



Descriptions of State-Developed Alternative Intervention Models for School Improvement Grants in Colorado, Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island, and Texas

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BACKGROUND

A state education agency (SEA) served by the Southeast Comprehensive Center (SECC) has requested information regarding state-developed (also referred to as state-determined) alternative models for schools receiving School Improvement Grant (SIG) funds. The state-determined school improvement model (one of three new models) offers an alternative to the prior version of SIG, which included four intervention models (U.S. Department of Education, 2015, February 9).

Consequently, this report focuses on state-developed alternative intervention models that are being offered in five states and is organized into the following sections:

- Procedure
- General Limitations
- Overview
- States' Demographics and Their State-Developed Alternative Intervention SIG Models
- Conclusion
- References

PROCEDURE

Due to the client's need for a prompt response, the SECC Information Request (IR) team abbreviated the customary process for compiling and reporting information. They conducted interviews with SEA staff in the states of Colorado, Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island, and Texas, which have state-developed alternative intervention models. The IR team also reviewed resources on websites for the five SEAs, the U.S. Department of Education (ED), and the Center for School Turnaround (CST).

Based on the information compiled, the IR team developed descriptions of the state-developed alternative intervention SIG models in the states of Colorado, Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island, and Texas, which begin on page 4.

GENERAL LIMITATIONS

As stated previously, the state-based information was compiled from interviews with SEA staff in the five states that were approved by ED to implement a state-developed alternative intervention model and from materials found on websites for ED and CST. This report is experiential and describes the states' developed alternative intervention models and the processes the states used to develop these models. Given the nature of this report, the IR team did not attempt to determine if the states' developed alternative intervention models are supported by a comprehensive research base.

The SECC provides the above comments to aid stakeholders in making informed decisions with respect to the content of this report but does not endorse any of the policies or practices that are discussed. In addition, SECC does not offer conclusions regarding the models featured in this report, but instead provides information about how states are developing alternative intervention SIG models.

OVERVIEW

School Improvement Grants are provided by ED and are authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)¹. The grants are made to SEAs that, in turn, award competitive subgrants to local education agencies (LEAs) that demonstrate (a) the greatest need for the funds and (b) the strongest commitment to use the funds in ways that will substantially raise the achievement of students in the state's lowest-performing schools.

As noted above, the SIG funds are to be directly used by LEAs and schools to improve student achievement. The federal SIG requirements were initially developed in 2009 and amended requirements were finalized in February 2015 (Redding, Dunn, & McCauley, 2015). In 2015, the SIG program changed from providing schools with three-years' worth of funding to five years, and the menu of SIG intervention models an LEA can choose expanded from four to seven models. Now, LEAs applying to their SEA for a SIG grant can select one of the following intervention models for each SIG-eligible school for which it is applying:

1. Turnaround – LEA must replace the principal and 50 percent of staff and meet other requirements
2. Restart – LEA must close the school and reopen as a charter school or school administered by an education management organization
3. Closure – LEA must close the school and assign students to other, better-performing schools
4. Transformation – LEA must replace the principal and implement turnaround principles (described below); most significant change in federal requirements for 2015 is the requirement to align the leader and teacher evaluation system with criteria in the ESEA flexibility guidance
5. NEW – State-Developed Alternative Model (if approved state model is available)
6. NEW – Evidence-Based, Whole-School Reform Strategy (created by LEA and external partner)
7. NEW – Early Learning Model
(Redding, Dunn, & McCauley, 2015, pp. 2–3)

¹For more details, see ED Programs: School Improvement Grants at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.

As mentioned previously, the purpose of this report is to describe several state-developed alternative intervention models approved by ED. As discussed by Redding, Dunn, and McCauley (2015), an SEA may seek approval from the U.S. Secretary of Education for one state-developed intervention model. The model may have its own features but must also address the seven ED Turnaround Principles²:

1. Strong leadership
2. Effective teachers
3. Increased learning time
4. Strengthen the school's instructional program
5. Use data to inform instruction for continuous improvement
6. Improve school safety and discipline
7. Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement

In addition, ED recommends³ that SEAs focus on the following factors when reviewing LEAs' applications to implement a state-developed alternative intervention model:

- The alignment among the LEA, identified school for the new SIG model, and the special features and requirements of the state-developed alternative model
- The LEA's selection process for a new leader for the school and the experience, training, and skills the new leader is expected to possess
- The LEA's ability to enable the new school leader to make strategic staff replacements
- The LEA's capacity to support the implementation of required, recommended, and diagnostically determined strategies
- Changes in decision-making policies and mechanisms (including greater school-level flexibility in budgeting, staffing, and scheduling) that accompany the implementation of the state-developed model
- Changes in operational practice that accompany the school transformation and how the LEA will create and sustain these changes

²For more details, see the Federal Register, Volume 79, Number 173, September 8, 2014, *Proposed Rules by ED*.

³Redding, S., Dunn, L., & McCauley, C. (2015). *School Improvement Grants: Guidance and Tools for the 2015 Amended Regulations: Maximizing the Optional Planning/Pre-Implementation Year*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd.

STATES’ DEMOGRAPHICS AND THEIR STATE-DEVELOPED ALTERNATIVE INTERVENTION SIG MODELS

This section contains information about the state-developed alternative intervention SIG models in the states of Colorado, Minnesota, New York, Rhode Island, and Texas. Each subsection includes figures on the state’s schools and districts, the rationale for developing the model, school and district reactions to the model, and a description of the model.

COLORADO

Table 1. Figures for Colorado’s Schools	
Students: 888,767 ^a	High schools: 299 ^a
Districts: 183 ^a	State Office: Office of Federal Programs
All schools: 1836 ^a	Priority schools: 19 ^b
Elementary schools: 935 ^a	Focus schools: 104 ^c
Middle schools: 263 ^a	Charter schools: 225 ^d
Sources: ^a Colorado Department of Education. (2015). <i>School View Data Center</i> . Retrieved from https://edx.cde.state.co.us/SchoolView/DataCenter/reports.aspx?_afWindowMode=0&_afLoop=582444822345038&_adf.ctrl-state=vgd96icow_4 ; ^b Colorado Department of Education. (2015). <i>Current Priority Schools</i> . Retrieved from http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/priorityschoolslist ; ^c Colorado Department of Education. (2015). <i>2014–2015 Focus Schools List</i> . Retrieved from http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/20142015focuschoolfinal ; ^d Colorado Department of Education. (2015). <i>Colorado Charter Schools</i> . Retrieved from http://www2.cde.state.co.us/edulibdir/Colorado_Charter_Schools-en-us.pdf	

Colorado Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 SIG Program Development of State-Determined Model—Secondary School Success Model

The description below is based on an interview with an SEA staff member (B. Bylsma, personal communication, August 13, 2015), unless indicated otherwise.

