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**Request for Application (RFA) for**

**More Rigorous Intervention (MRI)**

**School Closure**

**Title I Sec.1003 [a]**

**Every Student Succeeds Act**

**CFDA Number: 84.010A**

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| **Deadline to Submit RFA:**  **February 26, 2018** |

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| *This is only a Request for Application (RFA) and does* ***NOT*** *constitute an award. Should this RFA result in an award, the LEA Superintendent/Charter Director will be notified by an official award letter. Only upon receipt of an award letter, signed by Secretary Designate Ruszkowski, may the LEA/charter school submit a Budget Adjustment Request (BAR).* |

**New Mexico Public Education Department**

**300 Don Gaspar Ave,**

**Santa Fe, NM**

**87501**

**New Mexico Public Education Department: School Improvement 1003[a]**

1. **Background**

Under New Mexico’s previously-approved ESEA waiver, the state committed to the following plan for chronically failing schools:

“If after four years of intervention there is not consistent and sustainable growth within a Priority School, or school with an overall grade of F, the PED may consider other options such as school closure, reconstitution, or other external management providers to completely redesign a school.”

At present, New Mexico has schools that fall under this legacy policy: Five elementary schools have earned four straight failing (F) ratings while another thirteen have earned three failing ratings (F) in the last four years. It cannot be ignored that schools in this category have failed generations of children[[1]](#footnote-1).

New Mexico has identified a total of four schools for More Rigorous Interventions (MRI), two schools that are chronically failing and have earned six continuous “F” grades since 2012 and two schools that have earned five continuous “F” grades since 2013. LEAs with identified chronically failing schools are required to identify one of the following more rigorous interventions:

1. **Closure:** Close the school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the surrounding area that are higher performing.
2. **Restart:** Close the school and reopen it under a charter school operator that has been selected through a rigorous state or local authorizer review process.
3. **Champion & Provide Choice:** Champion a range of choices in an open system that focuses on new approaches to learning; one that keeps the individual student(s) at the center of accessing options that best support their learning path. There must be clear evidence that choice has been championed for the impacted students.

Choices may include:

* public charter schools
* magnet schools
* private schools
* online learning
* homeschooling

This may also include the creation and expansion of state or local school voucher programs[[2]](#footnote-2).

1. **Significantly restructure and redesign the vision and systems at a school** including extending instructional time, significantly changing staffing to include only educators earning effective, highly effective, or exemplary ratings and above, state-selected curriculum approaches, and/or personalized learning models for all students.

This option may also include a hybrid approach of the three options outlined above. The PED will approve all elements and sub-elements of the school’s plan.

1. **Purpose**

The primary purpose of the MRI Request for Application process is to provide LEAs with schools identified as MRI the opportunity to apply for additional funding through a competitive grant process to support participation in an evidence-based school improvement program or innovative school interventions. This may be in addition to or in support of state-sponsored programs funded via targeted investments.

1. **Eligibility**

Grant funding is available to LEAs with state identified MRI Schools. LEAs are to submit **separate and complete applications for each MRI school in response to this RFA.**

A full list of MRI schools is available on the NM PED ESSA in New Mexico page:

<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/ped/ESSA.html>

1. **Project Period Timeline**

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| --- | --- |
| **Closure** | |
| Applications Released by PED | December 05, 2017 |
| Commitment Letter to PED (Example Appendix B) | January 26, 2018 |
| Applications Due to PED | February 26, 2018 |
| For schools selecting a Closure model, the full project period will be six months.  There is no continuation of funding past the six month or year-one implementation period for the Closure model.  The Closure Model Project Period March 2018 to June 30, 2018. | |

1. **Proposal Requirements: Closure[[3]](#footnote-3)**

If the district chooses Closure as the MRI, they must ensure that students who attended the school are reassigned to other, high-achieving schools within the LEA; these other schools should be within reasonable proximity to the closed school and may include, but are not limited to, charter schools or new schools for which achievement data are not yet available.

