

**ARRA Investing in Innovation Fund ("I3") Grant Program  
Notice of Proposed Priorities, Requirements, and Selection Criteria**

**INITIAL SUMMARY "BLUEPRINT" FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
OCTOBER 9, 2009**

**Introduction and Purpose:** To inform planning and development, the chart below presents in table form the *proposed* priorities, requirements, and criteria released by the U.S. Department of Education (USED) on October 6, 2009, to govern the \$650 million local "Investing in Innovation" (I3) grants, under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The purpose of the program is to "provide competitive grants to applicants with a record of improving student achievement, in order to expand the implementation of, and investment in, innovative practices that are demonstrated to have an impact on improving student achievement or student growth for high-need students, as well as to promote school readiness, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, and improve teacher and school leader effectiveness." Eligible entities include: (1) school districts; and (2) partnerships between non-profit organizations and (a) one or more school districts or (b) a consortium of schools. The Department has proposed *three tiers of innovation grants* (applicants may seek funding from only one tier), with varying levels of evidence required for each tier:

- "Development Grants" of up to \$5 million for proposals with "research based findings or hypotheses;"
- "Validation Grants" of up to \$30 million for proposals with "moderate" evidentiary foundations; and
- "Scale Up Grants" of up to \$50 million for proposals with "strong" evidentiary backing.

The Public Notice proposes a clear structure for the innovation program and encourages applicants to propose initiatives across a wide range of strategies, so long as they satisfy general criteria.

**Absolute and Competitive Priorities:** Under the Public Notice, proposals must focus on one or more of *four absolute priorities*, which track the ARRA's four core policy assurances: (1) improvements in teacher effectiveness and ensuring all schools have effective teachers; (2) gathering data to improve student learning, teacher performance, and college and career readiness through enhanced data systems; (3) progress toward college- and career-ready standards and rigorous assessments; and (4) improving achievement in low performing schools through intensive support and effective interventions.

The Notice also proposes *four competitive priorities* aligned with the Department's reform goals: (1) improved early learning outcomes; (2) college access and success; (3) addressing the needs of students with disabilities and limited English proficient students; and (4) serving schools in rural areas.

**Selection Criteria and Other Factors:** The Department has proposed *seven selection criteria*, including: (1) need for project and quality of project design; (2) strength of research, significance of effect, and magnitude of effect; (3) experience of the applicant; (4) quality of project evaluation; (5) strategy and capacity to scale; (6) sustainability; and (7) quality of management plan and personnel.

Projects funded under the program must focus on high-need students. Applicants are encouraged to partner with state education agencies, service centers, and post-secondary institutions, and other stakeholders (many of which themselves are not eligible). The proposal also includes a mandatory 20% private match, which can be waived by the Secretary only in "exceptional circumstances."

**Outlook/Timeline:** Interested parties must file comments on the Public Notice's proposed I3 framework on or before Monday, November 9. Given this timeline, and the Department's expectation that the agency will receive thousands of comments, USED will likely publish the Final Notice inviting applications for the program in February or March. Assuming a 60 day application window, applications would likely be due in April or May (all program funds must be obligated by the Department of Education no later than September 30, 2010).

### Planning and Development Blue Print

	Core Points	Notes/Comments
<b>Priorities</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Absolute.</b> <i>Applicants must address one or more of the following...</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Effective Teachers and School Leaders <input type="checkbox"/> Improving the Use of Data <input type="checkbox"/> Complementing the Implementation of High Standards and High Quality Assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Turning-Around Persistently Low Performing Schools	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Competitive.</b> <i>Applicants will receive credit for innovations for...</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Improved Early Learning Outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting College Access and Success <input type="checkbox"/> Addressing the Unique Needs of Students with Disabilities and Limited English Proficient Students <input type="checkbox"/> Serving Schools in Rural Areas	
<b>Requirements</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Eligible Applicants</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> LEAs or a partnership between a non-profit organization and (a) one or more LEAs or (b) a consortium of schools.	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Award Eligibility.</b> <i>To be eligible for an award applicant's must...</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Have significantly closed achievement gaps between groups of students (economically disadvantaged, major racial and ethnic groups, limited English proficiency, disabled). <input type="checkbox"/> Have exceeded the State's annual measurable objectives for two or more consecutive years or have demonstrated success in significantly increasing student achievement for all groups of students through another measure such as NAEP. <input type="checkbox"/> Have made significant improvements in other areas, such as grad rates or increased recruitment and placement of high quality teachers and school leaders. <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate that they have established partnerships with the private sector and that the private sector will provide matching funds in order to scale results. <input type="checkbox"/> In the case of non-profit organizations, provide in its application the names of the LEAS with which it will partner or the names of the schools in the consortium.	

