

April 12, 2010

Jan Stanley
State Title I Director
West Virginia Department of Education
1900 Kanawha Blvd. East, Building 6
Charleston, WV 25305-0330


Dear Ms. Stanley:

Please accept this letter and attachments as intent to make application for a school improvement grant authorized by section 1003(g) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Berkeley County Schools (LEA ID # 5400060) intends to make application on behalf of Martinsburg North Middle School (NCES ID # 540006000024), a Tier II school. Berkeley County Schools will implement the transformational model at Martinsburg North Middle School.

The principal of Martinsburg North Middle School began her tenure on October 16, 2007. Berkeley County Schools intends to hire a new assistant principal and a new counselor to begin the 2010-2011 school year following anticipated retirements. The LEA also plans to hire a turnaround administrator to assist with planning and implementing reforms at the school. In addition to the grant activities, the school will be included in district improvement activities, most notably standards-based instruction, culturally responsive teaching, and instructional strategies for ESL students.

A narrative needs assessment, demonstration of capacity rubric, and preliminary budget are attached. Please direct questions concerning letter of intent materials to Kim Hough, Director of Federal Programs, at 304-267-3510 Ext. 3227. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Manny P. Arvon
Superintendent
Berkeley County Schools

Enclosures

C: Frank Aliveto, Deputy Superintendent
Kimberly Hough, Director of Federal Programs

Board Members

Dr. William F. Queen
President

William H. Norris
Vice-President

Todd M. Beckwith
Member

Patrick H. Murphy
Member

Richard A. Pill
Member

Narrative Needs Analysis

Overview of School AYP Data

According to Martinsburg North Middle School's 2008-2009 NCLB Report Card, the school did not make adequate yearly progress. The school missed adequate yearly progress in the area of reading for the students with disabilities cell and the low SES cell. In the area of mathematics, the school did not make adequate yearly progress in the students with disabilities cell. The school made adequate yearly progress in all other areas in which it had cell size, including all students, black students, and white students. The school did not have cell size in LEP students.

The percentages of mastery for all students in grades 6, 7, and 8 at Martinsburg North Middle School were below district and state averages in reading and mathematics. In the area of reading, the percentage of mastery for all students, male students, female students, white students, Hispanic students (smaller number of students than cell size), non-low SES students, and non-special education students were below district and state averages. The percentage of mastery in reading for black students was higher than the state average and slightly higher than the district average. The percentage of mastery in reading for low SES students was lower than the district average but higher than the state average. The percentage mastery for students with disabilities in reading was higher than the state average and the district average. Although the school did not have cell size in LEP students, the percentage of mastery was higher than the district average but lower than the state average. In the area of mathematics, the percentages of mastery for every subgroup was below both state and district averages.

Martinsburg North Middle School currently meets all required examination participation and instructional minutes targets. During the 2009-2010 school year, the school created an after school program for students who wish to stay to complete homework. Acuity benchmark testing has been implemented for the 2009-2010 school year.

An overview of school AYP and student achievement data indicates that mathematics is an area of critical concern and that the school needs to improve performance in almost all subgroups.

External Trend Data

Martinsburg North Middle School has an enrollment of 549 students. During the 2010-2011 school year to date, 129 students have transferred from the school and 111 students have transferred to the school. Martinsburg North Middle School has a poverty rate of 63.65%. The district poverty rate is 45.12%. The percentage of adults 25 and over in the county who have a two-year college degree or more is 19.8%, which is below the national average. An analysis of external trend data indicates that many students who attend North Middle School are at risk due to the high poverty rate and high mobility rate in the attendance area. Sustained attendance and parental support of students are concerns.

Student Achievement Data

All teachers at Martinsburg North Middle School utilize Acuity with the exception of four teachers whose students take APTA. Prior to the writing assessment in 2010, 750 Writing Roadmap practice tests had been completed. The majority of the students participating in Acuity testing scored in Tier 2 in both

reading/language arts and mathematics during the fall benchmark session. In the area of reading/language arts, there was some progress from Tier 2 to Tier 3 at every grade level for the second benchmark. In the area of mathematics, there was little movement of students at every grade level with most students remaining in the Tier 2 group at the second benchmark. The third benchmark has not yet occurred. Martinsburg North Middle School currently has 15 LEP students. One of the students has achieved English language proficiency.

