**Summary of the Review Process, Overall Scoring, and Results**

**School Redesign Grant Overview**

The School Redesign Grant (SRG) program utilizes federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding to provide direct support and assistance to schools identified for assistance or intervention (Targeted Support and Comprehensive Support schools) through the state’s accountability system, as aligned with federal guidelines[[1]](#footnote-1). The SRG program represents Massachusetts’ implementation of the federal *School Improvement Grant (SIG)* program*,* which is authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA).

In accordance with federal guidelines, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has administered a competitive process for eligible districts and schools on an annual basis, since 2010. ***The purpose of the grant is to provide funds to underperforming schools to (a) accelerate turnaround efforts in these schools and (b) build district capacity to support and sustain turnaround efforts.*** The DESE has intentionally aligned the use of federal SIG funds to support the state’s efforts to turnaround identified schools, as part of the [*2010 Act to Close the Achievement Gap*](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/about.html) and as authorized under state statute 603 CMR 2.00, [Underperforming Schools and School Districts.](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr2.html)

In 2019, eight schools applied for SRG competitive funds[[2]](#footnote-2) and nine (9) schools submitted renewal applications for continuation of turnaround efforts.

**Facilitation**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) contracted with the Institute for Strategic Leadership and Learning (INSTLL) as a partner to administer the School Redesign Grant (SRG) review process. INSTLL staff worked closely with Erica Champagne and Michael Seymour to manage the review process.

**Training and Review Team Members**

The SRG review team included 24 DESE staff members and 10 external review team members with expertise in strategies for district and school improvement, and the needs of historically marginalized students. Review team members participated in a half-day training held on April 30, 2019. During the training, reviewers participated in a practice scoring process to calibrate reviewers’ scoring. The reviewers also were introduced to the team review process to ensure inter-team reliability during the team review process.

**Review Process**

The review of new School Redesign Grant (SRG) proposals involves three steps:

A formal review of the school turnaround plan by a facilitated, three-person team, using a standard process and scoring rubric.

A DESE review of the proposed SRG budget.

A district and school in-person interview session, facilitated by a three- or four-person team, using a standard protocol and an interview rubric.

**Team Review of Individual Proposals**

The written review process for applications were held between May 3 and May 15, 2019. Each three-person review team reviewed one SRG proposals. Each team review produced: (1) a team score for the reviewed proposal based on the scoring rubric; (2) a summary statement including strengths and weaknesses; (3) a set of questions to be used in the interview. The DESE staff reviewed the budgets for each application to determine a rubric rating (for budget items) and to ensure that funding request met state and federal guidelines. The review team also completed the Federal Requirements Checklist to record whether or not the district had addressed each of the federal requirements for flexibilities and autonomies needed for eligibility for the grant. Finally, a member of DESE’s research team reviewed each school’s designated use of an Evidence Based Practice to ensure that the identified practice met the federal standard for evidence-based practices and was aligned with school needs.

Each review team was comprised of two DESE staff members and one external reviewer, with attention given to having a mix of individuals with specific content and grade-level expertise relevant to the turnaround plan under review. Review team members were strategically assigned to teams in a way that matched expertise and to ensure a mix of perspectives and to minimize bias. A dedicated facilitator was assigned to each review team and was responsible for facilitating the team scoring process, recording team scores and comments, and identifying issues that required additional clarification.

**Calibration**

INSTLL reviewed the scores generated during the team scoring process to identify certain items that might require additional calibration and adjustment, as needed to ensure the reliability of scores across turnaround plans and to ensure that team scores were comparable. Items identified for potential calibration were flagged for review. The calibration process is an evidence-based process intended to ensure that when rubric items (and reviewer scores for items) are based on similar or identical evidence across multiple proposals, the items are correctly scored and comparable, or if scores are different, that the evidence supports the different scores. No score calibrationwas deemed necessary for applications in 2019.