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Non Profit Eligibility</b> <i>Non profit applicants will be...</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Considered to have met the achievement gap, AMO, and grad rates/teacher recruitment requirements described above, if the non profit has a record of meeting those requirements. <input type="checkbox"/> Considered to have met these requirements through its record of work with an LEA (the LEA of record need not be the same LEA or LEAs which the non profit proposes to partner with in the I3 competition).			
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> <i>Applicant must...</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> State whether it is applying for a "scale up," "validation," or "development" grant. <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate that it has established one or more partnerships with an entity or organization in the private sector and must obtain matching funds equal to at least 20 percent of its grant award (the Secretary may wave the matching requirement in "exceptional" circumstances). <input type="checkbox"/> Comply with the requirements of any evaluation of the program conducted by the Department and must conduct and independent evaluation of the project and must cooperate with any technical assistance provided by the Department. <input type="checkbox"/> Must participate in, organize, or facilitate "communities of practice," which are defined grantees that agree to interact regularly to solve a persistent problem or improve practice in an important area.			
<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<b>Key Factors for Selection Criteria</b>			
<i>Applications should address...</i>	<b>Scale Up Grants - Up to \$50 million</b> Research Strength: "Strong Evidence"	<b>Validation Grants - Up to \$30 million</b> Research Strength: "Moderate Evidence"	<b>Development Grants - Up to \$5 million</b> Research Strength: "Reasonable Hypothesis"	
A. Need for Project and Quality of Project Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities the applicant is seeking to meet (i.e., addresses a largely unmet need, particularly for high-need students, and is a practice, strategy, or program that has not already been widely adopted).</li> <li>The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy (i.e., logic model), with actions that are (i) aligned with the priorities the applicant is seeking to meet, and (ii) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities the applicant is seeking to meet (i.e., addresses a largely unmet need, particularly for high-need students, and is a practice, strategy, or program that has not already been widely adopted).</li> <li>The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy (i.e., logic model), with actions that are (1) aligned with the priorities the applicant is seeking to meet, and (2) expected to result in achieving the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach to the priorities the applicant is seeking to meet (i.e., addresses a largely unmet need, particularly for high-need students, and is a practice that has not already been widely adopted).</li> <li>The extent to which the proposed project has a clear set of goals and an explicit strategy (i.e., logic model), with the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project clearly specified and measurable and linked to the priorities the applicant is seeking to meet.</li> </ul>	
B. Strength of Research, Significance of Effect, and Magnitude of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that there is strong evidence that the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant effect on improving student</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that there is moderate evidence that the proposed practice, strategy, or program will have a statistically significant effect on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that there are research-based findings or reasonable hypotheses that support the proposed project, including related research in education and other</li> </ul>	

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Effect	<p>achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, or increasing high school graduation rates, and that the effect will be substantial and important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the extent to which the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, or increase high school graduation rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the applicant to support the proposed project.</li> </ul>	<p>improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, or increasing high school graduation rates and that with further study, the effect may prove to be substantial and important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The importance and magnitude of the effect expected to be obtained by the proposed project, including the likelihood that the project will substantially and measurably improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, or increase high school graduation rates. The evidence in support of the importance and magnitude of the effect would be the research-based evidence provided by the applicant to support the proposed project.</li> </ul>	<p>sectors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the proposed project has been attempted previously, albeit on a limited scale or in a limited setting, with promising results that suggest that more formal and systematic study is warranted.</li> <li>The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that, if funded, the proposed project likely will have a positive impact, as measured by the importance or magnitude of the effect, on improving student achievement or student growth, closing achievement gaps, decreasing dropout rates, or increasing high school graduation rates.</li> </ul>
C. Experience of the Applicant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The past performance of the applicant in implementing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.</li> <li>The extent to which an applicant provides information and data demonstrating that it has (or has supported an LEA in taking actions that have)-- (i) Significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA; (ii) Exceeded the State's annual measurable objectives consistent with section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA for two or more consecutive years or demonstrated success in significantly increasing student achievement for all groups of students described in that section through another measure, such as measures described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA (i.e., the National</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The past performance of the applicant in implementing complex projects.</li> <li>The extent to which an applicant provides information and data demonstrating that it has (or supported an LEA in taking actions that have)-- (i) Significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA; (ii) Exceeded the State's annual measurable objectives consistent with section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA for two or more consecutive years or demonstrated success in significantly increasing student achievement for all groups of students described in that section through another measure, such as measures described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA (i.e., the National Assessment of Educational Progress); and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The past performance of the applicant in implementing projects of the size and scope proposed by the applicant.</li> <li>The extent to which an applicant provides information and data demonstrating that it has (or supported an LEA in taking actions that)-- (i) Significantly closed the achievement gaps between groups of students described in section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA; (ii) Exceeded the State's annual measurable objectives consistent with section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA for two or more consecutive years or has demonstrated success in significantly increasing student achievement for all groups of students described in that section through another measure, such as measures described in section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA (i.e., the National</li> </ul>