One concern with student achievement data is the lack of technology available to teachers and students at the school. Students are currently not participating widely in TechSteps because so few computers are available at the school. Acuity and Writing Road Map have been priorities for computer usage. Staff access to computers is also limited, and no wireless access currently exists, limiting the spaces in which technology can be utilized. The school has 155 student computers for 549 students. The school's digital divide survey shows 20 teacher computers for 54 teachers and 4 administrative computers.

Other Student Outcome Data

Since 2006, the number of discipline referrals and suspensions has declined. In 2006, there were a total of 1135 referrals. By 2009, discipline referrals had dropped to 811. In 2006, out of school suspensions totaled 385. By 2009, out-of-school suspensions totaled 335. In school suspensions, which totaled 436 in 2006, were reduced to 243 in 2009. The attendance rate for the 2010-2011 school year is currently 97%. The student outcome data indicates that the school is moving in the right direction with fewer discipline referrals and a focus on keeping students in school; however, additional improvements in this area are needed. It is anticipated that the hiring of a new assistant principal and guidance counselor for the 2010-2011 school year following retirements will give the school additional opportunity to change the discipline culture.

Analysis of Culture, Conditions, and Practices

An analysis of the culture, conditions, and practices reveals needs in the area of monitoring student engagement, using updated instructional technology, involving parents, and increasing the percentages of classes taught by highly qualified teachers. The school has not yet implemented the Instructional Practices Inventory. Availability of current technology is limited. The degree of meaningful parent involvement needs to be increased. During the 2008-2009 school year, 77.5% of classes were taught by highly qualified teachers. This rate is well below both the county and state averages. Additionally teacher attendance is an area of concern.

Root Causes

Possible reasons for not meeting objectives in the area of curriculum and resources include lack of access to 21st century technology and additional progress needed in the areas of student engagement, data analysis, and differentiating instruction. Schedule and classroom reasons may include the need for additional collaborative time among teachers to examine instructional issues and the need for additional improvement in the area of student discipline. Areas of need in the staffing realm include the need for a higher percentage of classes to be taught by highly qualified teachers and the need for better teacher attendance. Parental involvement activities and participation could also be increased.

District Capacity Index

Each LEA must complete a self analysis of the capacity it has to assist the low performing schools in the implementation of the selected intervention. This will be determined utilizing a scale of 1-3 ranking from poor (1), satisfactory (2) and commendable (3) for the following criteria:

Criteria	Poor 1 point	Satisfactory 2 points	Commendable 3 points	Points Earned
LEA governance	State takeover district	Limited SEA intervention	No SEA intervention	3
Title I audit reports	Findings in areas requiring a repayment of funds	Findings in areas noted-repayment of funds not required	No findings in the fiscal area	2
LEA overall achievement ranking	Bottom (5% = 3 districts)	Middle (70% = 38 districts)	Top (25% = 14 districts)	2
Approval of the district strategic plan by the SEA (entire plan, not just the Title I section)	Not approved by the SEA	Approved by the SEA with revisions	Approved by the SEA without revisions	3
Percentage of Title I schools that met AYP in the last testing cycle	0-50% of the Title I schools met AYP.	51-75% of the Title I schools met AYP.	76-100% of the Title I schools met AYP.	3
Development of schools as professional learning communities	The school has not yet begun to address the practice of a PLC or an effort has been made to address the practice of PLCs, but has not yet begun to impact a critical mass of staff members.	A critical mass of staff has begun to engage in PLC practice. Members are being asked to modify their thinking as well as their traditional practice. Structural changes are being met to support the transition.	The practice of PLCs is deeply embedded in the culture of the school. It is a driving force in the daily work of the staff. It is deeply internalized and staff would resist attempts to abandon the practice.	2
Identification of district leadership team and assignment of responsibilities	No district leadership team nor identified person assigned for monitoring implementation	Lacks specific identification of personnel for the district leadership team and for monitoring implementation.	A specific district leadership team is identified and one or more persons are assigned for monitoring implementation.	3

Criteria	Poor 1 point	Satisfactory 2 points	Commendable 3 points	Points Earned
School Leadership Team	School leadership team members are identified on the district and school level, but little evidence is produced to document whether the requirements of NCLB Sections 1116 and 1117 have been met.	School leadership team members are identified on the district and school level and evidence is produced to document whether the requirements of NCLB Sections 1116 and 1117 have been met.	School leadership team members are identified on the district and school level and include a wide range of stakeholders (e.g., parents; representatives of institutions of higher education; representatives of RESA or representatives of outside consultant groups) Evidence is produced to document whether the requirements of NCLB Sections 1116 and 1117 have been exceeded.	3
			Total Points	21

Districts must obtain a score of 20 out of 24 possible points to demonstrate capacity to provide adequate resources and related support to each Tier I, Tier II and Tier III school identified in the LEA's application in order to implement fully and effectively the selected intervention/activities in each identified school.

