

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL



MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Stronger Connections Grant Program

Submission Deadline Date: August 16, 2023

Table of Contents

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW	4
1.1 Program Purpose and Goals	4
1.2 Eligibility Criteria.....	5
1.3 Pre-Proposal Conference	6
1.4 Conflict of Interest	6
SECTION 2. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION	6
2.1 Scope of Work	6
2.2 Program Activities	7
2.3 Program Reports and Evaluation.....	9
2.4 Proposal Review and Selection Process	10
2.5 Proposal Scoring Criteria	10
SECTION 3. GRANT AWARD AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	13
3.1 Use of Funds.....	13
3.2 Responsibilities of A Fiscal Agent	15
3.3 Audit.....	16
SECTION 4. TENTATIVE TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES.....	17
SECTION 5. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS	17
5.1. Proposal Formatting and Submission Information.....	17
5.2 Submission Requirements	18
5.3 Formatting and Submission Directions	18
5.4 Proposal Submission and Due Date.....	19
5.6 Risk of Delivery.....	19
5.5 Restrictions on Communications.....	20
5.7 Rejection of Proposals	20
5.8 Conditions of Solicitation	21
5.9 Acceptance of Proposals	21
5.10 Modification or Withdrawal of a Proposal.....	21
5.11 Disposition of Proposals.....	22
b. Appeals Federal Process	22
5.12 Requests for Information.....	23
SECTION 6. PROPOSAL FORMS & ATTACHMENTS.....	23
Cover Page.....	24
ASSURANCES.....	25

PROGRAM SPECIFIC ASSURANCES.....	27
STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS.....	29
CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM	32
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AMENDMENTS	34
UEI VERIFICATION	35
Program Plan and Narrative	36
Budget Forms.....	38
Instructions for Budget Forms:.....	38
BUDGET OVERVIEW	38
BUDGET SUMMARY	38
BUDGET NARRATIVE.....	38
Budget Overview.....	40
BUDGET SUMMARY PAGE	41
BUDGET NARRATIVE.....	42
Resources	45

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1 Program Purpose and Goals

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Office of Federal Programs is seeking competitive written proposals from qualified applicants to provide services implementing the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act Stronger Connections Grant Program (BSCA) through grant awards issued by the Mississippi Department of Education.

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) of 2022 provides historic funding to support State educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), and public schools in establishing safe, healthy, and supportive learning opportunities and environments. This includes \$1 billion through Title IV, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for SEAs to competitively award subgrants to high-need LEAs to establish safer and healthier learning environments and to prevent and respond to acts of bullying, violence, and hate that impact our school communities at individual and systemic levels, among other programs and activities.

The Department has designated this component of the BSCA the Stronger Connections Grant Program in recognition of the fact that local evidence-based school safety and climate plans, along with other evidence-based strategies for creating safe, healthy, and supportive schools, depend on meaningful engagement between school and LEA leaders and students, parents, families, and community members, and strong relationships between students and adults. These connections are vital for ensuring that school safety and climate plans are tailored to local conditions, lived experiences, and needs; well-designed; effectively implemented; and clearly communicated, including to families. LEA plans to create safe, healthy, and supportive schools should reflect a comprehensive set of evidence-based components. Examples of critical components include those related to safety assessments and corresponding safety plans and strategies (e.g., emergency operation plans), positive school culture and climate (e.g., Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and student wellness (e.g., integrated student supports).

The purpose of this competitive grant is to provide qualifying LEA's the opportunity to establish strategies and to carry out activities that will help to increase student's sense of belonging. LEAs are invited to compete for funding to support one or more of the following strategies established by:

1. Implementing comprehensive, evidence-based strategies that meet each student's social, emotional, physical, and mental well-being needs; creating positive, inclusive, and supportive school environments; and increasing access to place-based interventions and services.
2. Engaging students, families, educators, staff, and community organizations in the selection and implementation of strategies and interventions to create safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments.
3. Designing and implementing policies and practices that advance equity and are responsive to underserved students, protect student rights, and demonstrate respect for student dignity and potential.

Stronger Connections Grant Program expects local evidence-based school safety and climate plans, along with other evidence-based strategies for creating safe, healthy, and supportive schools. These plans depend on and must demonstrate meaningful engagement between school and LEA leaders and students, parents, families, guardians, and community members,

and strong relationships between students and adults. These connections are vital for ensuring that school safety and climate plans are tailored to local conditions, lived experiences, and needs; well-designed; effectively implemented; and clearly communicated, including to families.

LEA plans to create safe, healthy, and supportive schools should reflect a comprehensive set of evidence-based components. Examples of critical components include those related to safety assessments and corresponding safety plans and strategies (e.g., emergency operation plans), positive school culture and climate (e.g., Social and Emotional Learning, Non-exclusionary Discipline, Anti-bias and trauma informed practices, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and student wellness (e.g., integrated student supports).

