

# 2015-16 1003(a) Application

## Improving Student Achievement in Low-Performing Schools

### Section 1003(a) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

**Purpose:** To leverage change and dramatically improve student achievement in Connecticut's lowest-performing schools by making targeted investments in the areas of talent, academics, culture and climate, and/or operations.

**Application Due: Friday, April 24, 2015**

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Improving Student Achievement in Low-Performing Schools

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### AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The CSDE does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race, color, religious creed, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, intellectual disability, past or present history of mental disorder, physical disability or learning disability), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut state and/or federal nondiscrimination laws. The CSDE does not unlawfully discriminate in employment and licensing against qualified persons with a prior criminal conviction. Inquiries regarding the CSDE’s nondiscrimination policies should be directed to:

Levy Gillespie  
 Equal Employment Opportunity Director  
 State of Connecticut Department of Education  
 25 Industrial Park Road | Middletown, CT 06457 | 860-807-2071

# PART I: 2015-16 1003(a) APPLICATION OVERVIEW

## 1. PURPOSE

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is seeking to assist local education agencies (LEAs) in dramatically improving student achievement in their lowest-performing schools by making targeted investments in schools pursuing comprehensive and transformative improvement plans.

## 2. GRANT PERIOD

The anticipated grant period is May 15, 2015 – September 30, 2016. Federal 1003(a) funds awarded through this competitive grant process must be expended or obligated by September 30, 2016, and liquidated within 60 days of the end date of the grant. Grant recipients will automatically be considered for a second year of funding, contingent upon available funds, implementation effectiveness, and 2015-16 results.

## 3. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

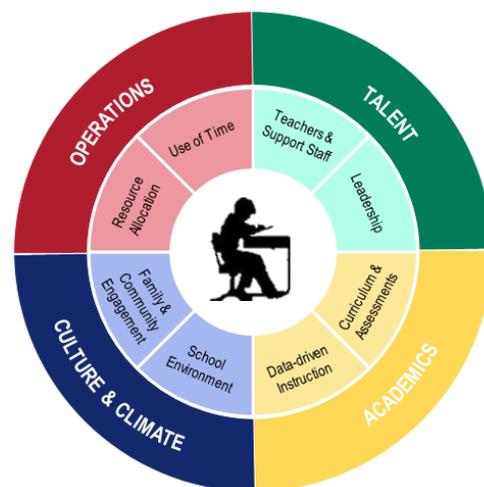
Applications will be accepted from LEAs on behalf of their Turnaround and/or Focus school(s). An LEA must submit a separate application for each school the district would like to have considered for competitive 1003(a) funds. Please visit the CSDE’s website for a list of eligible Turnaround and Focus schools. Review schools are not eligible to submit an application.

Schools that applied for and received 1003(a) funds during the 2014-15 school year will automatically be considered for a second year of funding during 2015-16. Pending a successful review of school data during Quarter 3 Alliance District monitoring meetings, 2014-15 grant recipients may be asked to submit a budget proposal for up to \$200,000 in new 1003(a) funds during the 2015-16 school year. Successful 2014-15 grant recipients need not apply for a continuation of funds during 2015-16; the CSDE will make Year 2 funding determinations based on school implementation effectiveness, progress, and data.

## 4. FUNDING AND USE OF FUNDS

Eligible applicants may submit an application for up to \$200,000 per school in 1003(a) funding. This competitive grant application requires LEAs to describe how such funds would support bold reform efforts at the school level. Funding requests must support at least one of the following objectives:

1. **Talent:** Employ systems and strategies to recruit, hire, develop, evaluate, and retain excellent school leaders, teachers, and support staff.
2. **Academics:** Design and implement a rigorous, aligned, and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels.
3. **Culture and Climate:** Foster a positive learning environment that supports high-quality teaching and learning and engages families and the community as partners in the educational process.
4. **Operations:** Create systems and processes that promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources.



The awarding of funding is contingent upon an application's selection on the basis of the criteria described in Sections 5-6 and Appendix B of this RFP, the availability of funds, and approval by the CSDE. The CSDE may choose to fund all, some, or none of the total funding request. In awarding federal 1003(a) funds, the CSDE may give preference to schools not receiving other competitive grant funding (e.g., Commissioner Network funds, federal School Improvement Grant 1003(g) funds). The CSDE may also give preference to LEAs that demonstrate a substantial local investment in the school's turnaround efforts. LEAs may demonstrate a local investment by describing, in the Budget Proposal, how the district will use local, Alliance District, Priority School District, Title I, and/or other local, state, federal, and private grant funding to support the successful implementation of the school's improvement plan. Please note that federal 1003(a) funds may not be used to supplant other funding already committed by the district.

