

2000 or the FY 2001 SLC competition are further required to describe the impact of the funded planning activities on their implementation plan. Further, such applicants should note that the Secretary will review both the expenditure rates and the progress achieved of SLC planning grantees requesting implementation funds.

(c) *Project design. (30 points)*

In determining the quality of the design of the project the Department will consider the extent to which the applicant:

(1) Proposes both structural and operational changes that result in the establishment of smaller learning communities designed to improve the academic performance of participating students. These changes may include, but are not limited to, development of programs of study that include rigorous academic coursework, freshman transition activities, and innovations to create a more personalized and safe learning environment. The applicant clearly defines the proposed smaller learning community, including the structures and strategies to be implemented, the grade levels or ages of the students who will participate and the rationale and research base supporting the applicant's contention that these particular structures are likely to be effective in raising achievement and helping all students make more informed choices about postsecondary education and longer-term career options. (10 points)

(2) Provides evidence that decisions about how students will be placed in the smaller learning community or communities will be made based on student/parent choice or random assignment. The applicant provides assurances that placement by smaller learning community will not be based on ability, testing or other judgments or any other measure, and describes the process for making smaller learning community student assignments. The applicant also assures that, by the end of the three-year grant period, all students will be assigned to a smaller learning community structure within the school(s). (5 points)

(3) Describes the applicant's operational strategies for improving the learning environment including (1) the common academic core curriculum and standards, (2) how teachers will be assigned to SLCs and provided with appropriate content and knowledge specific to smaller learning community implementation, (3) strategies for assisting struggling students, and strategies for securing and maintaining widespread staff, community and parent buy-in. (10 points)

(4) Documents the administrative and managerial relationship of the smaller learning communities to the governance structure of the high school(s) and the local school district, including the LEA's operation of other Federal grants, and demonstrates a commitment to sustain the smaller learning community structures beyond the period covered by the Federal smaller learning communities grant. The applicant must describe the timeline and milestones for implementing the proposed structures and strategies and for phasing them in over the period of the grant. (5 points)

(d) *Feasibility of the plan. (15 points)*

In determining the feasibility of the implementation plan, the Department will consider the extent to which the applicant:

(1) Provides a budget that adequately supports the proposed activities. In addition, items in the budget must clearly reflect the proposed goals and objectives in the application. (5 points)

(2) Provides evidence that the proposed project will provide high-quality professional development for teachers in their academic content areas as well as professional development for other pertinent staff, to enable them to improve classroom instruction and target instruction to helping all students meet challenging academic content standards. This professional development must be aligned with the goals, curriculum, and evidence-based instructional practices of the proposed smaller learning communities. (5 points)

(3) Provides evidence of, or proposes, an ongoing partnership with an external technical assistance provider. (5 points)

(e) *Quality of the project evaluation. (10 points)*

In determining the quality of the applicant's project evaluation plan, the Department will consider the extent to which the applicant:

(1) Describes the overall evaluation strategy, including the applicant's plan to contract with an independent, third-party evaluator and the measures that evaluator will use to determine (a) progress of implementation and (b) changes in student outcomes, especially student achievement, both school-wide and disaggregated by the population categories identified in section 1111(b)(3)(C)(xiii) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; (5 points)

(2) Describes the method of collecting and reporting the required data for the Annual Performance Reports to the Department of Education (2 points); and

(3) Describe how the proposed project will address the school's efforts to make adequate yearly progress as defined in section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and how

information gleaned from student assessments, and used in adequate yearly progress determination, will be used for project improvement within the school. (3 points)

(f) *Adequacy of resources. (10 points)*

In determining the adequacy of resources, the Department will consider the extent to which the applicant:

(1) Focuses grant expenditures on activities that directly affect the structural and operational changes needed to establish SLCs that will endure beyond the life of the grant, and how the applicant will limit expenditures on equipment and administrative costs. (5 points)

(2) Documents qualifications and availability of project personnel responsible for implementing the project plan, and the amount of time they will dedicate to this effort. (5 points)

*Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs*

This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism. The Executive order relies on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

This document provides early notification of our specific plans and actions for this program.

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**Note:** The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. Free Internet access to the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations is available on GPO Access at: <http://access.gpo.gov/nara/index.html>.

(Catalogue of Federal Assistance Number: 84.215L Smaller Learning Communities program)

*Applicable Program Regulations:* 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99.