All applications should specify how families, students and communities will be engaged in planning, strategic prioritization, implementation, and evaluation of grant activities. Grantees will be expected to participate, as requested, in training and technical assistance sessions provided by MDE focused on embedding equity into safe, healthy and supportive schools' programs during the grant period. LEAs that receive Stronger Connections grants are expected to evaluate the implementation and impact of the programs or strategies stated in the grant application. Further grantees will participate, as requested, in any MDE evaluation of the Stronger Connections program and will cooperate with any audit or examination of records with respect to such funds.

The Safe and Healthy Connections Grant will provide:

- Professional development and funding for training.
- Technical assistance to support development, implementation and sustainable practices.
- Development of family and community engagement partnerships.
- External coaching to support safe and healthy development and implementation.
- Trauma-informed practices, emergency plan development, and site assessments.
- Development of personnel for safe and healthy school initiatives.

A grant agreement will be signed at the discretion of the State Board of Education (SBE). This solicitation and any resulting grant agreement shall be governed by the applicable provisions of *the State Board of Education Grant Policies*. The grant agreement Assurances and Standard Terms and Conditions have been included as Forms 2, 3, and 4 for your review and acceptance.

A copy of this solicitation, including all attachments and any subsequent amendments, including the Question-and-Answer amendment, if issued, will be posted on the MDE [website](#) under “Public Notice” Request for Applications, Qualifications, and Proposals section. It is the sole responsibility of all interested Applicants to monitor the website for updates regarding this solicitation.

1.2 Eligibility Criteria

This solicitation is to provide information required to submit a response to this Request for Proposal (RFP). Please be aware that changes to previous requirements and/or eligibility solicited may have been made.

The Mississippi Department of Education will award BSCA Stronger Connections competitive subgrants to *high-need local education agencies* (LEAs) to establish safe, healthy, and

supportive learning opportunities and environment.

For the purpose of this grant program, a high-need LEA is identified as:

- An LEA that exceeds the poverty average of 40% for SY 2022-2023; **and**
- An LEA that exceeds the average of 20% for chronic absenteeism for SY 2021-2022

The awarded Subgrantee must meet the following criteria to submit a proposal for these services:

- A local educational agency (LEA);
- Poverty average of 40% or more for SY 2022-2023; and
- Chronic absenteeism of 20% or more for SY 2021-22.

Unique Entity ID (UEI) Requirement

The UEI number is a unique number used to identify Subgrantees. The federal government uses the UEI to track how federal money is allocated to Subgrantees. All Subgrantees must have an active UEI Number, that is unrestricted and accessible at www.sam.gov. Please visit [Quick Start Guide for Getting a Unique Entity ID \(SAM\)](#) for information.

To receive an UEI Number, you must register with the System Award Management (SAM). Any debarred person or Applicant will not be eligible to apply and receive Federal funds.

Verification and documentation of the registered active UEI must be submitted with the proposal (e.g., www.sam.gov correspondence indicating the status and expiration date, UEI notification email, etc.) Please remember that your UEI must be unrestricted and accessible to the public. Failure to obtain and register your UEI number will result in rejection of the proposal.

1.3 Pre-Proposal Conference –

The MDE will host a workshop virtually on **Tuesday, July 18, 2023, at 1:30 pm Central time** to assist potential Subgrantees with understanding the program and the proposal process. There is no cost for the workshop; however, registration is required. **Proposal workshop participation is not required to apply but is highly encouraged.**

[Pre-Proposal Conference Registration Link](#)

1.4 Conflict of Interest

Each Applicant receiving an award for funds must maintain a written conflict of interest policy.

SECTION 2. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 Scope of Work

The Mississippi Department of Education, through the Office of Federal Programs, is seeking proposals to establish safer and healthier learning environments. LEAs are provided the opportunity to promote the following goals:

1. Students experience a sense of belonging in school.
2. Learning environments provide culturally and linguistically responsive practices.
3. Students are surrounded by adults they can trust and who are committed to building stronger relationships.
4. Learning environments are nurturing and help students overcome challenges and traumatic experiences and provide a sense of emotional and physical safety. for implementation of effective after-school programs.

ESEA section 4108 allows funds to be used for activities that foster safe, healthy, supportive, and drug- free environments and support students' academic achievement. To this end, there are a variety of evidence-based approaches that LEAs can consider as part of a comprehensive plan for creating safe, supportive, and healthy schools. This work begins with providing safe and welcoming teaching and learning environments and taking purposeful steps to be prepared to respond to different types of emergency situations. School preparedness is fortified by prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery activities. These efforts are a shared responsibility between local school and community leaders, including leaders in the following spaces: schools, emergency responders, public health, and mental and behavioral health.