Rationale for Developing a State-Determined Model: Colorado has a significant number of high schools and alternative education high schools identified as persistently low-performing. Colorado used five years of lessons learned about supports and structures for low-performing secondary schools to decide on focusing on high schools for its state-determined alternative intervention model. Also, when offering SIG funds to districts, most opted for the Transformation Model, but the state didn’t feel it would be sufficient for high schools since it offered general versus specific interventions needed at that level.

Development Time Frame: Colorado’s model was developed and finalized in February 2015.

Necessary SEA Structures and Processes for Model Development: The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) team met frequently to develop their state-determined SIG model. The team was cross-departmental, and a committee of practitioners provided feedback and input on ideas the CDE had about their state-determined SIG model. Districts who were currently receiving SIG funds also provided input about the model.

Challenges in Model Development: A significant challenge in developing the alternative high school SIG model was the need to develop very specific steps in the action plan that schools would complete to address each requirement and track progress of the action plan’s distinct elements.

Districts’ and Schools’ Reactions to State-Determined Model Option: To date, no high school has implemented this alternative model. CDE reported that one high school was interested in perhaps participating in the model but had concerns about the requirement to replace school leadership. The CDE did not have additional information regarding specific reactions to the state-determined model at the time of the interview by SECC staff.

Colorado State-Determined Model—Secondary School Success Model

Model Overview: Colorado plans to use this model as an opportunity to address the unique and specific needs of secondary schools through a mix of structural changes and instructional improvements.

These structural changes include the following:

- Dual enrollment in postsecondary-level courses to enable students to earn high school and college credit
- Thematic learning academies to focus on personalization, development of college- and career-ready skills, and easing transitions in and out of high school; the creation of small learning communities and structures to help students who may feel depersonalized or lost in a large, comprehensive high school
- Credit recovery and intervention programs to allow students to quickly remediate missing skills and earn missing credits
- Re-engagement strategies designed to meet the needs of youth who have dropped out, are at risk of dropping out, or who have unique life challenges (e.g., incarceration, pregnancy, parenting issues, and/or homelessness)
(Colorado Department of Education, 2015, p. 1)

Model Components (referred to as tenets):

Ensure effective teachers and leaders by doing the following:

- Replace the principal who led the school prior to the reform model or provide justification for keeping the current leader if the individual has been leading the school for less than two years.
- Select a school leader to lead the transformation, ensuring a track record of successful turnaround leadership.
- Use evaluations based in substantial part on student achievement/growth and identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff who improve student achievement and identify and remove those who do not.
- Prevent ineffective teachers from transferring to a tiered intervention grant-funded school.
- Provide relevant, ongoing, job-embedded professional development (PD).
- Implement strategies designed to recruit, place, and retain high-quality staff interested in supporting secondary school reform.

- Recruit, select, and retain high-quality staff with backgrounds in supporting students in progressing through high school (e.g., college-readiness counselor or promotions coach).

Ensure comprehensive instructional reform by doing the following:

- Implement a comprehensive, researched-based instructional program that is vertically aligned from one grade level to the next as well as aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards.
- Create structures to support students in transition from 8th to 9th grade and in interventions to address deficits.
- Create structures to support students in credit recovery programs.
- Ensure students who are receiving interventions or credit recovery opportunities have access to grade-level content.
- Create data systems to identify students who are on and off track to graduate, use data to monitor the effectiveness of the instructional program, and provide timely and rigorous interventions.

Expand learning opportunities by doing the following:

- Utilize innovative approaches that expand learning opportunities before, during, and after school, during the summer, and/or by extending the school day and year.
- Create structures to support students in dual enrollment through concurrent enrollment, Advanced Placement, and early college courses in high schools.
- Provide opportunities for students to participate in internships or externships with local businesses and organizations.
- Create transition programs for students entering 9th grade (e.g., 9th grade academies, thematic academies) that include an advisory component, teach study skills, and involve intensive development of opportunities to help students academically catch up. Establish partnerships with feeder schools to engage in early transition programs.
- Provide expanded time for teachers to engage in collaboration and PD; build time and incentives for collaboration between high school teachers and postsecondary institutions.

Create community-oriented schools by doing the following:

- Establish a positive and safe school culture with a focus on high expectations and college and career readiness for all students.
- Develop a specific, rigorous attendance plan to increase average daily attendance and decrease chronic absenteeism.
- Create discipline policies that encourage alternatives to suspensions.
- Maintain ongoing, clear, two-way communication with students and families.
- Provide operating flexibility and sustained support by giving the school sufficient operating flexibility (e.g., in staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes.

- Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance (TA) and related support from the LEA, the SEA, and/or a designated external lead partner organization.

Other Permissible Components include the following:

- Design clear course pathways that provide students with opportunities for dual credit options and provide course selection guidance for students.
- Offer credit recovery opportunities that address the challenges that prevented students from previous success; ensure that teachers certified in the appropriate subjects oversee the courses; offer these courses during non-traditional hours (e.g., before- or after-school, evenings, and weekends).
- Establish strategies to create small learning communities to increase student engagement and teacher involvement (schools may create thematic communities around academics or careers); ensure that teachers receive focused PD, and form interdisciplinary teams to share time with students, plan, and make decisions. (Colorado Department of Education, 2015, pp. 1–3)

Model Grade Levels: The Colorado model applies to high schools, both regular and alternative.

School Eligibility Requirements: High schools in the lowest 5 percent in terms of student performance/accountability designation, are classified as Title I, and have low graduation rates (approximately below 60 percent) are eligible for this model.

Consequences for Not Meeting SIG Outcomes: CDE indicated that this does not yet apply as no schools have opted into the model to date.

SEA Approval Process: CDE would consider and approve applications from eligible schools applying for the model that meet requirements. Agency staff indicated that they perceived ED would favor SEA applications for the state-determined model that provide specific and detailed information about their particular model components and requirements for LEAs.

