



# Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

## Next Generation School Improvement Grants

In the 2021-2022 academic year, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is debuting the *Next Generation School Improvement Grant* (“Next Gen SIG”) to provide funds to local educational agencies (LEAs) fully committed to aligning a student’s learning with their academic and personal needs. This competitive, federal grant will support planning and implementation of transformational plans in schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and/or Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI).

Next Gen SIG is distinct from prior school improvement grant programs that took a programmatic approach to school improvement, versus a systemic approach to school transformation. This grant overview provides details of the grant objectives, grant design, and application requirements. Interested applicants are encouraged to review this information carefully prior to applying.

### GRANT OBJECTIVES

Next Gen SIG aims to encourage and support transformational school improvement plans that:

- Engage and empower a school community (families, educators, community leaders, employers, etc.) to inform and influence the educational experience to align to student needs most effectively.
- Rethink governance structures to shift authority over critical decision-making on time/schedule, personnel/human resources, fiscal/budget, and programs/curriculum to the school building level.
- Secure the capacity and expertise, through external partners or demonstrated internal capacity, to successfully implement a comprehensive school/system transformation plan.
- Demonstrate a commitment and belief in the ability for all students to achieve by setting clear performance benchmarks that put students on a trajectory to live a life of choice and opportunity.

### WHAT ARE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT & SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION?

Since the adoption of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, states have been focused on providing resources – both human and monetary – to schools and school corporations to improve outcomes in schools that do not meet student achievement benchmarks. Over the past 20 years, these efforts have been focused on **school improvement**, which involves changing programs and increasing effectiveness within the current system. The process traditionally consists of a needs assessment, where school leaders work with their staff and community to identify areas holding students back. This leads to the development and implementation of a school improvement plan mainly consisting of efforts that change curriculum, provide leadership coaching, focus on data analysis, etc. This approach assumes that:

- The current set of policies will remain,
- Schools will continue to be organized as they are,
- Schools will maintain the same approach to teacher compensation, recruitment, and retention, and
- The student experience will remain largely unchanged, other than students receiving “more” instruction within the existing system.

More simply put, school improvement efforts attempt to drive change within the existing system.



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**School transformation** questions the current educational system to critically analyze all aspects of our approach through the lens of the student experience. School transformation seeks to enhance educational opportunities by understanding and responding to the needs of the students and families currently served, irrespective of how systems have operated in the past.

At its core, school transformation acknowledges that the current one-size-fits all educational model may no longer meet the needs of students and families, and as a result, may no longer provide an effective vehicle to improve student outcomes.

## ELIGIBLE ENTITIES & AVAILABLE FUNDS

- The Next Gen SIG program is open to schools identified for CSI and TSI pursuant to Indiana's approved Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan. Successful grantees will receive up to \$250,000 in planning grant funds for the 2021-2022 academic year and up to \$3 million distributed over four years (academic years 2022-2023 through 2025-2026) for implementation.
- A list of eligible schools can be downloaded [HERE](#).

## SINGLE SCHOOL & MULTI-SCHOOL GRANT

Applicants will be asked to identify whether their proposal is designed to transform one school or strategically transform multiple schools within the LEA. All schools included in a single year or multi-year grant must meet the eligibility requirements for the Next Gen SIG program outlined above.

**Single School Grant:** The single school grant is specifically designed for LEAs with fewer than three TSI and/or CSI schools that have a school with unique needs from other eligible schools.

An LEA may apply for a single school grant for one or more of its eligible schools and is not required to submit a grant application for each eligible school.

**Multi-School Grant:** The multi-school grant is specifically for LEAs with four or more TSI and/or CSI schools. These funds will be leveraged to help districts design and implement sustainable, large-scale school transformation initiatives (e.g., Transformation Zones, Innovation Networks) that transform the conditions for learning to meet student needs and improve student outcomes. Districts are not required to include each of their eligible schools in their application but will be asked to justify the selection of the schools included in the multi-school application.

## GRANT TIMELINE & STRUCTURE

School transformation requires careful planning and comprehensive stakeholder engagement to ensure the changes adopted are student-focused and learner-centered. Therefore, the Next Gen SIG process will include a planning phase and an implementation phase.