2.2 Program Activities

Applicants receiving an award are responsible for utilizing these funds to carry out activities that advance student achievement and support student success, including but not limited to:

- Implementing comprehensive, evidence-based strategies that meet each student's social, emotional, physical, and mental well-being needs; create positive, inclusive, and supportive school environments; and increase access to place-based interventions and services.
- Engaging students, families, educators, staff, and community organizations in the selection and implementation of strategies and interventions to create safe, inclusive and supportive learning environments.
- Designing and implementing policies and practices that advance equity and are responsive to underserved students, protect student rights, and demonstrate respect for student dignity and potential.

Examples of allowable services or activities include:

- Drug and violence prevention activities that are evidence-based.
- School-based mental health services.
- Comprehensive health education programs.
- Integrating health and safety practices into school or athletic programs.
- Nutritional education and physical education activities.
- Implementation of schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports.
- Bullying and harassment prevention.
- Activities that improve instructional practices for developing relationship-building skills.

- Prevention of teen and dating violence, stalking, domestic abuse, and sexual violence and harassment.
- Mentoring and school counseling.
- Establishing or improving school dropout and reentry programs.
- Suicide prevention.
- Crisis management and conflict resolution techniques.
- School-based violence prevention strategies.
- Reducing exclusionary disciplinary practices.
- Establishing partnerships within the community to provide resources and support for schools.
- Strengthening relationships between schools and communities.
- High-quality training for school personnel in effective practices related to any of the above.

Subgrantees are also obligated under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to ensure that their proposed program activities are outlined and are accessible to persons with disabilities.

Evidence-Based Interventions

LEAs are strongly encouraged to invest Stronger Connections Grant funds on evidence-based strategies that have been shown to significantly improve student safety and health, as well as academic outcomes. Specifically, “evidence-based” means an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes. ESEA section 8101(21) defines the term “evidence-based” and the definition includes four tiers of evidence.

Tier 1: Strong Evidence	Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented randomized control experimental studies.
Tier 2: Moderate Evidence	Supported by one or more well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental studies.
Tier 3: Promising Evidence	Supported by one or more well-designed and well implemented correlational studies (with statistical controls for selection bias).
Tier 4: Demonstrates a Rationale	Practices that have a well-defined logic model or theory of action, are supported by research, and have some effort underway by an SEA, LEA, or outside research organization to determine their effectiveness.

For more information around selecting evidence-based strategies, LEAs can review USDE's [guidance on evidence](#) or visit MDE's [Evidence-Based Programs](#).

Additional Resources:

- [What Works Clearinghouse](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\) Evidence-Based Practice Resource Center](#)
- [Selecting Evidence-Based Programs and Practices for Title IV, Part A Activities](#)

Equitable Participation of Private, Non-Public School Students

A public school or other public or private entity that is awarded a subgrant must provide equitable services to eligible private, non-public school students, their families, their teachers, and other educational personnel. In designing a program that meets this requirement, grant applicant must provide comparable opportunities for the participation of both private and public-school students who reside in the area served by the subgrant.

Grant applicants must conduct timely and meaningful consultation with non-public school officials during the design and development of the BSCA Stronger Connections Grant program on issues such as how the children's needs will be identified and what services will be offered. Services and benefits provided to private school students must be secular, neutral, and non-ideological. Meaningful consultation involves communication and discussions between grant applicants, LEAs and private school officials on key issues that are relevant to the equitable participation of eligible private school students, teachers, and other education personnel in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) programs. Meaningful consultation provides a genuine opportunity for all parties to express their views, to have their views seriously considered, and to discuss viable options for ensuring equitable participation of private school students, teachers, and other education personnel. The goal of all parties should be to reach an agreement on how to provide equitable and effective programs for eligible private school children. Adequate notice of such consultation is critical in ensuring meaningful consultation and the likelihood that those involved will be well prepared with the necessary information and data for decision-making. For detailed information regarding services to eligible private school children, please visit Section 8501 of the Every Student Succeeds Act at <https://www.congress.gov/114/plaws/publ95/PLAW-114publ95.pdf>

Applicants must complete and submit the Private School Consultation Form (Form 5).

2.3 Program Reports and Evaluation

Each LEA that receives an award through the Stronger Connections Grant is required to participate in all components of program monitoring, evaluation, and reporting to MDE and USDE. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Reporting LEA uses of Stronger Connections Grant funds, including any revisions to activities or the approved budget;
2. Evaluating the effectiveness of the LEA's implementation, including challenges, successes, and lessons learned; and
3. Submitting an Annual Financial Report (AFR) for each funding year.

Note: Additional fiscal and programmatic reporting requirements may be required as additional guidance is provided by USDE.