The school to which students who previously attended a closed school are sent should be located “within reasonable proximity” to the closed school. An LEA has discretion to determine which schools are located within a reasonable proximity to a closed school. A distance that is considered to be within a “reasonable proximity” in one LEA may not be within a “reasonable proximity” in another LEA, depending on the nature of the community. In making this determination, an LEA should consider whether students who would be required to attend a new school because of a closure would be unduly inconvenienced by having to travel to the new location. An LEA should also consider whether the burden on students could be eased by designating multiple schools as receiving schools.

An LEA should not eliminate school closure as an option simply because the higher-achieving schools that could be receiving students are located at some distance from the closed school, so long as the distance is not unreasonable. Indeed, it is preferable for an LEA to send students who previously attended a closed school to a higher-achieving school that is located at some distance from, but still within reasonable proximity to, the closed school than to send those students to a lower-performing school that is geographically closer to the closed school.

Moreover, an LEA should consider allowing parents to choose from among multiple higher-achieving schools, at least one of which is located within reasonable proximity to the closed school. By providing multiple school options, a parent could decide, for example, that it is worth having his or her child travel a longer distance in order to attend a higher-achieving school. Ultimately, the LEA’s goal should be to ensure that students who previously attended a closed school are able to enroll in the highest-performing school that can reasonably be offered as an alternative to the closed school.

Appendix A[[4]](#footnote-4) provides LEAs with an example of a school closure timeline.

1. **Use of Title I School Improvement 1003[a] Funds for School Closure**

An LEA may apply for and use Title I 1003[a] funds to pay certain reasonable and necessary costs associated with closing a MRI school, such as costs related to parent and community outreach, including, but not limited to, press releases, newsletters, newspaper announcements, hotlines, direct mail notices, or meetings regarding the school closure; services to help parents and students transition to a new school; or orientation activities, including open houses, that are specifically designed for students attending a new school after their prior school closes.

Other costs, such as revising transportation routes, transporting students to their new school, or making class assignments in a new school, are regular responsibilities an LEA carries out for all students and generally may not be paid for with Title I 1003[a] funds. However, an LEA may use Title I 1003[a] funds to cover these types of costs associated with its general responsibilities if the costs are directly attributable to the school closure and exceed the costs the LEA would have incurred in the absence of the closure.

However, to the extent a receiving school is a Title I school that increases its population of children from low-income families, the school should receive additional Title I, Part A funds through the Title I, Part A funding formula, and those Title I, Part A funds could be used to cover the educational costs for these new students. If the school is not currently a Title I school, the addition of children from low-income families from a closed school might make it an eligible school.

1. **Full Application Submission**

Complete applications **must** be submitted electronically through the Priority Schools Bureau portal available at the following link: [ped.psb@state.nm.us](mailto:ped.psb@state.nm.us).

In addition, one original application plus one hardcopy **must** be mailed by postal service to:

New Mexico Public Education Department

Attn: Debbie M. Rael

Deputy Cabinet Secretary, School Transformation

Room 123

300 Don Gaspar Avenue

Santa Fe, New Mexico 85701

Complete hardcopy applications must be postmarked by February 26, 2018, and complete electronic copies must be submitted through the Priority Schools email portal ([ped.psb@state.nm.us](mailto:ped.psb@state.nm.us).) no later than 4:00 p.m. on February 26, 2018.

1. **Review and Approval**

PED will review the proposed MRI and either approve or deny the plan. If the plan is denied, PED reserves the right to select the MRI for the school.

If the district refuses to identify a MRI to participate in, the PED will select the MRI for the school.

