What are School Improvement Grants?

School Improvement Grants are federal funds to assist low-performing schools. The goal of the School Improvement Grant program is to increase academic achievement through prescriptive reforms. The funds are made available by the U.S. Department of Education to the states.

- The previous rounds included four reform models
- Congress changed School Improvement Grants in 2014 to include Whole-School Reform as a new model
- The states make sub-grants to Local Education Agencies
- Schools are eligible for up to five years of funding
What does the ESEA rewrite mean for SIGs?

In order to tailor our model of Whole-School Reform to recent changes seen at the federal level with the ongoing Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) rewrite, Positive Action has developed a “Primary Plan.” Our Primary Plan takes into consideration that School Improvement Grant funding is written out of both the House and Senate bills. While there will still be funding for school improvement projects (if/when these rewrites go into effect), these funds look to be grouped under general Title I funds. How and how much will be allocated once this happens is currently unknown. What we do know is that we have one year of certain funding for Whole-School Reform.

Our Primary Plan sets schools up for success by offering a first-year program of implementation, guidance, job-embedded coaching, and support. Positive Action has also taken into consideration the limited availability of SIG funds in comparison to the number of schools that are eligible to submit applications. Our Primary Plan is our most economic model of Whole-School Reform available and allows more schools to receive funds. Positive Action offers a 10-year content license at the end of the last funded year. This acts as a safety net, lest the funding be cut short during any year of the original five year grant period and ensures program sustainability. Implementation after the first year mirrors the step-by-step plan laid out in year one, each year building off of knowledge and skills gained previously. By creating a system that begins with foundational implementation and a perpetuity of materials, schools are given a better chance of success and sustainability in addition to safeguards against federal funding changes.
What is Whole-School Reform?

Whole-School Reform is an effort to improve achievement scores by affecting the entire school ecosystem. Whole-School Reform requires schools to use an approved evidence-based model and provider. The model must:

• Have at least one study proving evidence of effectiveness at the What Works Clearinghouse level.
• Include teaching and learning in at least one academic content area.
• Offer opportunities for leadership and professional development.
• Encourage and facilitate parental engagement.
• Encourage and facilitate community engagement.
• Have a sustainability component to ensure progress continues after the grant funding ends.

Positive Action includes all of these components in its Whole-School Reform Model.
What is *Positive Action®*?

*Positive Action* is an educational program that started in 1982. The system includes over 2,000 lessons spanning Pre-Kindergarten to 12th Grade. The content is organized into age-appropriate classroom kits tailored for each grade level. The primary objectives of the program are:

- To enrich students’ reading and language arts curricula and other content areas.
- To develop an intrinsic interest in learning among students.
- To teach students a positive way to understand and manage their behavior.
- To create a positive learning environment for all students.
- To engage parents and the community in the students’ learning.

*Positive Action* goes beyond curriculum. Fundamental to the program are the School Climate and Parent & Community pieces. Learning takes place beyond the individual student level—it extends to the whole school ecosystem including the students, teachers, administrators, families and community. These pieces include:

- *Elementary and Secondary Climate Kits*
- *Parenting Engagement Program*
- *Community Engagement Program*
- *Counselor’s Kit*
- *Conflict Resolution Kit*
- *Bullying Kit*
- *Drug Kit*
How does it Work?

Implementing Positive Action is straightforward. Each classroom kit contains a manual with lesson plans and all the materials necessary to deliver the content. The design of the program is based on a common-sense philosophy:

We feel good about ourselves when we do Positive Actions.

The program is organized into six main unit concepts. These concepts are “scoped-and-sequenced” throughout the curriculum. This means that the concepts that are being taught in Unit 1 to kindergartners are the same concepts being taught in Unit 1 to 6th graders, which are the same concepts being taught in the secondary levels. This enables an entire school to use a common vocabulary. The six units cover:

1. Philosophy and Thoughts-Actions-Feelings about Self Circle
2. Positive Actions for the body and mind
3. Managing yourself responsibly
4. Treating others the way you like to be treated
5. Telling yourself the truth
6. Improving yourself continually
The Positive Action System

Philosophy:
You feel good about yourself when you do positive actions, and there is a positive way to do everything. Develops a common language and shared goal.

Thoughts-Actions-Feelings Circle: Applies the Philosophy.