2.4 Proposal Review and Selection Process

Phase I – Compliance

Proposals are reviewed by MDE program staff to determine if all formatting and submission requirements are met. **If any proposal fails to meet the established deadline or Required Elements, the proposal will be disqualified.** Please review the submission deadline and the *Required Elements*. *Proposals that are not received by the deadline or fail to provide the information as specified in the “Required Elements” will not be considered for an award and the Applicant may reapply at a future date.*

Phase II – Review and Scoring

An evaluation committee, authorized by the MDE, shall evaluate and score each proposal based on the quality of the proposed activities and the evidence provided to demonstrate the capacity of the Applicants to implement the proposed program. The evaluation committee is comprised of expert proposal readers from various related professions and backgrounds.

Each proposal will be evaluated using the criteria for the proposal and scoring process. The evaluation committee will recommend proposals from highest to lowest ranking to be funded by the MDE.

A minimum of five evaluation committee members will review and evaluate each proposal and score utilizing a rubric. A reader may award up to 100 points for each proposal. A proposal must receive a minimum total quality score of **75** before the proposal can be considered eligible for funding. The MDE will allocate funding based upon the average scores of all committee members and will fund Applicants, based on the highest to lowest scores, until funding is exhausted, or all eligible Applicants receive funding.

The MDE reserves the right to reject any portion of the proposal and negotiate with potential Subgrantees to address any issues that may impact the proposal or funding.

After the selection process, Applicants that were not recommended to the State Board of Education (SBE) for funding may receive copies of the evaluator’s comments and feedback upon a formal request to the MDE Office of Public Reporting only.

2.5 Proposal Scoring Criteria

This section covers the criteria an Applicant must address in the ***plan of action*** to obtain the maximum points available to score 100 points upon submitting a proposal.

The proposal shall consist of the Applicant’s program operating plan to address the certain criteria below. The stated plan must be clear, concise, and be implemented with fidelity upon the SBE approval. When completing the proposal, please remember that Applicants will not be permitted to change the program’s scope (i.e., type of services and/or target population) that is originally outlined in the proposal, scored by the evaluation committee during the proposal review process, and approved by the SBE. This is designed to provide an open competitive, fair, and transparent

process for all submitting a proposal.

a. Eligibility (10 Total Points)

1. Describe how the LEA meets the requirement for 40% or more of students living in poverty for school year 2022-2023.
2. Describe how the LEA meets the requirement of having a chronic absenteeism rate of 20% or more in school year 2021-2022.

b. Abstract (10 Total Points)

1. In 400 words or less, the abstract should describe the overall plan including: how the proposed project will enhance the LEAs current efforts in creating safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments that are associated with improved academic achievement and emotional well-being of students, who will benefit, and how the LEA will know if the intervention was successful.

c. Demonstration of Need (10 Total Points)

1. Describe the greatest challenges/needs related to the health and safety of students that will be address through the Stronger Connections Grant.
2. Describe how the use of Stronger Connections Grant funds will supplement activities currently being carried out with Title IV, Part A funds, if applicable.

d. Stakeholder Engagement (15 Points)

1. Provide a description of how the LEA meaningfully consulted with students, parents and families, teachers, principals, and other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, community-based organizations, local government representatives (which may include a local law enforcement agency, local juvenile court, local child welfare agency, or local public housing agency), and other organizations or partners with relevant and demonstrated expertise in the programs and activities within the grant application.
2. Describe how the LEA will coordinate the implementation of the proposed activities with other programs, strategies, and activities being conducted in the community.
3. Provide a description of how the LEA will use ongoing consultation with stakeholders to evaluate and improve, if needed, the implementation of the proposed activities.

e. Program Goals, Evaluation, and Timeline (25 Points)

1. Outline a comprehensive plan that will meet the identified social, emotional, physical, mental, or overall well-being needs of students through integrated student services and/or reduce chronic absenteeism, if applicable. The plan should include evidence-based strategies and activities.

Note: Proposed activities and plans should align with, and address needs related to the reasons for eligibility for this grant.

2. Describe clear, detailed, and attainable goals (desired outcomes) for the proposed activities that will have a direct impact on students and are aligned to ESEA Section 4108, Safe and Healthy Students.

Note: The LEA may identify a target population (e.g., schools, grade levels, student demographic). LEAs are encouraged to consider including a logic model, which might be helpful in demonstrating the connection between planned activities and desired outcomes.

3. Describe the steps being taken to identify and overcome barriers that exist within the LEA related to gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age, including how the LEA plans to address those barriers that are applicable to the proposed activities within the grant application. (GEPA)

As part of the program plan, the Applicant should continue with a complete plan that utilizes specific goals, strategies and action steps that outline objectives, activities, and a timeframe. This section provides complete details to address these requirements:

Action Steps: Program action steps should be realistic and directly aligned with the goals of the specification.