**Planning Phase:** During the planning phase, IDOE will work with school officials to finalize the vision and details of their transformation plan alongside a range of stakeholder groups. The planning phase will allow grantees to strengthen the needs assessment described in the initial application, with a focus on identifying the systemic barriers inhibiting student progress and teacher success. IDOE will work with grantees to establish an agreed upon set of benchmarks to evaluate progress throughout the planning period.

Through regular engagements throughout the planning year, IDOE will provide support and feedback



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on progress towards these benchmarks. Implementation funding will be contingent upon successful completion of the agreed upon benchmarks during the planning year.

**Implementation Phase:** The Next Gen SIG program will fund up to four years of implementation, with an anticipated grant award amount of up to \$3 million per school. Multi-school interventions can expect additional funds, but the total allocations should reflect a strategic approach to spending that articulates the benefits and leverages the economies of scale of a multi-school intervention. IDOE will work with school officials to articulate rigorous, specific, and measurable goals for the intervention and establish a performance dashboard to guide conversations and continuous improvement within the existing plan.

The expectation for all grantees will be that all schools included in the intervention exit CSI or TSI status by the end of the four years. Schools that achieve this exit criteria prior to the end of the grant cycle will remain eligible for funding through the end of the full, four-year implementation phase.

## INTERVENTION PRIORITY & INTERVENTION MODEL

Next Gen SIG requires applicants to identify an intervention priority and an intervention model to serve as the foundation for the planning year.

**Intervention Priority:** The intervention priority provides a clear purpose for the proposal. This does not prohibit the use of grant funds on other initiatives; rather, it serves as a focus for the entire initiative and sends a clear signal about the purpose of the work to internal and external stakeholders. The application includes three possible intervention priorities, but applicants may also identify another priority based on the needs of their community.

1. **Primary Literacy Transformation** – This priority focuses on transforming the student experience to improve primary literacy. Research has regularly demonstrated the importance of reading on grade level by the end of grade three; however, thousands of students continue to grade four and beyond without the foundational literacy skills needed to be successful. Applications that prioritize primary literacy should focus on transforming the student experience in grades K-3 to eliminate systemic barriers and better align the entire instructional model to student needs.
2. **Student Pathways & Postsecondary Credentials** – This priority focuses on transforming a student's high school experience to blur the lines between high school and their next steps, whether they are enrollment, employment, or enlistment leading to service. Shifts in postsecondary demand have increased the expectation of educational attainment, and our high schools must shift their programming to align to this demand. Applications that prioritize student pathways and postsecondary credentials should focus on developing meaningful pathways in partnership with workforce and higher education partners that strategically integrate customized course sequences, meaningful work-based or project-based learning experiences, and a high-demand postsecondary credential.
3. **Personalized/Differentiated Instructional Model** – This priority focuses on transforming the primary, one-size-fits-all approach to instruction into a model that promotes teacher collaboration and considers student needs when establishing class sizes, teacher assignments, instructional time, etc. Applications that prioritize personalized/differentiated instructional models should focus on leveraging technology, innovative student grouping, and teacher



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- career ladders to redesign the fundamental assumptions about how we structure schools in our current system.
4. Other – Applicants can propose an alternative intervention priority based on the demonstrated needs of students in the identified school(s). Successful applications that propose an alternative priority will clearly explain how addressing the selected priority will address root cause issues and improve student outcomes across the board.

**Intervention Model:** The intervention model plays a critical role in establishing the conditions necessary for transformation. Transformational intervention models often require flexibility from state law and local policies including staffing, time, money, and programs. The following models currently exist within Indiana state law.

1. Innovation Network School – Innovation Network Schools may be established by teachers and an administrator at the school, the governing body of a school corporation, or through a partnership between the school corporation and an external school operator. Under current Indiana law, an Innovation Network School can receive additional flexibility to establish the conditions necessary to support transformation.
2. Transformation Zone – A Transformation Zone is an intervention model designed for a multi-school initiative. This model aims to cluster schools with similar needs into a zone that is afforded additional flexibility and capacity. Under current Indiana law, schools that participate in a Transformation Zone can request flexibility from certain state regulations and local policies.
3. 1003 Flexibility Waiver – The governing body of a school corporation may request a waiver from the Indiana State Board of Education to eliminate certain statutory and regulatory requirements that currently exist in Indiana law. These waivers can be customized to fit the unique needs of a particular intervention; however, applicants should be aware of the restrictions associated with this option before pursuing as an intervention model.
4. Other – Applicants may propose alternative intervention models; however, the description must clearly articulate how the proposed model secures the necessary conditions for transformation despite not being included in Indiana state law.

