

Iowa Receives \$18 Million to Help Low Achieving Schools

The Iowa Department of Education has received \$18.7 million from the U.S. Department of Education to help turn around schools identified as persistently low achieving schools in Iowa.

In order for a school district to apply, the district must have a state-identified “persistently lowest achieving” school or a Tier III school, which is a school that has failed to meet annual yearly progress for two years but has not been identified as a persistently lowest achieving school (PLAS). Tier III schools will receive funding once all of the state’s persistently lowest schools have received funds.

School districts applying for funds must indicate which of the four models they will implement to turn around their schools. The four models include:

1. Turnaround Model – Replace the principal; screen existing school staff; improve the school through curriculum reform, extending learning time, and other strategies.
2. Restart Model – Convert a school or close it and re-open it as a charter school or under an education management organization.
3. School Closure – Close the school and send the students to a higher-achieving school in the district.
4. Transformation Model – Replace the principal and improve the school through comprehensive curriculum reform, professional development, extending learning time, and other strategies.

The School Improvement Grant application can be found at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/summary/index.html>. The department anticipates awarding grants by the end of May.