Collaborative School Improvement Grant Development Guidebook

New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Knowledge › Skill › Opportunity
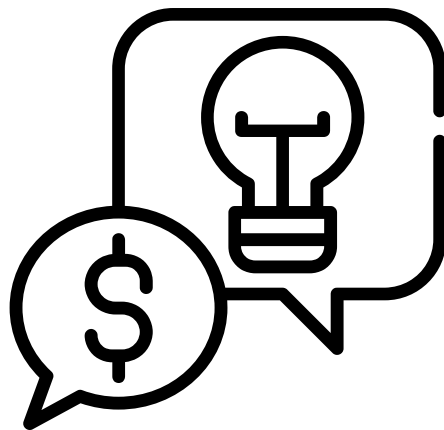
Overview

All schools in the Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) model are required to annually implement a Civic Empowerment Project designed to expand participation in decision making to those that may not have previously participated.

One option available for schools to implement is the **Collaborative School Improvement Grant (SIG) Development.**

Schools in the Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) or Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) model may elect to implement a Civic Empowerment Project. Districts can work similarly with the schools in the ATSI and/or TSI model that may be interested in this opportunity to expand participation and collaborate further in the decision-making.

Purpose

The purpose of this guidebook is to outline expectations and provide guidance for schools implementing the Collaborative School Improvement Grant Development option.

Collaborative School Improvement Grant Development Requirements

- The members of the team that drafted the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) will work with one representative from the district to draft the SIG Basic application to support the implementation of the school's SCEP.

New York State Education Department

- The principal and at least two additional representatives from the team will be selected to work with the district representative to finalize the application for the school.

- The district representative will assist the team with understanding the allowable expenses and assist the team in understanding local procurement guidance; however, the district representative should refrain from overruling the input from the team.

- The SCEP team should identify proposed expenses that amount to at least 80% of the allocation generated by the school. These expenses must support the implementation and monitoring of the upcoming year's SCEP and the development of the following year's SCEP.

- In September, schools that pursue this option will also present to staff and to families the grant submitted.

- Future SCEP team meetings during the year will incorporate a review of the impact of the resources allocated. Schools that select this option can anticipate that NYSED/Principal Pre-SCEP Team Meeting Planning Sessions will devote time toward preparing for these discussions at SCEP team meetings.

Tips for School Team Members

- The SIG Basic application is submitted through the NYSED Business Portal, and NYSED will provide Guidance Documents within the Supporting Documents section of that Business Portal. Schools selecting this option should ask their district for copies of the Guidance Documents in the portal.

- Team members should request a copy of previous school-level SIG Basic submissions to become familiar with how these funds have been spent in the past.

- Remember there are three areas in which these funds can be spent:
    - Support the implementation of the SCEP;
    - Support the monitoring of the SCEP (including SCEP team meetings throughout the year); AND
    - Support the development of the next SCEP.

New York State Education Department

When considering how to allocate funds, remember to set aside sufficient funds to allow the team to meet throughout the year to monitor the plan, and for additional meetings in the spring to conduct the needs assessment and write the next year's plan.

- The team should consider sustainability when identifying potential expenses and try to avoid recurring expenses that may be difficult to support if these funds no longer existed.

- The team should consider both equity and impact when identifying how to use funds.
    - For expenses that have existed in the past and might continue, some questions to consider might be: "What has been the school's return on investment in the past?" "How do we know that this has been a good use of funds?" "How have we minimized bias when determining how these funds should be allocated?"

    - For expenses that might be new, some questions to consider might be: "What do we hope to accomplish by directing our funds in this manner?" "Is this a good use of funds?" "How will we know if we have been successful?" "How have we ensured that we incorporated equity into our selection process when determining how these funds are allocated to minimize bias?"

Frequently Asked Questions

1. ***Does someone from the school have to complete the SIG Basic application in the business portal?***

No, this task is best handled by the representative from the district. The school team should be active in the completion of the School Activity Chart, which is ultimately uploaded to the portal.

2. ***What if my district wants to use some of the school-generated allocation for centralized expenses that our team cannot influence?***

Federal guidelines permit the district to determine how to use these funds to support the implementation of school plans and this allows for centralized expenses. We would

New York State Education Department

encourage all school teams to be familiar with how the entire school-generated allocation is being spent so the team can offer feedback and insight as to which expenses are having the most impact.

For *Collaborative School Improvement Grant Development* to serve as the school's Civic Empowerment Project, the representatives from the school team must allocate at least 80% of the school-generated allocation.

3. *Our school would like to select this option, but our district has already submitted the SIG Basic application. Is it too late?*

In this instance, it is too late. A school in this circumstance should wait until the next school year to pursue this option.

4. *Our school receives SIG funds through other programs, is this for all SIG funds or just SIG Basic?*

Collaborative School Improvement Grant Development as a Civic Empowerment Project is only for SIG Basic, though it is good practice to have two-way communication between the SCEP team and the district when any SIG application is submitted.

5. *What if during the year our school wants to change the expenses proposed, but the district already has an approved SIG application?*

That is fine. SCEP teams may decide that some changes need to be made to the plan for implementation as they review data throughout the year. Should any of the changes result in modifications to the SIG application, the principal and members of the SCEP team should work with the district representative to determine if an amendment to the SIG application is warranted. NYSED has an amendment process available to support districts that may need to make changes to approved budgets before a project period ends.

6. *When will our school receive the funds?*

All SIG funds are disseminated to the Target District, at different points throughout the school year. Prior to approval, NYSED staff will review the application and ensure that the proposed expenditures align to the DCIP and individual schools' SCEP. NYSED typically releases the first 20% of the total allocation within six weeks of the grant approval. Throughout the year, the district can request additional disbursements of funds to cover planned expenditures. The school-level schedule of funds management and disbursement is determined by and the responsibility of the district.

New York State Education Department