

## SUPPORTING STATEMENT

### A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) authorizes the School Improvement Grants program to help State educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) address the needs of schools in improvement, corrective action and restructuring in order to improve student achievement. Funded at \$125 million for the first time in fiscal year (FY) 2007, the School Improvement Grants program awards funds through a formula to SEAs. SEAs then make awards to LEAs giving priority to LEAs with the lowest-achieving schools that demonstrate (1) the greatest need for funds and (2) the strongest commitment to ensuring that the funds are used to provide support for the lowest-achieving schools to meet the goals under school and LEA improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. To receive a School Improvement Grant, section 1003(g)(4) requires an SEA submit an application to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) that outlines how it will use funds to assist State and local school improvement efforts and meet the priorities described above. These funds are critical to State and local implementation of effective LEA and school improvement strategies that help meet the academic proficiency goals of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and focusing greater resources on the growing number of schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under NCLB.

ED's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education is requesting emergency clearance from Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of the School Improvement Grants application package in order to put this program into operation as soon as possible in school year (SY) 2007-08. Emergency approval would enable ED to publish promptly the application package, provide SEAs 30 days after release of the application package to submit an application to ED, and allow SEAs to receive a grant award for SY 2007-08.

Congress did not appropriate funds for School Improvement Grants until February 15, 2007 with passage of the FY 2007 Final Continuing Resolution (PL 110-5). As a result, ED did not know until then that funds would be available for this purpose. Consequently, ED could not begin developing an application package until funds became available. (Earlier versions of the FY 2007 continuing resolutions included no funding for School Improvement Grants.) Since February 15, ED has consulted with interested groups within the agency and outside the agency to develop an application package that meets the intent and purposes of section 1003(g) so that ED can award grants to States as soon as possible after July 1, 2007, when FY 2007 School Improvement Grant funds become available.

It is extremely important for SEAs and LEAs to access these funds as soon as possible in order to implement the requirements of section 1116 of ESEA for schools that have been identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The \$125 million made available in FY 2007 under section 1003(g) for this purpose will enable States to carry out needed school improvement activities that they would not otherwise be able to conduct. An emergency clearance is needed in order to allow States to begin conducting critical school improvement activities as soon as possible.

We expect that this emergency clearance of the application package would be needed only for awarding FY 2007 grant awards. Next year, the burden associated with the emergency application package for the School Improvement Grants program would be folded in with the consolidated State plan package that is scheduled for renewal in 2008. As this package is considered an amendment to the consolidated application, States already have all assurances on file, such as lobbying, etc.

2. The information is collected in the form of grant applications submitted by SEAs. ED uses the information in the applications to evaluate the school improvement activities proposed by the State that would be funded through the formula award. Additionally, these applications also provide a

basis for monitoring project performance, based on the project design, objectives, evaluation plans and other information described in the grant application.

3. The information is collected through narrative responses to the priorities. Respondents will be required to submit their application by mail or through Grants.gov by the closing date.
4. The information is relevant only to grant applications under the School Improvement Fund 1003(g). There is no similar information available in other forms, or, as the result of other information collections. This information collection does not duplicate any other information collection effort.
5. Small entities are not affected by this program. The respondents are SEAs.
6. The School Improvement Grants program is a formula program with a required application submitted to the Secretary. The program could not be implemented without the collection of information required in the application. The data collection occurs only when applications for new grants and the annual performance report is solicited.
7. Applications submitted by mail or electronically are consistent with guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.
8. Since February 15, when Congress appropriated funds for the School Improvement Grants, ED has consulted with interested groups, both externally and internally, to develop an application package that meets the intent and purposes of section 1003(g) so that ED can award grants to States as soon as possible FY 2007 School Improvement Grant funds become available.
9. No payments or gifts to respondents will be made.
10. There is no assurance of confidentiality.
11. There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

12. A. Burden hours for respondents

At this present time, the specific number of how many applications the Department will receive is 52. (The 52 applicants are the 50 States, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.) The average burden for the grant application is estimated to be 30 hours, for a total of 1,500 burden-hours.

B. Cost to Respondents

Primary costs to respondents fall into the following categories: Preparation of the application and submittal by email and through Grants.gov. Based on the estimate that 52 applications will be submitted, costs to respondents are estimated to be the following:

52 apps. X 30 hours/application x \$25/hour	=	\$ 1,560
52 apps. X \$5.00/application per mailing	=	<u>\$ 260</u>
Total Cost to Respondents	=	\$ 1,820

13. There are no costs that (a) meet the criteria for inclusion under this item; and (b) have not been addressed in either item #12 or #14.

14. Estimated Federal costs:

Program Personnel:

3 persons @ \$43.00/hr. x 80 hours=	\$ 10,320
2 persons @ \$50.00/hr. x 80 hours=	\$ 8,000
1 person @ \$36.00/hr. x 80 hours=	<u>\$ 2,880</u>
Total	\$ 21,200

Anticipated applications reviewed:

52 applications x 2 hours X 3 reviewers per application x 2 independent panels = 624 hours

Honorarium (24 reviewers x \$1,000) \$ 24,000

Printing and mailing of the application package: no costs. The application package will be available through the Federal Register and on the ED's website.

15. This is a new request with a program change of 1,560 hours.
16. There are no plans to publish the results of this data collection.
17. No request is being made to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection.
18. There are no exceptions to the referenced certification statement.

B. COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This information collection does not employ statistical methods.