MINNESOTA

Table 2. Figures for Minnesota’s Schools

Students: 837,154 ^a	High schools: 475 ^a
Districts: 328 ^a	State Office: Division of School Support
All schools: 2,017 ^a	Priority schools: 41 ^b
Elementary schools: 960 ^a	Focus schools: 111 ^b
Middle schools: 212 ^a	Charter schools: 165 ^a
Sources: ^a Minnesota Department of Education. (2015). <i>Schools and Districts at a Glance</i> . Retrieved from http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Summary.jsp ; ^b Minnesota Department of Education. (2014). <i>2014–2015 Schools Eligible for Support</i> . Retrieved from http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/JustParent/ESEA/PriorityFocusRewardSch/index.html	

Minnesota Federal FY 2014 SIG Program⁴

The description below is based on an interview with an SEA staff member (G. Keith, personal communication, August 18, 2015), unless indicated otherwise.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) accepted final applications for the SIG program on June 1, 2015, from LEAs that are receiving Title I Part A funds and are identified as priority schools. Priority schools work on their turnaround plans for three years unless they meet exit criteria.

In addition to the ED-approved models, Minnesota also allows districts applying for SIGs to implement the State-Determined Model: Minnesota State Model (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015).

Development of State-Determined Model: Minnesota State Model

Rationale for Developing a State-Determined Model: MDE’s rationale for developing a state-determined model emerged with the Minneapolis and St. Paul School Districts’ decision not to apply to two competitions for SIG grants. The districts decided not to apply because the intervention models and the program did not meet their needs. This decision was a concern to MDE because the Minneapolis and St. Paul School Systems have half of the state’s focus and priority schools. Originally, MDE’s vision was to work collaboratively with the Minneapolis and St. Paul districts to design a state-determined intervention model called Minnesota’s Urban Model to better meet the two school systems’ needs. Through this work, which included identifying what did not work for them in the existing SIG models, staff from the Minneapolis and St. Paul districts realized it was not that the models or the programs were not meeting their needs; rather, it was how the districts and schools were implementing the SIG models. Therefore, the model changed from Minnesota’s Urban Model to one that reflected the state’s priority—elimination of achievement gaps.

⁴ U.S. Department of Education. (2013). *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Flexibility) Waiver Frequently Asked Questions*. Retrieved from <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/ESEAFlex/FedAccount/041739>.

Development Time Frame: The Minnesota State Model was finalized between Fall 2014 and Winter 2015, and the application was then submitted to ED.

Necessary SEA Structures and Processes for Model Development: There are three important steps that MDE took to develop the Minnesota State Model. First, MDE spent a great deal of time in Fall 2014 researching existing SIG models. The MDE examined multiple models that were in existence and selected aspects of the models that fit their state context. Second, MDE engaged with schools and districts while they were in the process of designing the model to ensure that the model reflected what schools and districts would buy into, select, and need as an option for an intervention model. Third, MDE took the time on the front end to clearly communicate what the different elements of the SIG model will look like in implementation. The process for communication included designing a rubric for each intervention model to score applications for SIG funds and using a modified version of the rubric for monitoring. In addition, the schools used the rubric to self-assess and plan their annual work plans.

Challenges in Model Development: During development of the model, MDE faced the challenges of reaching consensus and maneuvering between three large organizations—Minneapolis Public Schools, St. Paul Public Schools, and MDE—which had to vet, produce, and reach agreement on the issues.

Districts’ and Schools’ Reactions to State-Determined Model Option: According to MDE, reactions to the model are highly positive with eight of the 10 schools that were awarded SIG funds selecting the Minnesota State Model.

Minnesota State-Determined Model: Minnesota State Model

Model Overview: During Fall 2014, MDE convened a team of 10 members that included three representatives from Minneapolis, three from St. Paul, and four from MDE to design the state-determined model. The team held monthly meetings to collaboratively design the state model. During this time, team members would go back to their respective stakeholders to vet decisions that were made; however, the SEA commissioner provided final approval of the state model.

The Minnesota State Model is based on the Transformation and Turnaround Models with an additional focus on equity. The model represents a partnership between MDE and school districts that clearly reflects the state’s priority to eliminate achievement gaps between groups of students. The model also provides opportunities for consistency and sustained turnaround leadership.

Model Components: LEAs and schools implementing the Minnesota State Model are required to utilize the following strategies:

- Address school leadership by either replacing the principal or retaining the principal who led the school prior to implementation of the model under specified conditions.
- Receive ongoing, intensive TA and support from the LEA, SEA, and/or an external partner that has significant experience and demonstrated success working with schools addressing institutionalized race-, income-, cultural-, and/or language-based inequities in student academic opportunities and outcomes; student and teacher behaviors; and student discipline policies and practices. If an external provider provides assistance, review performance and hold the provider accountable for meeting requirements.
- Implement LEA strategies for identifying and addressing institutional and racial inequities at the LEA level, and include sustained emphasis on changing perceptions at the LEA level.

- Give the school sufficient operational flexibility (e.g., staffing, calendars/time, budgeting, curriculum, and programming) to implement a fully comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and decrease race-, income-, cultural-, and language-based inequities in outcomes among students; and, for high schools, to increase high school graduation rates and decrease race-, income-, cultural-, and language-based inequities in graduation rates among students.
- Employ a minimum 1.0 full time equivalent (FTE) instructional facilitator to assist the principal with instructional leadership duties; teacher PD and support; and teacher induction, mentoring, and coaching.
- Employ a minimum .5 FTE continuous improvement specialist to manage the SIG and assist the principal with continuous improvement activities and with non-instructional school leadership duties.
- Use data, including data on achievement gaps between groups of students, to identify and implement an instructional program with a focus on at least one full academic content area and with multi-tiered systems of support for students (i.e., reading/language arts, math, science, social studies). The instructional program must be research-based, vertically aligned from one grade to the next, aligned with academic standards, and selected based on evidence that indicates it will be effective in accelerating student achievement for underperforming student groups.
- Use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation and support systems for teachers that meet requirements in Minnesota statute 122A.40 or 122A.41, use at least three performance levels, provide clear and timely feedback, and guide PD.
- Create a comprehensive PD plan to provide ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded PD that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program. The plan must include strategies for addressing racial and institutional inequities, supporting a sustained emphasis on changing staff perceptions, providing culturally-responsive instruction, and must be designed with input from school staff to ensure that they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies. The plan also must incorporate input from community members to ensure staff are sensitive to and equipped to address community concerns related to teaching, learning, behavior, and discipline.
- Reserve 90 minutes per week for teachers to meet in professional learning communities.
- Promote the continuous use of student data (e.g., formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the academic needs of individual students and groups of students to eliminate achievement gaps between groups of students, plan and provide student non-academic supports, and inform principal and teacher support and development.
- Conduct annual time audits to monitor the use of instructional time, establish schedules and implement strategies that maximize the quality of instruction time, and ensure all changes in schedules or increases in learning time are fully aligned with the school's instructional model.
- Employ a family liaison at the school to create and implement a plan to provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement that includes a focus on engaging families that are representative of the school's diverse student population and that supports families in addressing institutionalized inequity as well as in actively engaging in the academic and social-emotional development of students.