## ROLE OF AN EXPERT PARTNER

Successful school transformation requires a specialized skill set and unique experience. These skills and experiences may not exist as part of an existing school system, and therefore require the selection of an expert partner to support the work. Applicants are asked to clearly identify how unique expertise will be secured in service of the intervention.

Successful applications will demonstrate how the school's transformation team has the required skills and experiences to successfully steward the intervention or will explain how an expert partner with a track-record of success with similar projects will work alongside the school team to foster the intervention's success.

## APPLICATION

Interested applicants should complete the following [planning application](#) no later than March 4, 2022.



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## EVALUATION CRITERIA

All grant proposals will be evaluated based on multiple criteria, including the defined assurances. Grant applications will be read and scored by a team of subject matter experts in accordance with the established rubric.

### Next Gen SIG Planning Application Scoring Rubric

<p><b>1. Demonstrated Academic Need</b></p> <p>The application provides a data-informed explanation of the unique academic needs of students in the participating schools with a focus on the impact of COVID 19.</p>	<p><b>0 points:</b> The application fails to provide a description of how students and families within the community have been impacted by COVID 19.</p>	<p><b>5 points:</b> The application provides a general description of how students and families within the community have been impacted by COVID 19 that fails to distinguish the schools in the application from other OR does not include data points (formative assessments, attendance data, mode of instruction, indicators of social and emotional well-being, etc.) to complement the description.</p>	<p><b>10 points:</b> The application provides a detailed description of how students and families within the community have been impacted by COVID 19 and includes data points (formative assessments, attendance data, mode of instruction, indicators of social and emotional well-being, etc.) to complement the description but may not fully justify the statements included in the description of impact.</p>	<p><b>15 points:</b> The application provides a detailed description of how students and families within the community have been impacted by COVID 19 including strategically selected data points to justify the description that may include (formative assessments, attendance data, mode of instruction, indicators of social and emotional well-being).</p>
<p><b>2.1 ETT Membership</b></p> <p>The application identifies a ETT members that reflect different perspectives with a focus on elevating voices outside of the K-12 system.</p>	<p><b>0 points:</b> The application does not identify specific ETT members or provide a detailed enough description to evaluate the diversity and capacity of the ETT.</p>	<p><b>2 points:</b> The identified or anticipated ETT members consist of mostly school/ corporation-based personnel. Membership includes a minority of members from outside of K-12 education.</p>	<p><b>3 points:</b> The application provides a description of anticipated ETT members that reflect the diversity of the school community in perspective and experience and demonstrates a commitment to identifying most ETT members from outside of K-12.</p>	<p><b>4 points:</b> Identified ETT members reflect the diversity of the school community in perspective and experience, and includes most members from outside of K-12, including community leaders and workforce reps.</p>
<p><b>2.2 ETT Authority</b></p> <p>The application clearly articulates the authority that will be given to the ETT to make decisions related to the transformation plan.</p>	<p><b>0 points:</b> The application does not describe any authority that will be provided to the ETT or fails to provide authority to the ETT.</p>	<p><b>2 points:</b> The application describes giving the ETT authority but falls short of identifying specific areas or committing to formalize the authority of the ETT in an MOU or other agreement.</p>	<p><b>3 points:</b> The application outlines clear authority of the ETT aligned to personnel, scheduling, budgets, and programs, but stops short of formalizing the authority of the ETT in an MOU or other agreement.</p>	<p><b>4 points:</b> The application proposes a formal agreement or MOU between the ETT and the school corporation that articulates clear authority of core operational aspects including personnel, scheduling, budgets, and programs.</p>