**Interviews**

Districts and schools that submitted SRG proposals participated in face-to-face interviews held on May 17, 22, 23, and 24. Interviews were held in Malden and on location in Springfield, Brockton, and UMass Dartmouth, in an effort to provide a more convenient time and location for district and school representatives located far from the DESE office. Interviews consisted of a 20- to 30-minute joint presentation by district and school leaders followed by an hour and a half of questions by the DESE interview team.

The interview protocol included a set of standard questions to guide the discussion in each interview and a customized set of proposal-specific questions addressing programmatic and technical issues of a school’s proposed interventions. Specifically, customized interview questions were developed to address each rubric item that was scored a 2 or lower during the team review portion of the review process. The interview team used the information gathered during the interview to consider a rescore of each rubric item scoring 2 or lower, thus providing an opportunity for each school to answer questions about their turnaround plan and to ensure that the final score for each proposal included relevant and current information that may not have been fully communicated in the written proposal.

Each DESE interview team was comprised of four individuals: (1) the lead interviewer (Ventura Rodriguez, Senior Associate Commissioner, State System of Support; David Parker, Manager of Regional Assistance, or Erica Champagne, Director, Office of Effective Practices in School Turnaround (2) an external reviewer who participated in the team review portion of the review process; (3) the facilitator of the team review process; and (4) a note taker. The SRG review rubric includes four items specific to the interview, which were used by the interview team to score the interview, in addition to determining whether the responses provided during the interview warranted rescoring rubric items that were previously scored 2 or lower. A final score was determined at the conclusion of the interview.

**Recommendations for SRG Awards**

At the conclusion of the full review session, inclusive of the team review process and interview sessions, recommendations for awarding SRGs were provided to Senior Associate Commissioner Russell Johnston and Commissioner Jeffrey Riley who made the final determinations as to which schools would be awarded grants and the amount of each award. Once those determinations have been made, the recommendations are then sent to the Governor’s Office for the Executive Office of Education to provide the final review.

**School Redesign Grant Proposals Final Scores**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | | **Score by Rubric Dimension** | | |  |  |
| District | School | Accountability Designation | Capacity and Commitment | Data Analysis | **Strategic and Actionable Approach** | Interview Score | Budget | Final Total | **Award** |
| Boston | David A. Ellis ES | Focused Targeted Support | 41 | 10 | 26 | 11 | 7 | 95 | 82% |
| Brockton | Manthala George Jr. ES | Focused Targeted Support | 39 | 9 | 25 | 16 | 6 | 95 | 82% |
| Fall River | Talbot Innovation MS | Focused Targeted Support | 36 | 12 | 23 | 15 | 8 | 94 | 81% |
| Fitchburg | Memorial MS | Focused Targeted Support | 35 | 8 | 25 | 13 | 6 | 87 | 75% |
| Lowell | Henry J. Robinson MS | Focused Targeted Support | 38 | 9 | 21 | 13 | 6 | 87 | 75% |
| New Bedford | Roosevelt MS | Focused Targeted Support | 34 | 9 | 24 | 14 | 6 | 87 | 75% |
| Pittsfield | Theodore Herberg MS | Focused Targeted Support | 37 | 8 | 24 | 14 | 7 | 90 | 78% |
| Springfield | South End MS | Focused Targeted Support | 40 | 9 | 25 | 13 | 6 | 93 | 80% |

The **Final Total Score** column lists the scores generated during the entire review process, inclusive of the team review and the interview for each district/school turnaround plan and is the sum of the scores the plan received in three dimensions: capacity and commitment, data analysis, and strategic and actionable approach. This is the score used to determine awardees.

**Award Decision Criteria and Justification:**

A final total score of 87 or higher is required to be considered for recommendation for award.

Awards are made contingent on each school demonstrating evidence that they fully meet state federal requirements, including the use of Evidence-Based Practices, and availability of SIG funds.



1. Prior to 2018, the state designated schools in one of five “Levels.” Level 3 and Level 4 were eligible for SIG funding. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In 2019, Massachusetts invited districts to apply for School Redesign Grant funding on behalf of schools in identified as Focused/Targeted Support schools with the greatest need. However, these schools were not formally identified as underperforming under state statute and did not have access to the same autonomies and requirements available to previous cohorts of Level 4 schools. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)