- Assess the effectiveness of the services provided by community partners, strengthen partnerships with organizations providing effective services, and modify or terminate partnerships with ineffective partners.
(U.S. Department of Education, 2015, pp. 1–3)

Model Grade Levels: The Minnesota alternative intervention model applies to elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools.

School Eligibility Requirements:

- Schools receiving Title I, Part A funds
- Schools identified as priority schools

Consequences for Not Meeting SIG Outcomes: Schools not meeting requirements are at risk of not having their funds continued for Years 2–4.

SEA Approval Process⁵:

- The MDE announces when letters of intent for all eligible LEAs are due to the agency (by April 21, 2015)
- The LEAs conduct a needs assessment to evaluate capacity and readiness to implement an intervention model
- The MDE opens the grant opportunity to eligible applicants in its online grants management system
- The LEAs develop applications during which time the SEA will provide intensive TA to eligible grantees
- The LEAs submit applications to MDE
- The MDE reviews applications using the following process:
 - Identify qualified reviewers internal to the SEA.
 - Assign two reviewers to each application.
 - Request, collect, and review clarifications to applications as needed.
 - Announce final awards.

The MDE’s Grant Division facilitates the review and approval process using a group of independent reviewers who score all applications based on rubrics submitted in the MDE’s SEA application. Applications that show alignment to the needs assessment of the school, define achievement gaps between groups of students, and articulate the rationale for why the state model versus the other intervention models best fits the needs of their school are given priority.

⁵ U.S. Department of Education. (2011). *School Improvement Grants New Awards Application, Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act: State of Minnesota*.

NEW YORK

Table 3. Figures for New York’s Schools	
Students: 2,579,011 ^b	High schools: 864 ^a
Districts: 719 ^c	State Office: Office of School Turnaround
All schools: 4,530 ^a	Priority schools: 178 ^d
Elementary schools: 2,461 ^a	Focus schools: 446 ^d
Middle schools: 633 ^a	Charter schools: 248 ^a
Sources: ^a New York State Department of Education. (2015). <i>Education Statistics for New York State</i> . Retrieved from http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/statistics/public/ ; ^b New York State Department of Education. (2013). <i>New York State School District Enrollment (K–12) Statewide Totals</i> . Retrieved from http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/statistics/enroll-n-staff/2013-14/School_District_Enrollment_1994-95-to-2012-13_Statewide_Totals.pdf ; ^c New York State Department of Education. (2008). <i>Directory of School District Websites</i> . Retrieved from http://www.oms.nysed.gov/oas/directory.html ; ^d New York State Department of Education. (2015). <i>School and District Accountability Designation Reports</i> . Retrieved from http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/2014-15AccountabilityDesignations.html	

New York Federal FY 2014 SIG Program

Under the New York State Education Department’s (NYSED) approved ESEA flexibility request, the state’s persistently lowest-achieving schools are referenced as priority schools that may also be placed under registration review. As a result, priority schools, with support from their district and community, may develop and implement a whole-school change model with the goal of achieving drastic achievement gains to move the school to good academic standing within three years.

Development of State-Determined Model: Innovation Framework

Rationale for Developing a State-Determined Model: The Innovation Framework Model closely aligns with New York State Education Department’s School Innovation Fund (SIF) grant opportunity, which will end August 31, 2015 (L. Curtin, personal communication, August 25, 2015). The NYSED pursued the state-determined model as an opportunity to continue the work begun under Race to the Top (RTT). The Community-Oriented School Design was selected because of its popularity in the three-year history of SIF, and the Career and Technical Education (CTE) and College Pathways were selected because of alignment to the New York State Education Department’s Board of Regents’ focus on college and career readiness.

Development Time Frame: NYSED began developing the grant in 2012, under RTT funding (L. Curtin, personal communication, August 25, 2015). The Innovation Framework was developed in the winter and spring of 2015 as a way to continue to offer opportunities for LEAs to fund innovative school redesign models.

Necessary SEA Structures and Processes for Model Development: The structure and processes that ensured successful development of the state-determined model included the following:

- A dedicated SIG team at NYSED to write the application to receive SIG funds from ED and to develop a request for proposals (RFP) for the LEAs
- A process for discussing and reviewing different drafts of the SIG funds application and the SIG RFP for LEAs

- Collaboration with other NYSED offices having expertise in the three design pathways to assist with the RFP language and requirements
- Ongoing communication with ED’s Office of State Support to discuss the model and what was allowable and approvable
- Work with NYSED’s Office of Counsel and Contracts Unit
- Approval of the RFP from the Office of the State Comptroller
- An internal NYSED chain of command that gave final approval on the drafts

Challenges in Model Development: The primary challenge was ensuring that the Innovation Framework Model could be approved as one model with three “pathways to innovation” (L. Curtin, personal communication, August 25, 2015).

Districts’ and Schools’ Reactions to State-Determined Model Option: The Innovation Framework was the most widely chosen model among LEAs that applied for SIG Round 6 funds (L. Curtin, personal communication, August 25, 2015).

New York State-Determined Model—Innovation Framework

Model Overview: In their applications, LEAs must indicate a complete redesign of an existing school, including replacing the principal and becoming aligned to one of the three models/initiatives described below. The particular model proposed and the scope of the redesign must be clearly identified and justified as a valid and well-reasoned solution to identified district gaps and needs in the context of a larger district portfolio strategy. Unique to this model, a school must partner with an educational partnership organization to jointly implement its whole-school redesign.

- College Pathways School Design: College pathway schools partner with an institution of higher education (IHE) to provide all students with the opportunity to earn college credits tuition-free along with a high school diploma. This partnership provides intense academic and social supports to students so they can attain college readiness. The school commits to continuing to provide these supports throughout the students’ high school tenure to ensure their mastery of college-level work. School also commits to developing a college-going culture. At the high school level, the program should be comprehensive in nature, begin in ninth grade, and offer a minimum of 24 college-level credits. A middle school program should provide similar supports to prepare students to take dual enrollment and college-credit bearing courses in a college-pathway high school. Additional guidance for this design framework may be found at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/turnaround/CollegePathways.html>.
- Community-Oriented School Design: A community school is a public school with an integrated focus on academics, services, supports, and opportunities that lead to improved student learning, stronger families, and healthier communities. It is child-centered, and all partners are integrated into the governance and decision-making bodies. Effective community schools continually develop a set of four key capacities: comprehensiveness, collaboration, coherence, and commitment. Typical programming is based on an assessment of the community’s needs and resources; is overseen by a community school coordinator; and may include parent engagement and involvement, adult education, medical/ dental/mental health/and social services, early childhood, and/or community and economic development. Additional guidance for this design framework may be found in

Building Community Schools: A Guide for Action at
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/turnaround/CommunitySchools.html>.