Activities & Timeframe: Activities are even more specific than action steps. They explain who will do what, when, where, and for how long. Applicants must include specific activities that will clearly allow the program to progress towards the previous stated goals objectives.

Sample Table:

Goals/Actions Steps, Activities, and Timeframe

Goals	Strategies	Action Steps	Activities	Timeframe

f. Evaluation and Sustainability Plan (10 Points)

1. Provide a clear timeline and evaluation plan, including what data will be collected to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the proposed activities.
2. Provide a clear and detailed description for how the proposed programs and/or activities will be continued beyond the life of the grant.

g. Budget (20 Points)

All applicants must submit a Budget Overview, Budget Summary, and Budget Narrative. The budget summary is the projected budget for funding beginning October 2023 to September 30,

2026. The Budget Narrative is the detailed budget that requires narratives and accurate calculation of cost for each category/activity as applicable.

Supplement, not Supplant

As general guidance in completing this section of the proposal, it is important to understand that subgrantees must use program funds **to supplement**, not supplant, other federal, state, local, or other non-federal funds. Therefore, BSCA Strong Connections grant funds cannot be used to replace existing programs, activities, or services, unless that funding has been eliminated or drastically reduced. Funds must be used for new populations, new programs, new services, or any combination thereof. Funds must be used to increase services offered by the program. The budget and program narratives must align. Regardless of the size of the grant, proposed costs must be **reasonable, necessary, and allocable** to carry out the program's purpose and objectives.

Allowable Expenses

Project funds must be used for activities that directly support the accomplishment of the project purpose, priorities, and expected outcomes. All expenditures must be consistent with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and guidance.

Applicants must list all budgetary costs based upon the narrative components and program design and ensure that the budget includes a line-item description for every allowable cost necessary to carry out the goals and objectives of the proposed program. It is advisable to consult with the financial office of the applying agency prior to submitting the proposal.

Successful subgrantees may use grant funds for allowable costs only during the grant award period. For example, a subgrantee may enter into a contract with a service occurring within the grant award period. However, the contracted service may not commence until the grant award period begins. **Any costs occurring outside the grant award period are solely the responsibility of the subgrantee and will not be reimbursed by the MDE. Once the grant is SBE approved, budgets must be reviewed and approved by the Office of Federal Programs (OFP). Programming cannot begin until each subgrantee has received written budget approval from the OFP or a notice of substantial approval.**

SECTION 3. GRANT AWARD AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Funds are subject to appropriations by the state/federal government. All grants will be awarded for up to 36 months contingent upon completion and submission of all required documentation and availability of funds. Funds will run through the FY24, FY25, and FY26 school years with an ending obligation date of September 30, 2026. Continuation of funding beyond the initial award will not be available. All grants will be awarded contingent upon appropriations, proper implementation of the proposed project implementation, completion, and submission of all required documentation. Funding to eligible Applicants is subject to the SBE approval. **The Mississippi Department of Education reserves the right to negotiate grant award amounts with all potential Subgrantees.**

3.1 Use of Funds

An LEA that receives a grant under the program shall use grant fund for activities that are reasonable, necessary, and allowable under section 4108 of the ESEA to provide students with safer and healthier learning environments.

Examples of allowable services or activities include:

- Implementation of high-quality, comprehensive emergency operating plans and emergency drills.
- Safety and violence prevention programs.
- Evidence-based interventions that have been shown to significantly improve student safety and health as well as academic outcomes.
- Implementing anti-bully and harassment plans.
- Designing and implementing positive and fair discipline policies and practices.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive programs and activities to establish safe, healthy, and supportive learning environment that enhance students' learning and academic success (multi-tiered system of support to support and respond to student needs).
- Schoolwide implementation of strategies to meet students' social, emotional, and academic needs.
- Increase access to meet the mental health needs of students.
- Increase support strategies that meet the needs of students with disabilities.
- Increase student connections and a sense of belonging at school.
- Programs that support a healthy, active lifestyle.
- Implementing programs that adequately address discrimination, including harassment, based on race, color, national origin, sex, and disability in educational programs.
- Provide related professional developments to educators including professional development to support trauma-informed practices.

In addition to the federally negotiated indirect cost rate, applicants may use a reasonable amount of funds for direct administrative costs. Direct administrative activities must be tracked, charged, and allocated directly to the grant and may include, but are not limited to:

- Overall program management, including salaries and related costs.
- Activities concerned with paying, transporting, exchanging, and maintaining goods and services.
- Activities concerned with establishing and administering policy, preparing reports, etc.
- Activities related to the program requirements of grantees.

Note: BSCA and ESEA prohibit the use of these funds for food, school construction, to purchase firearms or train any individual in the use of firearms.

Funds are used for program implementation, as well as for operating expenses such as:

- Personnel and personnel benefits.
- Staff development and training.
- Consultants, subcontractors, and evaluators.

