CASS LAKE-BENA ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS

OUR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MODEL ("transformation" model)

REQUIRED ELEMENTS, GROUPED

STUDENTS AND FAMILIES	
Transformation Model: Required Elements	**Examples**
(15) Establish schedules and implement strategies that provide increased learning time (p. 103 and 111, ESEA Waiver Request).	• Longer school day (effective 2015-16) • After-school programming (academic, available to all students) • Summer school (academic, available to all students…SIG pays for transportation)
(16) Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students (p. 18, SIG Guidance)	• Behavior Interventionist position • ES: "Positive behavior" class is part of Encore classes • MS: "growth mindset" curriculum • Two-year kindergarten option, with first year emphasis on social, emotional, and behavioral readiness
(17) Provide opportunities for family and community participation in the SIG planning process, model selection and implementation of the model (p. 14, SIG LEA Application).	• Parent Action Committee • Principals are at monthly LIEC for feedback • A parent is a member of the ES leadership team
(18) Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement (p. 17, SIG Guidance).	• Monthly family activities such as Jeopardy, book bingo • Home visits by FCLs • Grade-level learning expectations brochures for families • Improvements to parent resources on school district's website • Facebook pages and other ways of communicating

WHAT TEACHERS DO

Transformation Model: Required Elements	Examples
(11) Use data to implement a research-based vertically-aligned and standards-aligned instructional program (p. 16, SIG Guidance).	• Teachers work on their reading and math and other "curriculum maps" in summer work sessions, as well as during the school year • Regional and state specialists spend time with us on interpreting MCA test scores and how our teaching fits with the State learning standards • We purchase reading books and math activities that fit with the state standards • Teachers occasionally meet with teachers from all grades in the subject area (math, reading/language arts, science, social studies, specialists) to talk about how their curriculums work together from year to year
(12) Promote continuous use of student data to differentiate instruction to meet needs of individual students (p. 16, SIG Guidance).	• Teachers in a weekly grade-level meeting talk about test scores (state test given once a year, tests given three times a year, grade-level tests or checks) • Teachers teach students in small groups and use data to divide students into the small groups • Teachers use scores to decide which students need more help and what to teach again • Leaders and teachers participate in "data days" to learn more, to analyze, and to set goals • Instructional coaches at each school help teachers with data and teaching
(13) Reserve 90 minutes per week for teachers to meet in professional learning communities (p. 13, SIG LEA Application).	• Teachers in each grade level meet with each other, to talk about teaching and learning, at least 90 minutes once a week (a block of 90 minutes at the ES, three meetings of 40 minutes at the MS) (These groups are called PLCs, Professional Learning Communities) • Each group has a leader who is part of the school's leadership team; the school leadership team helps decide some of the grade-level group work • In their groups, teachers talk about how they are teaching to improve students' learning (and therefore test scores)

HIRE AND SUPPORT TEACHERS

Transformation Model: Required Elements	Examples
(7) Implement strategies and incentives designed to recruit, place and retain staff with skills necessary to meet the needs of the students (p.15, SIG	• Attend teacher job fairs to attract teachers • Mentoring program for new teachers • Experienced teachers can develop new skills through serving on Leadership Team

Guidance).	
(8) Identify and reward leaders, teachers and other staff for raising student achievement and graduation rates and remove those who, after ample opportunities to improve, have not done so (p.15, SIG Guidance).	• As we are currently limited in offering financial incentives for raising student achievement by the teacher contract (union), we continue to explore ways to reward teachers • Use formal and informal evaluations to identify teachers who have a harder time and provide additional coaching and mentoring for them
(9) Use a rigorous evaluation and support system for teachers ~~and principals~~ using at least three performance levels, clear and timely feedback that guides professional development (p. 14-15, SIG Guidance).	• New teachers have three formal evaluations every year • The first evaluation is within the first three months • There are also informal evaluations (classroom walkthroughs) • Experienced teachers have two or three formal evaluations per year
(10) Use locally adopted competencies to measure staff effectiveness to work in the turnaround environment and meet the needs of students (p. 6, SIG Guidance).	• The district uses a teacher evaluation developed with the teachers' union and based on research about what makes teachers effective • New teachers participate in a monthly workshop to help them develop as effective teachers
(14) Provide ongoing, high quality, job-embedded professional development aligned with the school's instructional program; designed with staff to ensure effective teaching, learning and capacity to implement reform strategies (p. 16, SIG Guidance).	• Teachers and administrators use their experience, teacher evaluations, and school improvement needs to decide professional development (teacher workshop) topics for the year • This year, the school board agreed to four "late start" days, when teachers have a two-hour workshop before the students arrive • Instructional coaches work with teachers after the workshops to support their new skills • Some teachers do a summer book study related to making the schools better • This year, we offered some teacher workshops before the start of the teachers' contract; teachers are paid extra for participating
(3) Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, SEA, or a designated external lead partner organization (p. 19, SIG Guidance).	• Experts from a "Regional Center of Excellence" attend SIG meetings, offer professional development, and consult with us—all to help us improve • Minnesota Department of Education experts offer workshops in St Paul for us and other SIG schools and spend time with us in our schools • We also invite other experts to lead teacher workshops • This happens throughout the school year and in the summer