Attach documentation or evidence for the above information.

Preliminary Budget Form Template

District Name: Berkeley County Schools

School Name by Tier	Intervention Models: Select the model that will be implemented in each Tier I and Tier II school.			
	Turnaround	Restart	Closure	Transformation
Tier I School:				
Tier II Schools: Martinsburg North Middle School				X
Tier III Schools:	Not applicable to Tier III schools.			

Complete a separate table for each Tier I or Tier II school. Estimate the amount of funds required to implement the intervention model selected for each school.

School Name: North Middle School	Tier:			
Turnaround Model	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Replace the principal				
Use locally adopted competencies to measure the effectiveness of staff who can work within the turnaround environment				
Screen all existing staff and rehire no more than 50 percent of existing staff				
Select new staff				
Implement strategies to recruit, place and retrain staff				
Provide high quality, job-embedded professional development				
Adopt a new governance structure				
Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards				
Promote continuous use of student data to inform and differentiate instruction				
Establish schedules and implement strategies to increase learning time				
Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented supports for students				
Additional options (specify activities) Any of the required and permissible activities under the transformation model or a new school model (e.g., themed, dual language academy)				
Total:				

Restart Model	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Convert or close school and reopen under a charter school operator, a charter management organization (CMO), or an education management organization (EMO) that has been selected through a rigorous review process.				
Enroll, within the grades it serves, any former student who wishes to attend the school.				
Total:				
School Closure Model	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Close the school		n/a	n/a	
Enroll the students in other higher-performing schools in LEA		n/a	n/a	
Total:		n/a	n/a	
Transformation Model	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
A. Develop teacher and school leader effectiveness				
Replace the principal				
Use rigorous, transparent and equitable evaluation systems that take into account data on student growth	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$35,000	
Identify and reward school leaders, teachers and other staff who have increased student achievement and the graduation rate	\$112,000	\$112,000	\$112,000	
Provide high quality, job-embedded professional development	\$72,000	\$75,000	\$70,000	
Implement strategies to recruit, place and retain staff	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	
Other permissible activities as defined in the regulations (specify activities)				
Section Subtotal:	\$213,000	\$223,000	\$223,000	
B. Comprehensive instructional reform programs				
Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with State academic standards	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	
Promote the continuous use of student data to inform and differentiate instruction	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	
Other permissible activities as defined in the regulations (specify activities)				
Section Subtotal:	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	
C. Increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools				
Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased learning time as defined by ED and create community-oriented schools	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	
Provide ongoing mechanisms for family and community engagement	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$12,000	
Other permissible activities as defined in the regulations (specify activities)				
Section Subtotal:	\$167,000	\$167,000	\$162,000	

D. Provide operating flexibility and sustained support				
Give schools operating flexibility to implement fully a comprehensive approach				
Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA and/or the SEA	\$100,000	\$102,000	\$104,000	
Provide intensive technical assistance and related support from a designated external lead partnership organization				
Other permissible activities as defined in the regulations (specify activities)				
Section Subtotal:	\$100,000	\$102,000	\$104,000	
Total for Transformation Model:	\$500,000	\$507,000	\$504,000	

Complete a separate table for each Tier III school. Estimate the amount of funds required to conduct school improvement activities.

School Name:				
List School Improvement Activities	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Total:				

The budget should take into account the following:

1. The number of Tier I and Tier II schools that the LEA commits to serve and the intervention model (turnaround, restart, closure, or transformation) selected for each school.
2. The budget request for each Tier I and Tier II school must be of sufficient size and scope to support full and effective implementation of the selected intervention over a period of three years.
3. The budget must be planned at a minimum of \$50,000 not to exceed 2 million dollars per year per school.
4. The SIG portion of school closure costs may be lower than the amount required for the other models and will be **granted for only one year**.
5. The LEA may request funding for LEA-level activities that will support the implementation of school intervention models in Tier I and Tier II schools and support school improvement activities, at the school or LEA level, for each Tier III school identified in the LEA's application.
6. The number of Tier III schools that the LEA commits to serve and the services or benefits the LEA plans to provide to these schools over the three-year grant period.