- Classroom equipment, materials, and supplies.

For a use of funds to be permitted, the grantee or subrecipient must determine if that activity is allowable under Stronger Connections – i.e., (1) authorized under section 4108 of the ESEA; (2) reasonable and necessary for the performance of the grant; (3) allocable to the grant; (4) supplements, and does not supplant, other non-Federal funds that would otherwise be used to pay for authorized activities; (5) not one of the prohibited activities in ESEA section 4001(b) or section 8526; and (6) consistent with any other applicable Uniform Guidance provisions (see 2 CFR 200 et seq., in particular 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E). For an LEA, use of funds must also be consistent with the design of the SEA’s Stronger Connections grant program and the LEA’s approved subgrant application.

Applicants should be aware that funds must be used in a manner consistent with all requirements of the statute and must be used only to supplement, not supplant, any federal, state, local, or non-federal funds available to support activities.

3.2 Responsibilities of A Fiscal Agent

The following are some of the expectations, roles, and responsibilities of a fiscal agent:

1. As the official Subgrantee, all awards must be adopted by the Local Board of Education for LEAs or the Board of Directors for non-LEAs.
2. Administer the subgrant from award to closeout in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.
3. Serve as the Subgrantee representative and point-of-contact for all business management aspects of the award agreement.
4. Apply appropriate management controls using management systems, checklists, and records, including, but not limited to:
 - **Internal Controls**
 - Safeguard assets; ensure reliability of accounting data and subgrant terms and conditions
 - **Operating Controls**
 - Fiduciary procedural manuals; budgetary control
 - **Accounting Controls**
 - Implement controls to ensure reliability of recorded financial data;
 - Maintain appropriate level of transaction review and authorization;
 - Develop and implement proper procurement procedures and cash management procedures that are well defined; and
 - Develop procedures that facilitate timely review and audit of financial activity.
 - **Compliance Controls**
 - Consider mechanisms to monitor and review compliance with subgrant terms (i.e., ensure grant funds are disbursed only to eligible Subgrantees);
 - Ensure **all** expenditures and disbursements are consistent with the objectives of the subgrant award and comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing the program and use of funds.
 - **Document Control System**

- Develop written documentation of adequate internal operating and accounting controls that demonstrate evidence of controls related to grant compliance.
- 5. Assemble appropriate staff resources and communicate all compliance requirements and resources of the subgrant.
- 6. Keep abreast of changes in policies, procedures or requirements and continue to advise program staff of subgrant requirements.
- 7. Request any further “prior approvals” when identified.
- 8. Submit subgrant reimbursement requests no later than September 30, 2026 with liquidations by December 30, 2026.
 - **Eligibility of Expenditures**
 - Adhere to the list of eligible activities for which funds under the program may be spent, as well as allowable cost objectives in applicable cost principles; and
 - Ensure that transactions are made in a reasonable and prudent manner, are allowable and allocable, and avoid double charging and ensure that credits are applied appropriately.
- 9. Prepare necessary reports:
 - **Source Documentation**
 - Appropriately support transactions entered into the Subgrantee’s system
 - Documentation tracks each subgrant transaction and supports the validity of financial data reported; and
 - Maintain separate funding lines for funds
 - **Audit Trail**
 - The lowest level of detail the system should provide is documentation that supports all transactions (e.g., invoices, contracts, purchase orders);
 - The overall recordkeeping system should be able to trace financial statement balances through the Subgrantee’s general ledger, cash books and other journals; and
 - Amounts claimed on financial statements and reports accurately reflect the accounting books and records from which they were prepared.
- 10. Use feedback from site visits by the MDE to enhance the program, show Subgrantee’s strength and demonstrate commitment to the project.
- 11. Keep the MDE and the public aware and informed about grant project progress.
- 12. Evaluate the extent to which measurable project objectives are being met.
- 13. Liquidate all obligations incurred under the award within the set deadline.
- 14. Ensure and oversee the performance of final audits and resolution of findings.
- 15. Establish adequate system for records retention.

3.3 Audit

Please note that the Subgrantee is required to, **if applicable**, have the financial and compliance audits conducted in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1966 and 2 C.F.R. Part

200 Subpart F – Audit Requirements. Any non-federal entity that expends \$750,000 or more in a year in federal awards shall have a single or program specific audit conducted for that year in accordance with the provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart F. If the non-federal entity did not expend \$750,000 or more in a year in federal awards, a letter **MUST** be provided stating that this requirement does not apply.

The financial audit shall be conducted by a certified public accountant or by an accountant certified as qualified to audit local government accounts. The audits must be performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards (GAAS) and the financial statements must be prepared in conformity with general accepted accounting principles (GAAP).