**Closure Application**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **LEA Information** | |
| **LEA Name** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **LEA NCES ID #** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Superintendent** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Superintendent email** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Mailing Address** | Click or tap here to enter text. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **School Information** | |
| **Name of School** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **School NCES ID #** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Principal** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **School Address** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **School Phone Number** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Grades Served** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **2017-2018 Student Enrollment** | Click or tap here to enter text. |

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| **Amount the LEA is requesting from Title I School Improvement 1003[a] funds** | |
| For schools selecting a Closure model, the full project period will be six months. There is no continuation of funding past the six month or year-one implementation period for the Closure model.  The Closure Model Project Period March 1, 2018 to June 30, 2018. | |
|  | |
| March 2018 to June 30, 2018 | $Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Total Funds | $Click or tap here to enter text. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **School Information** | |
| **Name of School Closing** | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Name of School(s) Receiving Students** | Click or tap here to enter text. |

**LEA Design and Implementation of the Intervention Model**

**Identification of Closed School**

1. Describe specific action steps and timeline that the LEA will take to identify the school for closure, close the school, transfer students to their receiving schools, and inform and engage all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the closure model.

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. Describe specific action steps that the LEA will take to identify the receiving schools, transfer students into their receiving schools, and inform and engage all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the closure model.

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. What is the accountability status of the receiving schools?

Click or tap here to enter text.

1. What is the proximity of the receiving school to the closed school?

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Budget Requirements**

The budget documents requested in response to this RFA must identify and explain funded costs for activities that are necessary to carry out all aspects of closure.

1. The budget narrative, described in the Proposal Narrative sections of this RFA, should identify and explain all funded costs for the entire project period.

An LEA may apply for and use Title I 1003[a] funds to pay certain reasonable and necessary costs associated with closing a MRI school, such as costs related to parent and community outreach, including, but not limited to, press releases, newsletters, newspaper announcements, hotlines, direct mail notices, or meetings regarding the school closure; services to help parents and students transition to a new school; or orientation activities, including open houses, that are specifically designed for students attending a new school after their prior school closes.

Describe specific action steps that the LEA will take to identify the receiving schools, transfer students into their receiving schools, and inform and engage all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the closure model.

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Required Signatures**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| *Superintendent Signature* | Date |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| *School Board President’s Signature* | Date |

**Appendix A: School Closure[[5]](#footnote-5)**

Closing a school is not a single process. It consists of four distinct processes:

1. Decision to close
2. Closing the building
3. Maintaining the building
4. Disposition of the building

Each one is different and requires adequate input and planning in order for each to be successful.

**Decision to Close**

Ideally, a decision to close a school should be made as early as possible in the school year, but no later than December. There are several reasons:

1. It will permit parents and students adequate time to choose a new school or get a new assignment if the district has a defined student assignment process.
2. It will provide adequate time to plan and execute the actual closing of the building (the second of the four processes).

Once the decision to close a school has been made, the second of the four processes begins – closing the building. Closing a school building requires as much planning time as opening a new or remodeled facility.

**Suggested Timeline**

**December/January**

* Begin identification, inventory, and relocation of items with archival, historic, or artistic value. Examples include awards, trophies, plaques, photos or artwork. Place in a central location and secure.
* Identify all current adopted textbooks and supplemental resources by grade level. Packing will occur later.
* Begin inventory process of all furniture and equipment by classroom, documenting overhead projectors, textbooks, supplies and technology related equipment like computers, printers, and scanners. Identify by description, brand and model (e.g. Dell GX270).
* Begin scrapping items throughout the building such as broken furniture and equipment, obsolete or broken supplies, textbooks, and files. Begin to take personal items home. Place excess furniture and equipment in a secure central storage area when no longer needed. Custodial staff can order extra pickups as required.
* Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with appropriate bargaining units for required activities related to school closing.

**February**

* Cancel or terminate contracts with outside vendors effective at the end of the school year.
* Assist parents/students in selecting a new school as part of the student assignment process.

**March**

* Put out a call to district sites to submit requests for surplus furniture/equipment from closed school.