SIG Leadership

Transformation Model: Required Elements	Examples
(1) *MODIFIED* **Replace the principal** (p. 14, SIG Guidance, March 20, 2015).	• This was modified at the elementary school, as Dr Blanchard had been recently hired and had required expertise • The middle school principal left (his own decision); Mrs Chase had experience with the high school SIG
(2) Grant principal [and leadership team] sufficient operational flexibility to implement fully each element of the model (p. 19, SIG Guidance).	**There is strong evidence that the principal [and leadership team] are granted sufficient operational flexibility to implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement and increase graduation rates.** ● Examples and evidence of LEA providing the principal and leadership implementation team with operational flexibility. ● Policy modifications to support SIG intervention model.
(4) Employ a minimum 1.0 FTE Instructional Facilitator to assist the principal with instructional leadership duties; teacher professional development and support; and teacher induction, mentoring and coaching (p. 12, SIG LEA Application).	**A position description clearly outlines the duties of the site Instructional Facilitator to co-lead instructional support and professional development as well as the induction, mentoring and coaching of the teachers with the principal. This facilitator has a demonstrated record of success as an instructional leader.**
(5) Employ a minimum .5 FTE Continuous Improvement Specialist to manage the School Improvement Grant, assist the principal with continuous improvement activities, and with non-instructional school leadership duties (p. 12, SIG LEA Application).	**A position description clearly outlines the duties of the Continuous Improvement Specialist to direct the SIG process and SIG reporting while serving to assist the principal with continuous improvement activities and non-instructional school leadership duties. This CIS has continuous improvement experience**.
(6) Employ a Family Liaison to increase family and community active participation related to student achievement (p. 12, SIG LEA Application).	**A position description clearly outlines the duties of the Family Liaison to engage families in opportunities on a regular basis that strengthen their children's learning.**