SECTION 4. TENTATIVE TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES

A recommendation to the SBE for an approval of awards is anticipated for Applicants based on proposals submitted and accepted, and an evaluation and selection process. All new Subgrantees approved for funding by the SBE at that time must attend subsequent mandatory meetings for all Subgrantees. An award or non-award letter will be sent to Applicants confirming the SBE’s action. The letter will include specific information on meeting dates and times, if applicable.

Important tentative dates and activities related to this solicitation are listed below.

Important Dates	Activity
July 5, 2023	RFP Issued
July 5, 2023	Email and Post to MDE Website/Newspaper
July 12, 2023	2 nd Email and Post to MDE Website/Newspaper
July 18, 2023, at 1:30 pm	Pre-proposal Conference
July 21, 2023	Deadline for submitting questions
July 26, 2023	Questions will be posted to the MDE website
August 16, 2023, at 2:00 pm	Proposals deadline by 2:00 PM CST
August 22, 2023 – September 1, 2023	Evaluation of proposals
October 19, 2023	State Board of Education approval
October 19, 2023	Notification of awards and non-awards

SECTION 5. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1. Proposal Formatting and Submission Information

Developed by the MDE, this solicitation contains all the forms and instructions necessary to apply for this grant opportunity. Please review the enclosed materials and carefully follow the instructions for completing and submitting a proposal. Before submission, review the proposal requirements to ensure that all sections and documents are complete.

The proposal **must** include **all** the required components listed below in the Submission Requirements section and must be in the exact order to proceed to **Phase II** of the proposal process. **Failure to submit the required completed forms with signatures will result in the rejection of the proposal. The proposal will consist of the required elements listed below ONLY:**

The entire proposal should not exceed 20 pages.

5.2 Submission Requirements

Proposals shall be submitted as described below with section components clearly distinguished as follows:

1. Signed Cover Page (Form 1) - *Required Signature*
2. Signed Assurances (Form 2) - *Required Signature*
3. Signed Program Specific Assurances (Form 3) - *Required Signature*
4. Signed Standard Terms and Conditions (Form 4) - *Required Signature*
5. Signed Conflict of Interest (Form 5) - *Required Signature*
6. Signed Private School Consultation (Form 6) – *Required Signature*
7. Sign Acknowledge of Amendments (Form 7) - *Required Signature*
8. Verification of the registration of the active Unique Entity ID (UEI) must be submitted with the proposal (e.g., www.sam.gov correspondence indicating the status and expiration date, UEI letter, etc.) (Form 8)
9. Program Plan & Narrative
10. Budget Forms A, B, & C – Complete

5.3 Formatting and Submission Directions

Applicants should submit proposals using the following parameters:

- Submitted on 8.5” x 11” white paper using 12-point Arial/ Times New Roman font
- Formatted using 1” margins on all sides
- Portrait setting
- Single-spaced and single-sided (pages must include the Applicant’s name and page number within the footer in the lower right-hand corner)
- The complete proposal including all attachments shall be submitted in a searchable Microsoft Office® format, preferably in Word® or Portable Document Format (PDF) only
- “Links” received to obtain a response via the RFXS will not be opened and the email will be rejected without further consideration for an award
- A response proposal received via the RFXS must include **ONE** proposal per electronic submission.

- **Duplicate submission** of an electronic and mailed response proposal will result in the LAST timely submission being considered as a modification to the original submission. The previous submissions will be rejected and not considered for the evaluation and award.

This grant competition is highly competitive. Applicants should ensure that all guidelines and requirements are met before submitting proposals. Please note that the MDE staff will not grant permission to Applicants to modify or change the criteria established in the proposal. This includes extending the date and time proposals are due.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit only the requested information. The evaluation committee will have limited time to evaluate proposals; and for this reason, the proposal should focus solely on the requirements of the solicitation. Supplementary materials such as videotapes, CD-ROMs, publications, press clippings, and testimonial letters **will not** be reviewed or returned.

5.4 Proposal Submission and Due Date

A signed proposal packet shall be submitted electronically in a PDF format via [RFXS](#) no later than **Wednesday, August 16, 2023, by 2:00 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST)**. Applicants shall allow at least 72 hours in advance of the due date to consider unforeseen technical issues. Proposals received after the time designated in the solicitation shall be considered late and shall not be considered for an award. ***The subject line shall specify the name of the solicitation and the name of the entity submitting the response.***

OR

An original signed proposal packet with number one (1) copy shall be shipped/mailed and received in a sealed envelope at the MDE no later than **Wednesday, August 16, 2023, by 2:00 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST)**. **The return address label must be visible on the sealed envelope and include the name of the individual/entity submitting a response.**

Shipping instructions are provided below:

Mississippi Department of Education

Monique Corley, Director

Office of Procurement

Bipartisan Safer Communities Act – Stronger Connections Grant Program

359 North West Street

Jackson, MS 39201

(DO NOT OPEN)

5.6 Risk of Delivery

Timely submission of the proposal package is the sole responsibility of the Applicant. It is suggested that if the proposal is shipped to the MDE, it should be tracked to require an MDE mailroom staff signature and request a return receipt/notice with signature. Any proposal shipped or mailed **MUST** be verified, date and time stamped, and recorded by an MDE mailroom staff. The time and date of the receipt will be indicated on the sealed envelope or package by the MDE mailroom staff. The only acceptable evidence to establish the time of receipt at the MDE will be identified by the time and date stamp of the MDE mailroom staff on the proposal wrapper or other documentary evidence of receipt used by the mailroom.