- **Career and Technical Education School Design.** A CTE School Design is a shift from the traditional educational plan to one reflecting a continuum of education that is committed to student career development and planning in preparation for postsecondary education and the workplace. A comprehensive concentration of groups of courses or units of study, when combined, will make up a school design that includes rigorous academic content closely aligned with career and technical subject matter that uses the state learning standards of career development and occupational studies as a framework and offers multiple pathways toward college and career readiness. For the purpose of this grant, CTE is a whole-school redesign rather than a separate program within the school and is ideally applicable to middle and/or high school student populations. Additional guidance for this framework may be found at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/turnaround/CareerandTechnicalEducationCTE.html>. (New York State Department of Education, 2015)

Model Grade Levels: The three initiatives or options in the state-determined model cover all grade levels. The College Pathways School Design and the Career and Technical Education School Design are both aimed at middle schools and high schools. The Community-Oriented School Design is aimed at all levels (L. Curtin, personal communication, August 25, 2015).

School Eligibility Requirements: The model is open to LEAs with one or more eligible priority or focus schools. An eligible priority or focus school is one that the LEA has designated as implementing a whole-school change model beginning in 2015–2016 and that is not currently receiving SIG 1003(g) or SIF grant funding. For each eligible school proposing to implement a model other than Closure, LEAs are eligible for up to \$2.0 million, commensurate to school size and need, for the full grant term that collectively includes three years of implementation and two years of post-implementation. Charter schools identified under the state accountability system are not eligible for award to implement a whole-school change model. In addition, to apply for the Innovation Framework, the school must have the ability to fulfill the requirements of the model.

Consequences for Not Meeting SIG Outcomes: If any funded LEA withdraws or becomes ineligible within the first year of funding, the leftover funds may be used to fund the next highest-ranking applications.

SEA Approval Process: All applications reviewed for Turnaround, Restart, Innovation Framework (state-determined model), and Early Learning Intervention Models include eligible priority schools that have not previously been awarded 1003(g) SIG or SIF grants. The applications must receive a minimum required final average score or above, and will be ranked together in order of the final average score. These applications represent Funding Priority 1. All priority school applications for Turnaround, Restart, Transformation, Innovation Framework, Early Learning, and Closure Models include eligible priority schools that have previously received 1003(g) SIG or SIF funds.

Any application reviewed for the Evidence-Based, Whole-School Reform Model as well as all applications for focus schools will be ranked together in order of final average score. Funding will be awarded first to Funding Priority 1 applicants. Priority 1 applicants scoring at or above the minimum threshold will be awarded in rank order by score. In the event of a tie, the applicant with the highest

combined score for School Leadership and Organizational Plan will be ranked higher. The LEAs are limited to 11 SIG awards; each district can get a maximum of 11 grants for its SIG schools.

NYSED suggests that states should consider prioritizing applications for the state-determined model, as a way to encourage applicants to apply for that model (L. Curtin, personal communication, August 25, 2015).

RHODE ISLAND

Table 4. Figures for Rhode Island’s Schools	
Students: 142,854 ^c	High schools: 52 ^a
Districts: 66 ^d	State Office: Office of School Transformation
All schools: 277 ^a	Priority schools: 22 ^b
Elementary schools: 165 ^a	Focus schools: 11 ^b
Middle schools: 60 ^a	Charter schools: 25 ^d
Sources: ^a Rhode Island Department of Education. (2014). <i>2014 School Classification Summary</i> . Retrieved from http://www.ride.ri.gov/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Students-and-Families-Great-Schools/RI-Public-Schools/2014-All-School-Classification-Summary.pdf . ^b Rhode Island Department of Education. (2015). <i>School Transformation</i> [Webpage]. Retrieved from http://www.ride.ri.gov/InformationAccountability/Accountability/SchoolTransformation.aspx . ^c Rhode Island Department of Education. (2015). <i>Inside RIDE</i> [Webpage]. Retrieved from http://www.ride.ri.gov/InsideRIDE/Overview.aspx . ^d Rhode Island Department of Education. (2015). <i>RI School Districts</i> [Webpage]. Retrieved from http://www.ride.ri.gov/StudentsFamilies/RIPublicSchools/SchoolDistricts.aspx	

Rhode Island Federal FY 2014 SIG Program

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) anticipates releasing new SIG applications and guidance in Fall 2015. There are 21 schools—11 priority schools and 10 focus schools—from five districts that are eligible for FY 2014 SIGs, which will be awarded through a competitive application process. RIDE received approximately \$1.4 million in SIG 1003(g) funds, which will be used to award grants to a maximum of four schools. The proposed grant time frame is no less than three years. Eligible schools are those that are classified as either a priority or a focus school, participate as a Title I school, and have not previously received 1003(g) funds. Applications are to be submitted by districts on behalf of one or more such schools. Funding will be awarded to the school with the highest-quality proposal. If a priority school and a focus school submit applications of equal quality, the priority school will be funded first (Rhode Island Department of Education, 2015).

Regarding SIG model selection, schools can choose among the seven approved SIG models while RIDE is waiting to receive approval. Rhode Island currently is waiting to receive official approval of its proposed state-developed model from ED (Rhode Island Department of Education, 2015).

Development of State-Determined Model: Empowered Leadership Turnaround Model

The description below is based on an interview with a RIDE staff member (S. Anderson, personal communication, August 12, 2015), unless indicated otherwise.

Rationale for Developing a State-Determined Model: RIDE pursued the development of a state-determined model because there was not enough evidence regarding the success and effectiveness of the four original models. The existing models have many requirements and significant financial investments, thus requiring school districts and schools to make tough decisions, such as staff replacement. However, these models did not have the positive aspects the agency wanted. According to RIDE, local school empowerment or autonomy is a key approach missing from the original SIG models. Those individuals closest to the students must be empowered to lead the transformation necessary for the school to be successful. The agency relied on research and its staff's own personal experiences in developing its state-determined model. Rhode Island schools that were making substantial progress towards exiting SIG status exhibited consistent leadership, clear performance goals, and clarity regarding decision-making authority.