Whole Self:
Physical + Intellectual + Social + Emotional

Unit 1
Self-Concept

Unit 2
Physical & Intellectual

Unit 3
Self-Management

Unit 4
Social & Emotional Competence

Unit 5
Self-Honesty

Unit 6
Self-Improvement

Family Programs
- Family Kit
- Family Classes Kit
- Parenting Classes Kit

Classroom Curriculum
- PreK-12 Instructor’s Kits
- Elementary Bullying Prevention Kit
- Elementary Drug Supplement Kit
- Secondary Drug Supplement Kit

Climate Program
- Elementary Climate Kit
- Secondary Climate Kit

Community Program
- Community Kit
- Counselor’s Kit
- Conflict Resolution Kit
- Family Kit
- Media Kit

Counselor’s Program
- Elementary Climate Kit
- Secondary Climate Kit
What are the **Academic Outcomes?**

Whole-School Reform requires evidence of effectiveness that meets the most stringent regulatory standards. *Positive Action* has completed two randomized-controlled studies, the gold standard for efficacy research. These studies were conducted in Chicago and Hawaii. Below is a sample of the academic improvements:

- State reading tests 20%
- State math test 51%
- Academic motivation 15%
- School involvement 19%
- Respect for teacher 28%
- School satisfaction – Teacher Reports 48%
What are the **Behavior** Outcomes?

*Positive Action* has achieved outcomes in multiple domains. From substance use to bullying, *Positive Action* can help schools decrease a multitude of risk factors and increase protective factors. Here are examples of outcomes:

**Decrease**
- Bullying 51%
- Violent behaviors 75%
- Substance Abuse 71%
- Suspensions 72%
- Disciplinary Referrals 85%
- BASC Depression Scale 17%
- Absenteeism 28%
- Drop Out Rate 37%
- Truancy 75%

**Increase**
- Pro-Social Interaction 19%
- Altruistic Behavior 8%
- Self Control 13%
- Honesty 17%
- Self-Concept 22%
Whole-School Reform Explained

The Whole-School Reform Model is a welcome addition to the School Improvement Grant program. Most of the historic models were considered too punitive and not appealing to most schools and districts. The Positive Action Whole-School Reform model is a school-friendly approach that implements Positive Action lessons in the classroom for 30 minutes almost daily and staff support for building a positive school climate and engaging parents and communities.

Positive Action has made it as easy as possible for schools and districts that wish to pursue a meaningful School Improvement Grant application. The Model addresses potential pitfalls that school reform grant applicants may encounter, including strategies for staffing, training and sustainability.

The role of Positive Action:
- Coordinates the entire project.
- Provides all of the tools and materials.
- Provides orientation and ongoing training and professional development.
- Ensures program fidelity.
- Assists teachers to improve the quality of their teaching.
- Assists school leaders to create a positive school climate.
- Assists coordination to engage families and communities.

Positive Action does not:
- Interfere with school management.
- Interfere with curricula choices.
- Interfere with local decision making.
- Prescribe disciplinary action.
Family and Community

Positive Action includes comprehensive family and community components based on two products specifically designed for interacting with these populations. The Family Kit contains valuable lessons with the same concepts as schools, to be taught at home. Classes are available for parents to learn how to use the lessons with their families. The Community Kit is used to engage community support.

For Whole-School Reform, Positive Action has expanded the implementation of both of these components, providing coordination for each. The family and community components will be handled by the Project Coordinator. The Coordinator will reach out to parents and community members and work toward establishing a permanent organization that will conduct future outreach and maintain the Positive Action Model.

Positive Action offers:

- Proven strategies for increasing involvement.
- Personnel for facilitating outreach efforts.
- Prepared materials with lessons and activities for outreach.
- Funds for Parenting Class educators.
Climate Development Committee

**What are the duties?**

The *Positive Action* Climate Development Committee is the supervisory and oversight body for the school climate program, and the family and community program.

**Who is involved?**

- Project Coordinator
- Students
- Faculty
- Support staff
- Administration
- Parents
- Community members

Volunteer Community Leaders Coalition

The volunteer Community Leaders Coalition (CLC) is comprised of community leaders who represent various community groups.

The CLC comes together to:

- Provide vision
- Set goals
- Raise funds
- Create budgets
- Organize and carry out some of the projects and activities
- Measure effects (if possible)
Sustainability

The Federal School Improvement Program has been in place since 2010. During this time, many reports and analyses have been produced. The analyses indicate that the previous models did not produce effects that can be sustained when the project funding runs out. To combat this, Whole-School Reform was added as an intervention model in 2014. As of March, 2015 Positive Action became one of the very few federally-approved providers of Whole-School Reform in the country.

Positive Action is focused on producing lasting effects that will endure the test of time. With the current ESEA re-write, federal funding for SIGs has become less stabilized for these five year grants. Currently, the SIG program has been written out of both the House and Senate bills and it appears that SIG funds are only guaranteed for one more year (FY 2015-16). With this in mind and in order to ensure that schools and communities are set up for success, Positive Action has put in place a “Primary Plan” which will provide implementation support and administration to continue for the duration of the grant (pending further federal funding allocation). The last year of funding will also include a 10-year content license enabling the school ongoing access to Positive Action material. Our Primary Plan ensures the best foreseeable course of action for project success, sustainability, and multiple school funding.