<p><b>2.3 Ongoing ETT Engagement</b></p> <p>The application describes how the ETT will regularly engage with key school officials to ensure ongoing monitoring of implementation and program evaluation.</p>	<p><b>0 points:</b> The application does not describe how the ETT will engage with school officials throughout the transformation.</p>	<p><b>1 point:</b> The application provides a general outline of ETT and school official engagement but lacks specific details or purpose.</p>	<p><b>2 points:</b> The application outlines regular engagements between the ETT and school officials. The role of the ETT and purpose of the engagements is unclear or does not include clear monitoring or oversight.</p>	<p><b>3 points:</b> The application outlines a regular schedule of engagements between the ETT and school officials to monitor and inform implementation of the plan and provide ongoing oversight and evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the plan.</p>
<p><b>3. Problem Statement</b></p> <p>The application identifies a specific problem that is within the school's locus of control.</p>	<p><b>0 points:</b> The application does not include a problem statement or includes a problem statement that is so ambiguous that a clear problem or challenge cannot be deduced.</p>	<p><b>1 point:</b> The application includes a general problem statement that is either outside of the school's control or does not include specific challenges associated with the educational opportunity currently offered to students.</p>	<p><b>2 points:</b> The application describes a specific problem that is programmatic, or strategy focused. The problem statement does not reflect the systemic barriers that perpetuate the gap between educational opportunity and unique student needs.</p>	<p><b>3 points:</b> The application describes a specific problem at the systems level that focuses on aligning educational opportunities to student needs and provides a clear strategic justification as to why it is negatively impacting student outcomes.</p>
<p><b>4.1 Where are we?</b></p> <p>The application describes relevant data and experiences aligned to the problem statement that focuses on gaps in opportunity and access for students. The application describes a clear vision for success.</p>	<p><b>0 points:</b> The application does not include a description of the current gaps in opportunities and access that inhibit student outcomes.</p>	<p><b>1 point:</b> The application provides a general description of the current educational opportunity and how it relates to the problem but fails to provide data or additional evidence or tie it to the problem statement; and/or, the vision statement does not sufficiently describe a transformed opportunities for students.</p>	<p><b>2 points:</b> The application describes general data and experiences that are not directly tied to the challenges addressed in the problem statement; and/or, the vision for success is general and does not include concrete student outcomes.</p>	<p><b>3 points:</b> The application describes relevant data and experiences aligned to the problem statement that focuses on gaps in opportunity and access for students and articulates a clear vision for success that includes concrete student outcomes.</p>
<p><b>4.2 How did we get here?</b></p> <p>The application identifies concrete and tangible conditions or systemic barriers</p>	<p><b>0 points:</b> The application fails to identify relevant and/or general internal or external barriers that are inhibiting student success.</p>	<p><b>1 point:</b> The application identifies general internal and external conditions or systemic barriers that are contributing to the gaps identified in the previous</p>	<p><b>2 points:</b> The application identifies concrete and tangible barriers that are contributing to the gaps identified in the previous section, but most of those</p>	<p><b>3 points:</b> The application identifies concrete and tangible internal and external conditions or systemic barriers that are contributing to the gaps identified in the previous section. The application</p>