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	Assessment of Educational Progress); and (iii) Made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and school leaders, as demonstrated with other meaningful data.	(iii) Made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and school leaders, as demonstrated with other meaningful data.	Assessment of Educational Progress); and (iii) Made significant improvements in other areas, such as graduation rates or increased recruitment and placement of high-quality teachers and school leaders, as demonstrated with other meaningful data.
D. Quality of Project Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include an experimental study or, if a well-designed experimental study of the project cannot be conducted, the extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed quasi-experimental study.</li> <li>• The extent to which, for either an experimental study or quasi-experimental study, the study will be conducted of the practice, strategy, or program as implemented at scale.</li> <li>• The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.</li> <li>• The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.</li> <li>• The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to effectively carry out the project evaluation.</li> <li>• The extent to which the proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and neither the program developer nor the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which the methods of evaluation will include a well-designed experimental or well-designed quasi-experimental study.</li> <li>• The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.</li> <li>• The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate replication or testing in other settings.</li> <li>• The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to effectively carry out the project evaluation.</li> <li>• The extent to which the proposed evaluation is rigorous, independent, and neither the program developer nor the project implementer is evaluating the impact of the project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The extent to which the methods of evaluation are appropriate to the size and scope of the proposed project.</li> <li>• The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide high-quality implementation data and performance feedback, and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.</li> <li>• The extent to which the evaluation will provide sufficient information about the key elements and approach of the project to facilitate further development, replication, or testing in other settings.</li> <li>• The extent to which the proposed project plan includes sufficient resources to effectively carry out the project evaluation.</li> </ul>

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	<p>project implementer is evaluating the impact of the project.</p>		
<p>E. Strategy and Capacity to Scale</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of students to be reached by the proposed project and the applicant's capacity to reach the proposed number of students during the course of the grant period.</li> <li>The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, management capacity) to bring the project to scale on a national, regional, or State level working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.</li> <li>The feasibility of the proposed project to be replicated successfully, if positive results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of student populations. Evidence of this ability includes the proposed project's demonstrated success in multiple settings with different types of students, the availability of resources and expertise required for implementing the project with fidelity, and the proposed project's evidence of relative ease of use or user satisfaction.</li> <li>The applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes start-up and operating costs per student (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project, as well as for the applicant or others to reach 100,000, 500,000, and 1,000,000 students.</li> <li>The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of students proposed to be reached by the proposed project and the applicant's capacity to reach the proposed number of students during the course of the grant period.</li> <li>The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, management capacity) to bring the project to scale on a State or regional level (as appropriate, based on the findings of the proposed project) working directly, or through partners, either during or following the end of the grant period.</li> <li>The feasibility of the proposed project to be replicated successfully, if positive results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of student populations. Evidence of this ability includes the availability of resources and expertise required for implementing the project with fidelity, and the proposed project's evidence of relative ease of use or user satisfaction.</li> <li>The applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes start-up and operating costs per student (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project, as well as for the applicant or others to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students.</li> <li>The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its project to support further</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of students proposed to be reached by the proposed project and the applicant's capacity to reach the proposed number of students during the course of the grant period.</li> <li>The applicant's capacity (e.g., in terms of qualified personnel, financial resources, management capacity) to further develop and scale the proposed practice, strategy, or program, or to work with others to ensure that the proposed practice, strategy, or program can be further developed and scaled, based on the findings of the proposed project.</li> <li>The feasibility of the proposed project to be replicated successfully, if positive results are obtained, in a variety of settings and with a variety of student populations. Evidence of this ability includes the availability of resources and expertise required for implementing the project with fidelity, and the proposed project's evidence of relative ease of use or user satisfaction.</li> <li>The applicant's estimate of the cost of the proposed project, which includes the start-up and operating costs per student (including indirect costs) for reaching the total number of students proposed to be served by the project as well as for the applicant or others to reach 100,000, 250,000, and 500,000 students. (e) The mechanisms the applicant will use to broadly disseminate information on its</li> </ul>

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	its project to support replication.	development, expansion, or replication.	project to support further development or replication.
F. Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources to operate the project beyond the length of the Scale-up grant, including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of current and future partners; and evidence of broad support from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success.</li> <li>The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the LEA, schools, or nonprofit organization at the end of the Scale-up grant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources, as well as the support of stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions), to operate the project beyond the length of the Validation grant.</li> <li>The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the LEA, schools, or nonprofit organization at the end of the Validation grant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that it has the resources, as well as the support from stakeholders (e.g., State educational agencies, teachers' unions) to operate the project beyond the length of the Development grant.</li> <li>The potential and planning for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing work of the LEA, schools, or nonprofit organization at the end of the Development grant.</li> </ul>
G. Quality of Management Plan and Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks, as well as plans for sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.</li> <li>The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing large, complex, and rapidly growing projects.</li> <li>The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks, as well as plans for sustainability and scalability of the proposed project.</li> <li>The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing complex projects.</li> <li>The qualifications, including relevant expertise and experience, of the project director and key personnel of the independent evaluator, especially in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The adequacy of the management plan to achieve The objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.</li> <li>The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and key project personnel, especially in managing projects of the size and scope of the proposed project.</li> </ul>

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	designing and conducting large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.	designing and conducting experimental and quasi-experimental studies of educational initiatives.	

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