

**Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
School Redesign Grant: Competition Scoring Summary, Spring 2016**

Summary of the Review Process, Overall Scoring, & Results

School Redesign Grant (SRG) Overview:

The School Redesign Grant (SRG) program represents Massachusetts' implementation of the federal *School Improvement Grant (SIG)* program, which is authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

The federal SIG program provides grants to state education agencies to make competitive subgrants (e.g., SRG funding) to districts and schools identified as needing the most support and showing the strongest commitment to raise student achievement. In accordance with federal guidelines, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) has administered a competitive process for eligible districts and schools on an annual basis, since 2010. *The purpose of the grant is to provide funds to underperforming schools to (a) accelerate turnaround efforts in these schools and (b) build district capacity to support and sustain turnaround efforts.* ESE has intentionally aligned the use of federal SIG funds to support the state's efforts to "turnaround" identified Level 4 schools, as part of the *2010 Act to Close the Achievement Gap*.

Facilitation

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) contracted the Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning (INSTLL, LLC) as a partner to co-design and administer the School Redesign Grant (SRG) review process. INSTLL staff worked closely with Erica Champagne and Amanda Trainor to manage the review process.

Training and Review Team Members

The SRG review team included 17 ESE staff members and 5 external review team members with expertise in strategies for district and school improvement, the needs of English language learners, and the needs of special education students. Review team members participated in one of two half-day trainings held on April 19, 2016 and April 27, 2016. During the training, reviewers participated in a practice scoring process to re-orient reviewers to the rubric, the team review process, and to ensure inter-team reliability during the team review process. All materials and guidance provided by ESE and referenced in this document can be found online at:

<http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ease/programs/accountability/support-for-level-3-4-and-5-districts-and-schools/school-and-district-turnaround/school-redesign-grants/school-redesign-grants-information.html>

Review Process

The review of district and school proposals involved two steps:

1. A formal review of the school Turnaround Plan by a facilitated, three-person team, using a standard process and scoring rubric.
2. An ESE review of the proposed SRG budget.
3. A district and school interview session, by a facilitated three-person team, using a standard protocol and an interview rubric.

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Team Review of Individual Proposals

A team scoring process was used to review each of the three submitted SRG proposals on May 5th and May 31st, 2016. Each three-person review team reviewed one SRG proposal per day. Each team review produced: (1) a team score for the reviewed proposal based on the scoring rubric; (2) a summary statement including strengths and weaknesses; (3) a set of interview questions to be used in the interview session; and (4) completion of the Federal Requirements Checklist to record whether or not the district had addressed each of the federal requirements for the selected model.

Each review team was comprised of two ESE staff members and an external reviewer, with attention given to having a mix of individuals with specific content and grade-level expertise relevant to the Turnaround Plan under review. Review team members were strategically assigned to teams in a way that matched expertise and to ensure a mix of perspectives and to minimize bias. A dedicated facilitator was assigned to each review team and was responsible for facilitating the team scoring process, recording team scores and comments, and identifying issues that required additional clarification.

Calibration

Similar to the process used in previous years, INSTLL reviewed the scores generated during the team scoring process to identify certain items that might require additional calibration and adjustment, as needed to ensure the reliability of scores across submitted redesign plans and to ensure that team scores were comparable. Items identified for potential calibration were flagged for review. The calibration process is an evidence-based process intended to ensure that when rubric items (and reviewer scores for items) are based on similar or identical evidence across multiple proposals, the items are correctly scored and comparable, or if scores are different, that the evidence supports the different scores.

No score calibration was deemed necessary in 2016.

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Interviews

Districts and schools that submitted proposals were invited to participate in an interview held on May 12, June 1, and June 2, 2016. Interviews consisted of a 20 to 30 minute joint presentation by district and school leaders followed by an hour and a half of questions by the ESE interview team.

The interview protocol included a set of standard questions to guide the discussion in each interview and a customized set of proposal-specific questions addressing programmatic and technical issues of a school's proposed intervention model. Specifically, customized interview questions were developed to address each rubric item that was scored a 2 or lower during the Team Review portion of the review process. The Interview Team used the information gathered during the interview to **rescore** each rubric item scoring 2 or lower, thus providing an opportunity for each school to answer questions about their Turnaround Plan and to ensure that the final score for each proposal included relevant and current information that may not have been fully communicated in the written proposal.

Each ESE interview team was comprised of four individuals: (1) the lead interviewer (Russell Johnston, Senior Associate Commissioner, Statewide System of Support, or Joan Tuttle, Director, Office of District and School Turnaround) (2) an external reviewer who participated in the Team Review portion of the review process; (3) the facilitator of the Team Review process; and (4) a note taker. The SRG Rubric includes 4 items specific to the Interview, which were used by the interview team to score the interview, in addition to determining whether the responses provided during the interview warranted rescoring rubric items that were previously scored 2 or lower.

A final SRG Turnaround Proposal score was determined at the conclusion of the Interview.

Recommendations for Awards

At the conclusion of the full review session, inclusive of the team review process and interview sessions, recommendations for awarding the SRG grants were provided to Commissioner Mitchell Chester, who made the final determinations as to which schools would be awarded grants and the amount of each award.

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Score by Rubric Dimension

District	School	Model	Capacity and Commitment	Data Analysis	Strategic and Actionable Approach	Interview Score	Budget	Final Total	Award
Athol-Royalston	Riverbend-Sanders Street Elementary	Early Learning	29	9	22	13	7	80	Yes
Boston	Madison Park Vocational Technical High School	Transformation	30	9	22	16	6	83	Yes
Holyoke	Peck Full Service Community	Transformation	28	10	21	15	6	81	Yes

The **Team Review Score** column lists the scores generated during the entire Review Process, inclusive of the Team Review and the Interview for each district/school Turnaround Plan and is the sum of the scores the plan received in three dimensions: capacity and commitment, data analysis, and strategic and actionable approach. The **Final Total** column is the combined **Team Review Score** and **Interview Score** and is the score used to determine awardees.

Award Decision Criteria and Justification:

1. **A final total score of 75 or higher** is required to be considered for recommendation for award.
2. **Awards are made contingent on each school demonstrating evidence that they fully meet the federal requirements for the selected intervention model and availability of SRG funds.**