## 5. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

**A. Required Format:** All applications must be completed using the Excel template found on the CSDE's Alliance District webpage, including the following components:

**1. Cover and Needs Analysis (Tab 1, Excel Template)**

The application must summarize the school's strengths and growth areas, citing specific data and evidence. Strategies and expenditures proposed in the School Improvement Plan and Budget Proposal sections must reflect school data and needs identified in the needs analysis.

**2. School Improvement Plan (Tab 2, Excel Template)**

The plan must describe school priorities, aligned strategies, and measurable goals to advance school performance and student achievement in the following areas: (1) talent; (2) academics; (3) culture and climate; and/or (4) operations. Please ensure close alignment between the School Improvement Plan and 1003(a) Budget Proposal.

**3. Budget Proposal (Tab 3, Excel Template)**

Complete a budget proposal using the ED 114 budget template. Using the budget template, explain how the LEA proposes to invest 1003(a) funds to execute the School Improvement Plan and drive significant gains in student achievement. Summarize the proposed costs and provide a detailed justification for each of the proposed investments (e.g., number of FTEs, number of units, cost per unit). Include any district efforts to invest other local, state, federal, and/or private grants funds in the school turnaround effort to support the sustainability of 1003(a) investments. Please ensure budget proposals align to guidance provided in the Local Fiscal Processing Manual and to the Uniform Chart of Accounts (guidance available here: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/dgm/payments/lfpm.pdf>).

**4. Statement of Assurances (see application Appendix A)**

Review and sign the Statement of Assurances found in Appendix A of this RFP.

**B. Minimum Submission Requirements:**

Any application that does not meet the following requirements will be deemed unacceptable and ineligible for further review and consideration:

1. Being an eligible applicant, as defined in Section 3.



2. Submitting a complete application by following the required format, as described in Section 5.A.
3. Meeting the submission deadline of Friday, April 24, 2015, at 4:00 PM EST.

Applications that do not comply with these requirements may be considered non-responsive and excluded from review. Omission of any required document or form, failure to use required formats for response, or failure to respond to any requirements may lead to rejection of the proposal prior to any formal review. The CSDE reserves the right to make grant awards under this program without discussion with the applicants. Therefore, proposals should represent the applicant's best effort from both a technical and cost stand point.

**C. Questions:**

Any and all questions regarding this application should be directed to: Michelle Rosado, Turnaround Office, [Michelle.Rosado@ct.gov](mailto:Michelle.Rosado@ct.gov).

**D. Submissions:**

All applications (Excel template and Appendix A: Statement of Assurances) must be submitted by e-mail to [SDEAllianceDistrict@ct.gov](mailto:SDEAllianceDistrict@ct.gov). **All applications must be received by 4:00 PM on Friday, April 24, 2015.**

**E. Freedom of Information:**

All complete applications shall become the sole property of the State and will not be returned. All of the information contained in an application is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Section 1-200 et seq. of the Connecticut General Statutes. FOIA declares that, except as provided by federal law or state statute, records maintained or kept on file by any public agency (as defined in statute) are public records and every person has a right to inspect such records and receive a copy of such records in accordance with the terms of FOIA.

## **6. SELECTION CRITERIA**

Using the rubric presented in Appendix B, a selection committee will review and score all applications that meet the minimum submission requirements, as described in Sections 5.A-B. All awards are subject to the availability of funds. Grants are not final until the award letter is executed. Given the number of eligible applicants, the CSDE anticipates a highly competitive process resulting in funding being awarded to only those applicants submitting well-developed applications and transformative plans.



**APPENDIX A: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES**

**CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
STANDARD STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES | GRANT PROGRAMS

**PROJECT TITLE:** Improving Student Achievement in Low-Performing Schools  
1003(a) Application

**THE APPLICANT:** \_\_\_\_\_ **HEREBY ASSURES THAT:**  
\_\_\_\_\_

(insert Agency/School/CBO Name)