**April**

* Make arrangements with finance office and receive written authority for key staff to remain throughout the summer, and funds to cover their salaries, including special payroll processes required. Key staff may include principal, head secretary, accountant, and technology coordinator.
* Determine records retention requirements for student, staff, and financial.
* Identify furniture and equipment to be made available to district sites and establish priorities for distribution.

**May**

* Close the library to permit the media specialist to complete full inventory of the collection and update all records.
* Inventory media equipment and retain in library storage.
* Confirm with technology coordinator as to status of computer-related items located in library.
* Cancel all newspapers and magazines.
* Schedule meeting with district finance office to review closeout of accounts, retention and auditing requirements. Schedule follow-up meetings as required.
* Inventory all financial records, both current and archived. Consolidate in central location at end of school year.
* Inventory building custodial equipment and supplies. Coordinate relocation with appropriate district staff.
* Inventory all staff files, both current and archived.
* Assist staff with reassignment process.
* Inventory park and recreation equipment and supplies. Coordinate relocation with district staff.
* Inventory all student records, both current and archived. Confirm retention requirements.

**June**

* Complete all inventories.
* Close out student records.
* Forward appropriate records to student’s new school of assignment.
* Pack and relocate all student records to remain in file cabinets in vault.
* Receive all keys from the staff, and have them sign a form indicating keys returned. Organize keys in case in vault. Keys for furniture to be taped in bottom drawer of unit.
* Keys for built-in cabinets should be tagged by room number and kept with room key.
* Keep alarm cards and notify facilities staff when access can be deactivated. Alarm card will be reprogrammed for new location.
* Pack all assessment and testing materials and return to Central Services.
* Pack all curricular materials and textbooks.
* Organize and label by subject area.
* Pack all special education equipment, records and IEP’s. Forward records and IEP’s to new school assignment. Remainder should be returned to Special Education supervisors in Central Services.
* Technology coordinator should clean hard drives on all existing computers of personal information and prepare units for redistribution.
* Relocate all technology-related equipment to secure area and maintain inventory.
* Remove all appropriate items from asset management systems.
* Request final audit.
* Complete outstanding work orders.
* Complete evaluations for all staff.
* Finalize all payments and purchase orders.
* Process miscellaneous payroll information.
* Complete all end-of-year budget items.
* Complete final audit.
* Pack and label all financial records and relocate to secure area.
* Re-key all secure storage areas.
* Shut off MC equipment and telephones, school phone number, and an appropriate message for a closed building with a point of contact for information. (One phone will be kept functional in custodian’s office and modem will be kept on for gas meter. Security system and elevator phone (if applicable) will also remain operational.)
* Contact election commission to inform them of closure and arrange for pick-up of voting equipment.
* At the end of the school year, the facilities staff will start its protocol to close and secure the building during the summer.
* A final cleaning of the building will be completed, including cleaning and disinfecting all toilets and locker rooms, sweeping all rooms, cleaning out lockers, and disposing of trash and garbage.
* Extra pickups should be scheduled for trash and shredding containers since there will be a greater amount than during a normal summer cleaning.

**July**

* Finalize all payments and purchase orders.
* Process miscellaneous payroll information.
* Complete all end-of-year budget items.
* Complete final audit.
* Pack and label all financial records and relocate to secure area.
* Re-key all secure storage areas.
* Shut off MC equipment and telephones, school phone number, and an appropriate message for a closed building with a point of contact for information. (One phone will be kept functional in custodian’s office and modem will be kept on for gas meter. Security system and elevator phone (if applicable) will also remain operational.)
* Contact election commission to inform them of closure and arrange for pick-up of voting equipment.
* At the end of the school year, the facilities staff will start its protocol to close and secure the building during the summer.
* A final cleaning of the building will be completed, including cleaning and disinfecting all toilets and locker rooms, sweeping all rooms, cleaning out lockers, and disposing of trash and garbage.
* Extra pickups should be scheduled for trash and shredding containers since there will be a greater amount than during a normal summer cleaning.
* Arrangements should be made to identify and remove all hazardous materials and chemicals for disposal in accordance with appropriate regulations.
* In addition, the appropriate craftsmen will need to shut off plumbing, water, and gas to the kitchen equipment, air conditioning units, and other areas of the building not required for summer activities.
* All refrigerators and freezers throughout the building should be cleared and doors left

open.