RIDE's new state-determined model has a bold approach and a different perspective from the original SIG models. With this state-determined model, there is total transparency between the school, district, and RIDE. Clarity to all stakeholders was an important consideration in model development as was district accountability for its decisions and strategies. Additionally, RIDE was interested in developing a model that exhibited "depth in scope" and would have a positive impact on all students.

Development Time Frame: The time frame for developing the state-determined model was very fast, just one month. ED released guidance in March 2015, with the state applications due April 15, 2015. Fortunately, RIDE had a small team that had been discussing school improvement issues in Rhode Island for a long time, so the groundwork for the model development already was there at the state level.

Necessary SEA Structures and Processes for Model Development: RIDE, as part of its normal work processes, possessed a great deal of knowledge about its districts and schools and what had been working at those levels. The agency had conducted prior research on leadership and school autonomy and had comprehensive knowledge on those topics. Intra-office collaboration with other Office of Transformation staff, including charter school staff, expanded RIDE's knowledge base of what was working for successful schools and districts. Additionally, RIDE conducts routine monitoring of all the schools in the state, during which state staff meet with school and district teams for approximately 3 hours every quarter, resulting in a shared understanding of individual school performance and structure.

Challenges in Model Development: There were two major challenges in developing the state-determined model, namely, time frame and internal follow through on potential state implications to model implementation. Regarding the time frame, the challenge was how to synthesize ideas on paper within the one-month timespan. Also challenging was following through with the rest of the agency on the far-reaching implications of implantation of the state-determined model. The agency's staff indicated the need to identify and explore the obstacles and state-level implications of granting waivers and variances and agreed that more time to develop the model would have been helpful to think through the long-term implications. RIDE is working on determining the effect that model implementation will have on other state offices.

Districts’ and Schools’ Reactions to State-Determined Model Option: Because official approval from ED of RIDE’s state-determined model has not been received as of the time of this report, RIDE is unable to release it to the field. The informal feedback received to date indicates that districts are excited about the model. However, RIDE is unsure of the number of applications it will receive for the state-determined model.

Additionally, staff at RIDE recommended that states considering the development of a state-determined model reflect on what their state, districts, and schools have been doing during the past few years as well as how successful the work has been. Staff also suggested that states (a) explore the evidence of what has been successful and use it to identify an approach for the state-determined model, and (b) make the model as responsive as possible to what is working in their respective schools.

Rhode Island State-Determined Model: Empowered Leadership Turnaround Model

Model Overview: The Empowered Leadership Turnaround Model provides districts with the option to build leadership teams to make autonomous decisions regarding school budget, staffing, curriculum and instruction, PD, and targeted intervention selection for their individual schools. The empowered leadership compact, a required model component, delineates the district’s support and responsibilities as well as the above-referenced areas in which the school leader will have autonomous decision-making authority. This design provides flexibility in designing the details of the model and establishes clear lines of accountability. School leaders also are provided the opportunity to request flexibility, via a waiver or variance, of either state-required regulations or reporting that inhibit school-level programming (Rhode Island Department of Education, n.d., p. 1).

Model Components: When implementing RIDE’s Empowered Leadership Turnaround Model, the LEA is required to do the following:

- Choose either to continue or replace the current school leader.
- Establish an “empowered leadership compact:”
 - The empowered leadership contract defines district and school leader responsibilities, such as the support and oversight that the district will retain, and the autonomous decisions to be made by the school leader in the areas of (a) school budget, (b) staffing, (c) curriculum and instruction, (d) PD, and (e) targeted intervention selection.
 - If an issue cannot be resolved at the local level via the empowered leadership compact, the district may request a regulatory waiver of either state-required regulations or reporting that inhibit school-level programming.
- Collaborate with the school leader to establish annual SIG school performance goals and quarterly leading indicators.
- Review the school’s performance annually in relationship to its annual SIG school performance goals; determine if new autonomies should be added or removed based upon adequate annual progress toward meeting SIG performance goals.
- Implement a rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation and support system for teachers and principals, which was designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

- Use the teacher and principal evaluation and support system to identify and reward school leaders and other staff who have increased student achievement; also use the system to identify and remove those who have not improved their professional practice, after ample opportunities to do so.
- Implement strategies designed to recruit, place, and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet student needs, as indicated by the results from the teacher and principal evaluation and support system. Strategies include, but are not limited to, providing increased opportunities for promotion, career growth, and more flexible work conditions.
- Provide the school with data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based, vertically aligned from one grade to the next, and aligned with state academic standards.
- Promote the school’s continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim, and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet the educational and developmental needs of individual students.
- Provide staff ongoing, high-quality, job-embedded PD, such as coaching and mentoring, (e.g., regarding subject-specific pedagogy, instruction that reflects a deeper understanding of the community served by the school, or differentiated instruction), 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 implement school reform strategies successfully.
(Rhode Island Department of Education, n.d., pp. 1–2)

Model Grade Levels: The RIDE model applies to elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools.

School Eligibility Requirements: Applications are submitted by districts for one or more schools that meet the following criteria: (a) are classified as either a priority school or a focus school, (b) are a participating Title I school, and (c) are not a previous recipient of SIG 1003(g) funds.

Funding will be awarded to the highest-quality proposals. If a priority school and a focus school have applications of equal quality, the funding will be awarded to the priority school (Rhode Island Department of Education, 2015).

Consequences for Not Meeting SIG Outcomes: If a school’s annual SIG performance goals are not being met, district intervention at the school level is required. Examples of district intervention include, but are not limited to, revision of the empowered leadership autonomy contract to reflect increasing levels of school oversight by the district and/or replacement of the school leadership (Rhode Island Department of Education, n.d., p. 23).

SEA Approval Process: RIDE will review and approve a district’s Empowered Leadership Turnaround Model proposal as per the following steps:

- Development and submission by the district of an Empowered Leadership Turnaround Model proposal that contains the SEA-required model components
- Review by RIDE of the district’s Empowered Leadership Turnaround Model proposal
 - If all criteria are not met, RIDE may require the district to select a different turnaround model or may not award the grant to the district.