- A. The applicant has the necessary legal authority to apply for and receive the proposed grant;
- B. The filing of this application has been authorized by the applicant's governing body, and the undersigned official has been duly authorized to file this application for and on behalf of said applicant, and otherwise to act as the authorized representative of the applicant in connection with this application;
- C. The activities and services for which assistance is sought under this grant will be administered by or under the supervision and control of the applicant;
- D. The project will be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and in compliance with regulations and other policies and administrative directives of the State Board of Education and the Connecticut State Department of Education;
- E. Grant funds shall not be used to supplant funds normally budgeted by the agency;
- F. Fiscal control and accounting procedures will be used to ensure proper disbursement of all funds awarded;
- G. The applicant will submit a final project report (within 60 days of the project completion) and such other reports, as specified, to the Connecticut State Department of Education, including information relating to the project records and access thereto as the Connecticut State Department of Education may find necessary;
- H. The Connecticut State Department of Education reserves the exclusive right to use and grant the right to use and/or publish any part or parts of any summary, abstract, reports, publications, records and materials resulting from this project and this grant;
- I. If the project achieves the specified objectives, every reasonable effort will be made to continue the project and/or implement the results after the termination of state/federal funding;
- J. The applicant will protect and save harmless the State Board of Education from financial loss and expense, including legal fees and costs, if any, arising out of any breach of the duties, in whole or part, described in the application for the grant;
- K. At the conclusion of each grant period, the applicant will provide for an independent audit report acceptable to the grantor in accordance with Sections 7-394a and 7-396a of the Connecticut General Statutes, and the

applicant shall return to the Connecticut State Department of Education any moneys not expended in accordance with the approved program/operation budget as determined by the audit;

L. REQUIRED LANGUAGE (NON-DISCRIMINATION)

References in this section to “contract” shall mean this grant agreement and to “contractor” shall mean the Grantee.

(a) For purposes of this Section, the following terms are defined as follows:

- i. "Commission" means the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities;
- ii. "Contract" and “contract” include any extension or modification of the Contract or contract;
- iii. "Contractor" and “contractor” include any successors or assigns of the Contractor or contractor;
- iv. "Gender identity or expression" means a person's gender-related identity, appearance or behavior, whether or not that gender-related identity, appearance or behavior is different from that traditionally associated with the person's physiology or assigned sex at birth, which gender-related identity can be shown by providing evidence including, but not limited to, medical history, care or treatment of the gender-related identity, consistent and uniform assertion of the gender-related identity or any other evidence that the gender-related identity is sincerely held, part of a person's core identity or not being asserted for an improper purpose;
- v. “good faith" means that degree of diligence which a reasonable person would exercise in the performance of legal duties and obligations;
- vi. "good faith efforts" shall include, but not be limited to, those reasonable initial efforts necessary to comply with statutory or regulatory requirements and additional or substituted efforts when it is determined that such initial efforts will not be sufficient to comply with such requirements;
- vii. "marital status" means being single, married as recognized by the state of Connecticut, widowed, separated or divorced;
- viii. "mental disability" means one or more mental disorders, as defined in the most recent edition of the American Psychiatric Association's "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders", or a record of or regarding a person as having one or more such disorders;
- ix. "minority business enterprise" means any small contractor or supplier of materials fifty-one percent or more of the capital stock, if any, or assets of which is owned by a person or persons: (1) who are active in the daily affairs of the enterprise, (2) who have the power to direct the management and policies of the enterprise, and (3) who are members of a minority, as such term is defined in subsection (a) of Connecticut General Statutes § 32-9n; and
- x. "public works contract" means any agreement between any individual, firm or corporation and the State or any political subdivision of the State other than a municipality for construction, rehabilitation, conversion, extension, demolition or repair of a public building, highway or other changes or improvements in real property, or which is financed in whole or in part by the State, including, but not limited to, matching expenditures, grants, loans, insurance or guarantees.

For purposes of this Section, the terms "Contract" and “contract” do not include a contract where each contractor is (1) a political subdivision of the state, including, but not limited to, a municipality, (2) a quasi-public agency, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 1-120, (3) any other state, including but not limited to any federally recognized Indian tribal governments, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 1-267, (4) the federal government, (5) a foreign government, or (6) an agency of a subdivision, agency, state or government described in the immediately preceding enumerated items (1), (2), (3), (4) or (5).

- (b) (1) The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color,

religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, mental retardation, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by such Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or of the State of Connecticut; and the Contractor further agrees to take affirmative action to insure that applicants with job-related qualifications are employed and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender identity or expression, mental retardation, mental disability or physical disability, including, but not limited to, blindness, unless it is shown by the Contractor that such disability prevents performance of the work involved; (2) the Contractor agrees, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the Contractor, to state that it is an "affirmative action-equal opportunity employer" in accordance with regulations adopted by the Commission; (3) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which the Contractor has a collective bargaining Agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which the Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission, advising the labor union or workers' representative of the Contractor's commitments under this section and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (4) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this Section and Connecticut General Statutes §§ 46a-68e and 46a-68f and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §§ 46a-56, 46a-68e and 46a-68f; and (5) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor as relate to the provisions of this Section and Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56. If the contract is a public works contract, the Contractor agrees and warrants that he will make good faith efforts to employ minority business enterprises as subcontractors and suppliers of materials on such public works projects.