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that are contributing to the gaps identified in the previous section.		section.	barriers are outside of the school's control. The description fails to demonstrate a strong locus of control and understanding of how the current system inhibits progress.	demonstrates ownership over internal and external conditions or barriers, identifying relevant challenges over which the school has influence.
<p><b>4.3 How do we get to our desired explanation?</b></p> <p>The application articulates concrete steps that can be taken to address the systemic barriers and conditions that inhibit student success.</p>	<p><b>0 points:</b> The application fails to provide a plan or provides a plan that is completely disconnected from the problem or systemic barriers that have been identified.</p>	<p><b>1 point:</b> The application outlines a plan to improve student success but fails to address the systemic barriers that were identified in the previous section; or, the application fails to present a plan to address systemic barriers because none were identified in the previous section.</p>	<p><b>2 points:</b> The application demonstrates some ownership and agency in relation to addressing and eliminating the gaps and barriers that inhibit student achievement. Proposed solutions tend to focus on programmatic issues rather than a systemic approach to improving educational opportunities for students.</p>	<p><b>3 points:</b> The application demonstrates clear ownership and agency in relation to addressing and eliminating the gaps and barriers that inhibit student achievement. Proposed solutions go beyond programmatic solutions and reflect a systems approach to improving educational opportunity for students.</p>
<p><b>5. Expert Partner</b></p> <p>The application provides a clear justification for selecting or not selecting an expert partner that fully addresses the capacity of the ETT and school officials to address the conditions identified in previous sections.</p>	<p><b>0 points:</b> The application fails to identify an expert partner or the ETT members.</p>	<p><b>2 points:</b> The application identifies an expert partner to support the work but does not provide any justification or rationale for the selection; or the application identifies ETT members but fails to provide any justification or explanation of the expertise the team possesses related to leading a school transformation.</p>	<p><b>3 points:</b> The application includes a justification for selecting the expert partner that lacks rigor and as a result is unclear if the expert partner has a strong track-record of success doing similar work; or the application outlines the capacity and expertise of the ETT but does not explicitly connect that expertise to the knowledge and skills needed to lead school transformation.</p>	<p><b>4 points:</b> The application includes a strategic approach to evaluating expert partners aligned to rigorous expectations and identifies an expert partner with a track-record of success leading similar school transformation work; or clearly articulates how the capacity and expertise of the ETT is sufficient to lead the transformation without the support of an expert partner.</p>
<p><b>6. Intervention Priority</b></p> <p>The application provides an overview of the school improvement priority around which the planning process will focus, along with the intervention model, to establish the conditions necessary to transform the educational experience for students being served in the school.</p>	<p><b>0 points:</b> The application selects an intervention priority, but it is unclear how it aligns to the problem statement <b>AND</b> it fails to explain how the intervention priority will transform the current student experience.</p>	<p><b>2 points:</b> The application selects an intervention priority, but it is unclear how it aligns to the problem statement <b>OR</b> it fails to explain how the intervention priority will transform the current student experience.</p>	<p><b>3 points:</b> The application identifies an intervention priority that aligns to the problem statement. The description explains how the intervention priority will serve as the core of the implementation plan but fails to explain how the priority will transform the current student educational experience.</p>	<p><b>4 points:</b> The application identifies an intervention priority that aligns to the problem statement and the systemic barriers identified that are currently limiting student achievement and outcomes. The description explicitly explains how the selected priority will transform the educational experience for students to better align to their needs.</p>
<p><b>7. Intervention Model</b></p> <p>The application must identify an intervention model that will the necessary conditions for school transformation. The selected model must provide the regulatory and governance flexibility necessary to successfully transform the educational experience for students in the school.</p>	<p><b>0 point:</b> The application fails to identify an intervention model.</p>	<p><b>2 points:</b> The application identifies an intervention model but fails to explain how the model will enhance the intervention or create the operational flexibility necessary to successfully transform the educational experience for students.</p>	<p><b>3 points:</b> The application identifies an intervention model but includes only a general explanation for how the selected model increases operational flexibility or how that flexibility will enhance the intervention and/or increase the likelihood for success.</p>	<p><b>4 points:</b> The application identifies an intervention model that addresses the systemic barriers identified in the application and clearly explains how the selected model increases operational flexibility and how that flexibility will enhance the intervention and/or increase the likelihood for success.</p>
<p><b>8. Commitment to Transformation</b></p> <p>The application, across all of the required section, demonstrates a strong commitment to transformative change focused on changing the conditions within which the school operates.</p>	<p><b>0 points:</b> The application does not demonstrate a strong commitment to developing a plan that will improve student outcomes.</p>	<p><b>5 points:</b> The challenges identified in the plan are relevant but fail to demonstrate an understanding for how system barriers may inhibit student success and therefore fails to commit to the transformative changes necessary to dramatically improve outcomes for students.</p>	<p><b>10 points:</b> Overall the application demonstrates an understanding and ownership of the systemic barriers that inhibit student learning but does not demonstrate a commitment to the types of systemic transformation necessary to redesign the educational experience.</p>	<p><b>15 points:</b> Overall the application demonstrates a clear understanding and ownership of the systemic barriers that inhibit to student learning and a commitment to addressing the systemic barriers that inhibit student success to redesign the educational experience in the image of the students the school currently serves.</p>
<p><b>8.1 Budget</b></p> <p>The application includes a budget with allowable expenses.</p>	<p><b>0 points:</b> The application does not include a budget description and/or a completed budget template or the budget description fails to provide even a general explanation for how school improvement resources will be used to support the planning phase.</p>		<p><b>5 points:</b> The application provides a budget description and completed budget template that, at a minimum, generally explain how school improvement resources will be used to support the planning year.</p>	
<b>Total (65 pts possible)</b>				