(3) Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA, SEA, or a designated external lead partner organization (p. 19, SIG Guidance).	**There is strong evidence of ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related planning support from the LEA and other collaborative partners. Roles of support providers are clearly defined.** ● Evidence of meetings with Superintendent, Board or LEA documenting oversight of implementing the SIG grant. ● Agendas and notes of conversations regarding planning/implementation of the School Improvement Grant (SIG) including leading indicators and evaluation activities. ● LEA must properly recruit, screen, and select any external providers that may be necessary to assist in planning for the implementation of a SIG intervention model. ○ Grantees must submit all final contracts with external providers to the MDE for approval. The outside provider's work duties in the contract must be clearly defined and linked to the LEA's full and effective implementation of the model. ○ Grantees should include in any contracts with outside providers terms or provisions that will enable the LEA to hold the provider accountable to specific, measurable and quantitative outcomes. ○ The inclusion of a cancellation clause in the LEA contract with external providers is mandatory (including the manner by which it will be effected and the basis for settlement).
(9) Use a rigorous evaluation and support system for ~~teachers and~~ principals using at least three performance levels, clear and timely feedback that guides professional development (p. 14-15, SIG Guidance).	Conducting Principal Evaluations -- ○ Principal/Director (redacted) formal evaluation, with reflections and goals. ○ Principal evaluation is rigorous, transparent, and equitable. ○ Evaluation System for Principal takes into account data on student growth as a significant factor as well as other factors, such as multiple observation-based assessments of performance and ongoing collections of professional practice reflective of student achievement and increased high school graduation rates; and designed/developed with principal involvement. ○ Principal professional growth plan submitted. ○ Schedule/Evidence of regular monitoring and oversight of principal from LEA.
OTHER REQUIREMENT **Effective Governance Structure: Leadership Team Development** (p. 110, ESEA Waiver Request).	**A leadership implementation team should be in place to lead the process of implementing the SIG workplan and the Record of Continuous Improvement (school action plan). Primarily, this team should organize and oversee the Comprehensive Needs Assessment process; lead the staff in implementing and evaluating the workplan; and conduct or oversee the implementation of instruction/interventions on an ongoing basis.** ● Evidence of comprehensive needs assessment process and root cause analysis. ● Evidence of selection process for instructional interventions (e.g., practices, strategies). How does each intervention fit with current priorities, initiatives, structures, supports and resources? ● Practice profiles developed to help school staff clearly define each selected usable intervention. ● Classroom walkthroughs and coaching observation tools also based on practice profiles. ○ Classroom walkthroughs compiled and used as formal fidelity of implementation data for Record of Continuous Improvement (school action plan) interventions. ● Evidence of short improvement cycles (4-6 weeks) to analyze implementation, achievement and performance assessment data to inform next steps. ● Evidence of a communication plan implemented with fidelity and how instructional changes are shared collaboratively with all stakeholders. ● MDE Leadership Team Rubric used to guide team with core structures and critical features.
OTHER REQUIREMENT **Selection and hiring of SIG grant positions** (p. 57, SIG Guidance)	**A plan to recruit and select effective candidates for all grant positions, including an Instructional Facilitator and Family Liaison, is documented by multiple sources of evidence (e.g., position descriptions, interview questions process tasks, timelines). The plan includes development of position descriptions that clearly outline the duties of SIG funded positions.** ○ Highly qualified and effective personnel are selected, based on the school needs assessment, for building staff capacity to support, implement and sustain the SIG intervention model reform strategies. ○ Hiring process targets and supports staff that is committed to the school and has strong potential to be retained for a number of years as an approach to formatively addressing staff mobility issues.

	○ Signed Time and Effort Reports (i.e., Semi-Annual Certifications, Personnel Activity Reports). ○ SIG personnel observation tool, observations and calendar (redacted, data privacy information removed).

GRANT MANAGEMENT

Transformation Model: Other Requirements	Examples
OTHER REQUIREMENT **SEA criteria for use of funds** (pp. 3-4, SIG LEA Application).	**SEA criteria for use of funds shall be limited to that portion identified in the application materials and the attached application and by any applicable state or federal laws.** ● Budget descriptions align with the workplan narrative and accurate, allowable and properly allocated budget codes are listed. ● LEA can describe its internal controls/accounting and budget review process and the steps it takes to make sure those expenditures are allowable. ● LEA can describe any adjustments made to budget or to programs based on approved application. ● SIG Grantees must submit all final contracts with external providers to the MDE for approval. Contracts must include goals, deliverables, review/evaluations and benchmarks of progress. The inclusion of a cancellation clause in the LEA contract with external providers is mandatory.
OTHER REQUIREMENT **Once awarded, the grantee will be required to complete and submit interim expenditure and progress reports,** as well as a final expense and progress report by the timeframe/date and in the form and manner indicated in the Official Grant Award Notification (OGAN). In addition, the grantee must comply with any special conditions outlined in the OGAN and any additional documents necessary for MDE to conduct monitoring (p. 11, SIG LEA Application).	**Report to the State Education Agency (SEA) the school-level data required under section II.A.8(a) of the final requirements, including baseline data for the year prior to SIG implementation.** **1) Number of minutes within the school year;** 2) Student participation rate on state assessments in reading/language arts and in mathematics, by student subgroup; 3) Dropout rate/graduation rate; **4) Student attendance rate;** **5) Number and percentage of students completing advanced coursework (e.g., AP/IB), early-college high schools, or dual enrollment classes;** 6) Discipline incidents; **7) Chronic Absenteeism;** 8) Distribution of teachers by performance level on an LEA's teacher evaluation system; and **9) Teacher attendance rate**