ideas from our Transformation Plan back in 2012-2013? Or do we start at the pre-implementation phase, i.e. summer before the 2014-15 school year?**  
*Start with the pre-implementation phase in the summer of 2014-15. You can also outline what you have already done.*
- 14. Are there font and line spacing requirements or preferences in the SIG?**  
*No, there are no requirements. The recommendation is 12pt font, single spaced.*
- 15. Do we need to include the FTE for grant-funded positions in the job descriptions we are submitting with the grant?**  
*Yes.*
- 16. After reviewing several of the approved plans, I see lots of data within several of the plans. Charts...tables...etc. However with the new template there are page limits now. It seems impossible to put in those charts. (and maybe that is what you were trying to do). Am I right in my thinking that we just give a narrative to fulfill the page limits and skip the charts and graphs?**  
*When cohorts I & II drafted their SIG applications they did not have approved SRO plans. Most of what was in the previous SIG apps is now in the SRO plan. There is no need to put all of the charts, tables, graphs, etc. in the SIG app. Just a succinct narrative of what you plan to do based on the analysis of those charts, tables, etc.*
- 17. I have been reviewing applications submitted in the past and I see that those that passed range from somewhere around 50 pages up to well over 200 pages. The template and instructions that we got for this cycle consistently asks for no more than a one-page response. Is this a change from the last cycle? Are you asking for more succinct responses? When it comes to including graphs and charts for the data are these uploaded as attachments away from the narrative**

**responses (I've seen it both ways). Essentially I'm asking about the significance of asking for no more than a page for responses.**

*The shortened application is new for the SIG cohort IV competition. The responses are expected to be succinct since the majority of the content is already in the approved SRO plan (this was not the case with SIG cohorts I & II). If you must include graphs and charts, they will be subject to the page limits.*

**18. Can you please tell me when the SIG applications are due to the state from the districts?**

*MDE is awaiting approval from the U.S. Dept. of Education. Dates will be posted on the MDE SIG website when they become available.*

**19. Our team is working on applying for the SIG grant which is due the end of May. Is there any possibility of you or someone in your department looking over our app before we submit it?**

*MDE cannot review your SIG grant application prior to submission.*

**20. For the budget, is this reasonably flexible if we plan a particular presenter and then change to another...is that allowed? I would assume it is but want to make sure as we begin writing.**

*All budgets in the initial application are considered preliminary budgets. Fine budget details will be worked out if and when the grant is awarded and budget detail is entered into MEGS+.*

**21. How should the application be submitted if it is no longer on MEGS? Your PowerPoint states that the application must be submitted on MEGS+.**

*The SIG application is to be uploaded in the MEGS+ system.*

**22. Can the grant coordinator position and data coach position be combined positions in small schools that are applying for SIG IV funding?**

*Absolutely! The positions need to be based on the school's needs. If a part-time SIG coordinator and part-time data coach meet the needs of the school that is all that is required.*

**23. Would SIG pay for teachers/staff memberships for professional groups (e.g. ASCD, NCTM...)?**

*No.*