This sustainability plan will enable participants to gain a deep knowledge of the philosophy, units, curriculum, school climate development, and parent & family engagement. This also increases school community participant buy-in as they begin to recognize changes in the student body throughout the years. Under the direction and support of the Project Coordinator and Positive Action staff, the program has a sound foundation to be implemented with fidelity.
How do the **Materials** Work?

*Positive Action* has great news! You don’t have to worry about the materials at all—everything is handled for you.

*Positive Action* provides:

• A full classroom kit for each teacher (Pre-K—12). There are 140 lessons per grade for elementary, 82 for middle school, and 132 for high school. Each lesson takes 30 minutes or less to complete.

• A *Climate Kit* for school leaders.

• *Family Kit* for families.

• *Family Classes Kit* for ongoing family instruction.

• *Community Kit* for community members.

• *Refresher Kits* for each year.
How does the Training Work?

Positive Action will embed a Project Coordinator in the school to coordinate and facilitate training/assistance. Additionally, Positive Action provides direct training/professional development and technical assistance for the whole school community. The steps outlined below will be continuous through each funded year.

Throughout the entire project, Positive Action will provide ongoing support and technical assistance. Positive Action will conduct two professional development trainings for the entire staff each year.

Step A

- Prior to the first year, school/district administration will collaborate with Positive Action for the hiring of the Project Coordinator. Prior to each funded year, it is necessary for school administration to collaborate with the Project Coordinator to complete site analysis, needs assessment, and site preparation.

Step 1

- The Project Coordinator will organize the teacher & staff training schedule and kick-off the school year with the management of training and distribution of materials.
- The Project Coordinator will work closely with the principal to plan and implement a school climate program specific to site needs. The Project Coordinator will also work with teachers to provide support and build a collaborative, honest, and open rapport.
- The Project Coordinator and principal will organize a Climate Development Committee.
- The Project Coordinator will recruit for the Community Volunteer Board.

Step 2

- The Project Coordinator will provide guidance to teachers presenting PA lessons.
- The Community Volunteer Board will begin planning the first community event.
- Under the guidance of the Project Coordinator, members from the Climate Development Committee begin family classes. Family classes will be continuous throughout each year. There will be seven family classes each year that will run two hours per session.
How does the *Training* Work, contd.

**Step 3**
- The Project Coordinator will provide guidance as the principal and committee assume climate activities. The Project Coordinator will provide ongoing fidelity support for model implementation.
- Dynamic Project Coordinator/teacher collaboration and lesson adaptability is encouraged throughout this step!
- The Climate Development Committee continues family classes.

**Step 4**
- The Project Coordinator will provide oversight, guidance and support at this step of the program.
- The last family classes are completed and the community organization will hold its second event.
- The Project Coordinator will participate in a summative project report.

During all steps, the Project Coordinator oversees each piece of the *Positive Action* plan to work seamlessly together forming a solid foundation to be built upon.
Summary

*Positive Action* is excited to become one of the first approved Whole-School Reform providers. We have worked tirelessly for more than 30 years to produce the most effective education program available. We are committed to achieving real and lasting outcomes with every Whole-School Reform project.

We have taken all the knowledge that we have gained from our own grant experiences and produced a plan to overcome the common barriers. We have also utilized the lessons learned from working with thousands of schools and districts and the challenges that they face; we hear from successful schools and districts every day that have surpassed their the goals with *Positive Action* and transformed their schools. This plan represents the best practices from multiple disciplines. We’re eager to work with schools, families and communities to turn around schools and make genuine school reform a reality.
Let’s work together to transform your school!

**STEP A**
**PLANNING**
- Site analysis
- Needs assessment
- Site preparation
- Collaborative Recruitment

**STEP ONE**
- Project Coordinator introduced to teachers who begin teaching classroom lessons
- Project Coordinator collaborates with Principal & Committee on climate activities
- Community organization volunteer board recruitment, one community event planned
- Teachers polled for site-specific activity suggestions

**STEP TWO**
- Teachers continue teaching lessons with Project Coordinator providing feedback
- Project Coordinator, Principal, & Committee begin climate activities
- Parent classes kick-off
- First community event planned
- Site-specific activities kick-off
**STEP THREE**

- Teachers continue teaching lessons with Project Coordinator providing feedback
- Principal & Committee assumes climate activities with the Project Coordinator providing guidance
- Parent classes continue
- Community organization event one completed
- Site-specific activities continue

**STEP FOUR**

- Teachers continue teaching lessons with Project Coordinator providing support
- Principal & Committee continues climate activities
- Parent classes continue
- Community organization holds second event
- Evaluation report prepared
- Site-specific activities continue
Let’s transform your school!

Call your Positive Action Whole School Reform Consultant

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