- Approval of proposal by RIDE and awarding of grant to district if proposal meets model criteria
- District progress monitoring on a quarterly basis by RIDE during the Empowered Leadership Turnaround Model’s pre-implementation phase
 - If substantial progress is not achieved on the district’s empowerment proposal by the end of the planning/pre-implementation phase, RIDE may elect to rescind the grant award.
 - Substantial progress includes, but is not limited to, appropriate implementation of the empowered leadership autonomy compact between the district superintendent and the school leader.
- Continued quarterly monitoring of the LEA’s progress on the commitments specified in the Empowered Leadership Turnaround Model’s SIG award (Rhode Island Department of Education, n.d., p. 3)

TEXAS

Table 5. Figures for Texas’ Schools	
Students: 5,135,880 ^d	High schools: 1,781 ^a
Districts: 1,219 ^a	State Office: Division of School Improvement and Support ^b
All schools: 8,646 ^a	Priority schools: 297 ^c
Elementary schools: 4,654 ^a	Focus schools: 598 ^c
Middle schools: 1,713 ^a	Charter schools: 613 ^a
Sources: ^a Texas Education Agency. (2015). <i>2015 Accountability System State Summary</i> . Retrieved from http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2015/statesummary.html ; ^b Texas Education Agency. (2015). <i>School Improvement and Support</i> [Webpage]. Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Monitoring_and_Interventions/School_Improvement_and_Support/School_Improvement_and_Support/ ; ^c Texas Education Agency. (2015). <i>Priority, Focus, and Reward Schools</i> [Webpage]. Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/Student_Testing_and_Accountability/Monitoring_and_Interventions/School_Improvement_and_Support/Priority_Focus_and_Reward_Schools/ ; ^d Texas Education Agency. (2013–2014). <i>Texas Academic Performance Report: 2013–14 State Performance</i> . Retrieved from http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/tapr/2014/state.pdf	

Texas Federal FY 2014 SIG Program

The description below is based on an interview with an SEA staff member (M. Baxter, personal communication, August 12, 2015), unless indicated otherwise.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) released new SIG applications and guidance during Summer 2015. The request for applications announcement was made on TEA’s website on June 19, 2015, and the deadline for schools to apply was August 20, 2015. Per the 2015–2020 Texas Title I Priority Schools, Cycle 4 Application Guidelines⁶, “Eligible applicants include campuses currently identified as Title I priority schools and Title I focus schools, and who are not currently receiving Texas Title I Priority Schools (TTIPS) funds” (p. 7). Texas Title I priority schools (TTIPS) is the program name Texas uses with schools receiving SIG funds. The TEA expects to award seven schools/campuses SIGs, through a

⁶Texas Education Agency. (2015). *Request for Application: Application Guidelines, Program Guidelines 2015–2020 Texas Title I Priority Schools, Cycle 4*. Retrieved from <http://www.tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=25769821675>.

competitive application process. The TEA expects to receive from ED approximately \$45 million in SIG 1003(g) funds, and each awarded school could receive up to a maximum of \$10 million for operations through the school years of 2015–2016 to 2019–2020. The maximum funding amount per year for any applicant is \$2 million. The proposed grant time frame is five years, with the first year as a pre-implementation, or planning period, three years of implementation, and the last year as a sustainability period.

As mentioned previously, eligible schools are Title I schools classified as either priority or focus schools that are not currently receiving TTIPS (SIG) funds. Districts submitted to TEA applications on behalf of one or more such schools. Independent reviewers will rate and score each application. Although funding will be awarded to the school with the highest-quality proposal, TEA will give special consideration (i.e., 20 priority points) to schools that have been rated Improvement Required in both the 2014 and 2015 state accountability ratings and to schools that select the State-Determined or Early Learning SIG Model (TTIPS Cycle 4 Announcement Letter). Texas schools will be able to choose from the seven models previously described above.

Development of State-Determined Model: Early College High School

Rationale for Developing a State-Determined Model: TEA pursued the development of a state-determined model because of several reasons, including the following:

- Compared to the four original models, the requirements for schools to implement the state-determined model offer greater flexibility (for example, the principal does not need to be replaced).
- The state-determined model allows TEA to expand its Early College High School (ECHS) program to more schools.

Texas schools applying for TTIPS funding will have the option to select one of the seven SIG models. As mentioned earlier, applying schools will be given priority points if they select the state-determined Early College High School Model or the Early Learning Model.

Development Time Frame: The time frame for developing the state-determined model was brief. ED released guidance in March 2015, and the state application was due April 15, 2015. Fortunately, TEA was able to “act quickly” because the ECHS Model has been developed and implemented in several Texas high schools since 2005 (TEA Early College High School webpage, http://tea.texas.gov/Curriculum_and_Instructional_Programs/College_and_Career_Readiness/Early_College_High_School/; M. Baxter, personal communication, August 12, 2015). The new SIG model will provide Texas high schools that are interested in becoming designated as an ECHS the time and funding during the first year, or planning year, to go through the ECHS designation process.

Necessary SEA Structures and Processes for Model Development: As mentioned earlier, TEA developed the ECHS program in 2005, and many high schools across the state have successfully implemented the program (<http://www.txechs.com/>). Thus, staff at TEA already possessed a great deal of knowledge about the ECHS program and how districts and schools can implement it effectively. TEA staff from the Office of School Improvement and Support and the Curriculum Division, which manages the ECHS program, met and worked together to develop TEA’s application to ED for the state-determined model. TEA staff believe that this resulted in the state successfully winning approval from ED to use the Early College High School program as Texas’ state-determined SIG model.

Challenges in Model Development: TEA staff reported the two-month period allowed by ED for states to develop their applications for the state-determined model was the only challenge they experienced, as two months was a very short time to prepare a comprehensive application. However, TEA staff reported being able to meet that challenge because “everyone at the agency was on board” with using the ECHS program as the state-determined SIG model.

Districts’ and Schools’ Reactions to State-Determined Model Option: TEA staff did not report on districts’ reactions to the new state-determined model because the applications from LEAs to implement the state-determined SIG model were received by the TEA after SECC staff interviewed TEA staff for the purposes of this report. At the time of the interview, TEA staff did not know how many districts were applying to or responding to the state-determined model.

Texas State-Determined Model: Early College High School

Model Overview: As presented in TEA’s webpage⁷, “Early College High Schools (ECHS) are innovative high schools that allow students least likely to attend college an opportunity to earn a high school diploma and 60 college credit hours. Early College High Schools:

- Provide dual credit at no cost to students.
- Offer rigorous instruction and accelerated courses.
- Provide academic and social support services to help students succeed.
- Increase college readiness.
- Reduce barriers to college access.”