- (c) Determination of the Contractor's good faith efforts shall include, but shall not be limited to, the following factors: The Contractor's employment and subcontracting policies, patterns and practices; affirmative advertising, recruitment and training; technical assistance activities and such other reasonable activities or efforts as the Commission may prescribe that are designed to ensure the participation of minority business enterprises in public works projects.
- (d) The Contractor shall develop and maintain adequate documentation, in a manner prescribed by the Commission, of its good faith efforts.
- (e) The Contractor shall include the provisions of subsection (b) of this Section in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §46a-56; provided if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.
- (f) The Contractor agrees to comply with the regulations referred to in this Section as they exist on the date of this Contract and as they may be adopted or amended from time to time during the term of this Contract and any amendments thereto.



(g) (1) The Contractor agrees and warrants that in the performance of the Contract such Contractor will not discriminate or permit discrimination against any person or group of persons on the grounds of sexual orientation, in any manner prohibited by the laws of the United States or the State of Connecticut, and that employees are treated when employed without regard to their sexual orientation; (2) the Contractor agrees to provide each labor union or representative of workers with which such Contractor has a collective bargaining Agreement or other contract or understanding and each vendor with which such Contractor has a contract or understanding, a notice to be provided by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities advising the labor union or workers' representative of the Contractor's commitments under this section, and to post copies of the notice in conspicuous places available to employees and applicants for employment; (3) the Contractor agrees to comply with each provision of this section and with each regulation or relevant order issued by said Commission pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56; and (4) the Contractor agrees to provide the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities with such information requested by the Commission, and permit access to pertinent books, records and accounts, concerning the employment practices and procedures of the Contractor which relate to the provisions of this Section and Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56.

(h) The Contractor shall include the provisions of the foregoing paragraph in every subcontract or purchase order entered into in order to fulfill any obligation of a contract with the State and such provisions shall be binding on a subcontractor, vendor or manufacturer unless exempted by regulations or orders of the Commission. The Contractor shall take such action with respect to any such subcontract or purchase order as the Commission may direct as a means of enforcing such provisions including sanctions for noncompliance in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes § 46a-56; provided, if such Contractor becomes involved in, or is threatened with, litigation with a subcontractor or vendor as a result of such direction by the Commission, the Contractor may request the State of Connecticut to enter into any such litigation or negotiation prior thereto to protect the interests of the State and the State may so enter.

M. The grant award is subject to approval of the Connecticut State Department of Education and availability of state or federal funds.

N. The applicant agrees and warrants that Sections 4-190 to 4-197, inclusive, of the Connecticut General Statutes concerning the Personal Data Act and Sections 10-4-8 to 10-4-10, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies promulgated there under are hereby incorporated by reference.

I, the undersigned authorized official; hereby certify that these assurances shall be fully implemented.

Superintendent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: *(typed)* \_\_\_\_\_

Title: *(typed)* \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B: APPLICATION RUBRIC

### Overview

1003(a) applications will be evaluated using the criteria outlined below. Each section of the application will be rated as: 0 – Below Standard; 2 – Developing; 4 – Proficient; or 6 – Exemplary. 1003(a) is a competitive grant, and awards and award amounts will be based on the quality and transformative potential of the application.

### Rating Key/Points Available:

**0 Points – Below Standard:** The response lacks meaningful detail, demonstrates a lack of preparation, or otherwise raises substantial concerns about the applicant’s understanding of the issues in concept and/or ability to meet the requirement in practice. Proposed strategies are not transformative in nature.

**2 Points – Developing:** The response lacks critical details in certain areas. The response requires additional information in order to be considered reasonably comprehensive and transformative, and to demonstrate a clear vision for the school.

**4 Points – Proficient:** The response indicates solid preparation and a grasp of the key issues, as demonstrated by a comprehensive and sufficiently transformative response. It provides a clear, realistic picture of how the school will operate. The response somewhat demonstrates the applicant’s ability to execute the vision described in the response.

**6 Points – Exemplary:** The response reflects a thorough understanding of key issues and alignment to school needs. The response indicates careful preparation for successful implementation, and a clear and compelling picture of how the school will operate. The response demonstrates the readiness of the applicant to successfully execute the vision described in the response.

Section:	Points Available:
1. Needs Analysis	6
2. Talent Section	6
3. Academics Section	6
4. Culture and Climate Section	6
5. Operations Section	6
6. Budget Proposal	6
7. Statement of Assurances	N/A – Required of all applicants.
<b>Total Points Available:</b>	<b>36</b>