* Other tasks include shutting down fans and motors; flushing valves at the valve, timer, and circuit breaker, and draining and opening boilers (unless it is a hot water system). Identify with tags which timers, switches, or valves have been closed or shut off. Finally, unplug all of the clocks, remove the flag, shut down the fire alarm system and enunciation printer, and make sure the emergency lighting is operational.

**Maintaining the Building**

* Upon completion of all of the school and facilities closing processes, the building is secured. This marks the commencement of the third process – maintaining the building.
* This process is one of the most important in ensuring that it can easily be reopened for another educational purpose, for leasing to another party, or to be held by the district for future use.
* The best way to ensure future use is to make sure the building is maintained to the same standard as other district facilities. The building should be checked daily to ensure the proper temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit is being maintained. Since someone other than the former building custodian will likely conduct the daily check, a checklist should be developed and posted adjacent to the building alarm control panel or housed in a handbook in the custodian’s office. Included on this checklist would be the following:
* Check exterior for open or broken windows and any sign of damage. Any damage should be repaired immediately.
* Check interior for water leaks and correct any that are found immediately.
* Check for graffiti and remove any found within 24 hours.
* Pick up trash or broken glass as needed.
* Establish regular schedules for grass cutting in the spring, summer, and fall, and snow removal during winter months.
* During the heating season, check boilers, pumps, air compressors, and other heating-related equipment.
* Check tot lot weekly (if applicable) – tighten bolts, etc. as required.
* Check fire extinguishers monthly.
* Flush toilets and pour water down all drains as needed.
* Grease and oil motors and pumps that are used as needed.
* These daily monitoring and maintenance activities have several advantages because they enable the building to be reopened with minimal expenditure of funds.
* Prevent the building from becoming an “eyesore” and impacting the surrounding neighborhood negatively – both from a crime or property value basis.

**Disposition of the Building**

The final process of closing a school is to determine the disposition of the building. If there was a recommended disposition included in the district’s decision to close the building, then it should be implemented.

Additional information regarding disposition can be found at: *Closing a School Building: A Systematic Approach 3 (2010) National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities at the National Institute of Building Sciences, Washington DC. Available at:* [*http://www.ncef.org/pubs/closing.pdf*](http://www.ncef.org/pubs/closing.pdf)

**Appendix B: Commitment Letter Example**

*Insert Date*

Secretary-Designate Christopher N. Ruszkowski

Public Education Department

300 Don Gaspar Avenue

Santa Fe, NM, 87501

Dear Secretary Ruszkowski:

The *(insert district)* commits to implementing the following More Rigorous Intervention in *(insert name of school)* for the 2018 school year *(insert name of chosen More Rigorous Intervention).*

Sincerely,

Insert name of Superintendent

Superintendent, (insert district name)

cc: *insert names of school board president, school principal, and any other locally identified district, community or school board members.*

1. New Mexico Rising: New Mexico’s State Plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act, pg. 107 (2017). New Mexico Public Education Department, Santa Fe, NM. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Vouchers are currently prohibited under New Mexico state law. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Handbook on school closure: <http://www.centerii.org/handbook/Resources/4_E_Closing_schools.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Closing a School Building: A Systematic Approach 3 (2010) National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities at the National Institute of Building Sciences, Washington DC. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Closing a School Building: A Systematic Approach 3 (2010) National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities at the National Institute of Building Sciences, Washington DC. Available at: <http://www.ncef.org/pubs/closing.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)