Model Components: When implementing the ECHS Model, the LEA and school are required by the TEA to execute a comprehensive school improvement strategy that will focus on all students in the school and is consistent with the Texas concept for developing an ECHS. TEA will require LEAs and campuses awarded TTIPS/SIG funding to implement the following⁸:

1. Use the first year of TTIPS funding to pursue designation as a Texas Early College High School, with a target of earning TEA ECHS designation and full-operation as an ECHS no later than the start of the second year of the TTIPS grant implementation period, Fall 2017.
2. Enable students to graduate with a high school diploma and an associate degree or high school diploma and 60 college credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree.
3. Provide college credit earned through the high school years to all students at no cost, including tuition, fees, and textbook costs.
4. Increase teacher and school leader effectiveness through use of the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System and Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System.

⁷Texas Education Agency. (2015). *Early College High School* [Webpage]. Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/Curriculum_and_Instructional_Programs/College_and_Career_Readiness/Early_College_High_School/.

⁸Texas Education Agency. (2015). *Texas 2015–2020 School Improvement Grant: State Design Model/The Early College High School Starter*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/sigmodel/txsidedetersigmodel2015.docx>.

5. Ensure that all students will benefit from the program. However, the program specifically identifies students, including those at risk for dropping out of school and students historically underrepresented in college courses, for more intensive supports. For more details on the types of support, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/sigmodel/txstdetersigmodel2015.docx>.
6. Have key partnerships in place, by the start of TTIPS full-implementation (Fall 2016),⁹ that will include the following:
 - Partnership between the school district and an IHE
 - Contract/partnership with the Texas Early College High School Technical Assistance provider for access to training, coaching, and TA through to earning designation; once designated, will continue work with the TA provider as is required as a condition of TEA designation
 - Contract/partnership with a Texas ECHS demonstration site
7. Establish and maintain a leadership team focused on P–16 Leadership initiatives by the start of TTIPS planning/pre-implementation year (January 1, 2016)¹⁰. This leadership team must meet regularly to address issues of the ECHS design and sustainability. The membership of the team must include, at a minimum, the campus principal and individuals with decision-making authority from both the LEA and IHE.
8. Provide students with a curriculum that offers a rigorous and accelerated course of study, in both college-credit bearing courses and preparatory/college readiness courses¹¹. Additionally, the program must provide students with the academic, emotional, and social supports necessary to be successful in the rigorous course of study. For more details on the curriculum and supports requirements, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/sigmodel/txstdetersigmodel2015.docx>.
9. Administer the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) college placement exam to students during the first full year of program implementation—to assess college readiness, design individual instruction plans, and enable students to begin taking college courses based on their performance. Cover all fees associated with assessment administrations for all students.
10. As cited in Texas’ 2015–2020 School Improvement Grant State-Design Model/the ECHS (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/sigmodel/txstdetersigmodel2015.docx>), “By the start of the TTIPS second year of full-implementation (Fall 2017), the campus will provide a full-day program at an autonomous high school; operating with:
 - (A) An IHE liaison with decision-making authority who interacts directly and frequently with the campus staff and administrators;
 - (B) A highly qualified teaching staff possessing appropriate level of certification, training and ongoing supports to teach college-bearing courses to high school students.
 - (C) Clear opportunities for students to have regular use (at least six times per school year) of college academic facilities, regardless of early college school site.

⁹Adapted from Texas Early College High School Blueprint, Benchmark 1.

¹⁰Adapted from Texas Early College High School Blueprint, Benchmark 2.

¹¹Adapted from Texas Early College High School Blueprint, Benchmark 3.

- (D) Opportunities for high school faculty and staff to receive regular training and support; in collaboration with the IHE faculty and staff” (p. 3).

For more information about the Texas ECHS program and school application requirements, see the following resources:

- 2015–2020 Texas Title I Priority Schools Grant, Cycle 4 Application: <http://burluson.tea.state.tx.us/GrantOpportunities/Forms/GrantProgramSearch.aspx>
- Texas Education Agency, ECHS program: http://tea.texas.gov/index2.aspx?id=4464&menu_id=814
- Texas Education Code §29.908: <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/SOTWDocs/ED/htm/ED.29.htm - 29.908>
- 19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 102 Educational Programs Subchapter GG: Commissioner’s Rules Concerning Early College Education Program: <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter102/ch102gg.html>

Model Grade Levels: The ECHS Model applies to high schools.

School Eligibility Requirements: Applications are submitted by districts for one or more schools that meet all three of the below criteria:

- Are classified as either a priority school or a focus school
- Are a participating Title I school
- Are not currently a recipient of TTIPS/SIG funds

SEA Approval Process: Reviewers independent of TEA will review and assess applications. Applications will be selected based on the reviewers’ assessment of each applicant’s ability to carry out all requirements contained in the request for application. Reviewers will evaluate applications based on the overall quality and validity of the proposed grant programs and the extent to which the applications address the primary objectives and intent of the project. For more information on the approval process and scoring the reviewers used, see the Request for Application, Application Guidelines/Program Guidelines for the 2015–2020 Texas Title I Priority Schools, Cycle 4 at <http://www.tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=25769821675>.

CONCLUSION

According to Redding, Dunn, and McCauley (2015), “The amended SIG regulations present an opportunity for SEAs and LEAs to revisit how SIG is implemented across all levels of the system” (p. 23). The five states featured in this report have seized this opportunity and created state-determined models that target specific needs of their school districts and schools.

- Colorado’s Secondary School Success Model focuses on high schools and includes dual enrollment in postsecondary level courses, thematic learning academies, credit recovery and intervention programs, and re-engagement strategies.
- Minnesota’s State Model requires schools that implement it to (a) address school leadership issues; (b) have school staff receive intensive TA to address institutionalized race-, income-, cultural-, and/or language-based inequities in student academic opportunities and outcomes, student and teacher behaviors, and student discipline policies and practices; and (c) use data to

identify and implement an instructional program that targets at least one full academic content area, among other requirements.

- In New York State, the Innovation Framework Model provides three options: the College Pathways School Design and the CTE School Design target middle schools and high schools, while the Community-Oriented Design is aimed at all school levels. In the College Pathway School Design, schools must partner with IHEs, which provide students the opportunity to earn tuition-free college credits along with a high school diploma. The CTE School Design focuses on postsecondary education and career development through rigorous academic content that is closely tied to career/technical subject matter.
- Using a totally different approach, Rhode Island’s School Empowerment Model provides complete transparency between the school, district, and RIDE. Through this model, school leadership can make autonomous decisions regarding school budget, staffing, as well as curriculum and instruction.
- The Texas Education Agency chose to focus its efforts on expanding its Early College High School program. As part of this model, participating high schools provide dual credit at no cost to students and offer rigorous instruction and accelerated courses as well as academic and social support services for all students.

Although the five states discussed in this report are using varied approaches, there is one overarching goal—to raise student achievement in the lowest-performing schools.

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