Packages that are delivered at the MDE in person by the applicant or a representative will NOT be opened. Packages received by shipping/mail without the appropriate acceptance by the MDE mailroom staff or is received and recorded AFTER the submission deadline will NOT be considered for an award.

The MDE will not be responsible for delivery delays or lost packets. All risk of late arrival due to unanticipated delays – whether delivered by shipping or electronic method – is entirely on the Applicant. All Applicants are urged to take the possibility of delay into account when submitting the proposal and submit the packet via [REFXS](#). **Applicants are encouraged to submit ONE response to prevent duplication. Upon submission of the response a confirmation receipt shall be provided as assurance the Office of Procurement received the response packet.** The Applicant shall be notified if their proposal was rejected and the reason for such rejection after the applicable State Board of Education session.

Supplemental or revised proposal information, either from the Applicant or another source, will not be accepted. A proposal package must contain every element intending to be submitted. Applicants are encouraged to carefully review the procedures for submitting their materials. No changes or additions to a proposal will be accepted after the deadline.

5.5 Restrictions on Communications

At no time shall any Applicant or its personnel, contact or attempt to contact any MDE staff regarding this solicitation. All correspondence shall be sent via email to the assigned contact person within the time specified in the Request for Information section. **Should it be determined that any Applicant has attempted to communicate or has communicated with any other MDE staff regarding this solicitation, MDE, at its discretion, may disqualify the Applicant from submitting a proposal in response to the solicitation.**

5.7 Rejection of Proposals

Proposals that do not conform to the requirements of the solicitation will be rejected by the Mississippi Department of Education. Proposals will be rejected for reasons below:

- The proposal is received late. Late proposals will be maintained unopened in the procurement file.
- The proposal contains unauthorized amendments to the requirements outlined in the solicitation.
- The proposal required signatures have not been obtained.
- The proposal contains misleading signatures, statements, or references.
- The proposal is incomplete or contains irregularities that make the proposal indefinite or ambiguous.
- Proposals that do not meet and conform to all requirements as outlined in *Required Submission*.
- The Applicant has previously been cited with major and/or significant deficiencies by the MDE in one or more programs or included on the debarment list.
- Required forms and attachments are not included in the proposal.
- The proposal is determined non-responsive.
- The UEI number is inactive or restricted upon verification, if applicable.

- The Applicant owes the State money.
- The Applicant did not perform prior services in a proper, workmanlike, and/or dignified manner.
- The Format and Procedure for Submission and Delivery of Proposals Section was not followed.
- The proposal packet was attached as a “link” in response to the solicitation.
- In person delivery.

5.8 Conditions of Solicitation

The MDE reserves the right to accept, reject, or negotiate regarding submitted proposals based on the evaluation criteria contained in the solicitation. The final decision to award a grant rest solely with the MDE.

The Applicant should note the following:

1. The MDE will not be liable for any costs associated with the preparation of proposals incurred by the Applicant.
2. The selection of an Applicant is contingent upon favorable evaluation of the proposal; approval of the proposal by the review panel selected by MDE, approved budget and the State Board of Education approval.
3. The selection of an Applicant is contingent upon successful negotiation of any changes to the proposal as required by MDE.
4. The MDE also reserves the right to accept any proposal submitted for grant award, without negotiation. Therefore, Applicants are advised to propose their most favorable terms initially.
5. Applicants shall acknowledge all funds and awards are subject to appropriations by the state/federal government and the MDE will not be liable for compensation of any award terminated prior to services beginning.
6. Applicants will be required to assume full responsibility for meeting all specified requirements stated in the solicitation.

5.9 Acceptance of Proposals

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in proposals. A minor irregularity is a variation of the solicitation that does not affect the proposal or the competitiveness, give one party an advantage or benefit over other parties, or adversely impacts the interest of the MDE.

5.10 Modification or Withdrawal of a Proposal

Prior to the proposal due date, a submitted proposal may be withdrawn by submitting a written request for its withdrawal to the MDE, signed by the Applicant.

A proposal may be submitted as an amended proposal before the due date for receipt of proposals. Such amended proposals shall be a complete replacement for a previously submitted proposal

and shall be clearly identified as such. The MDE shall not merge, collate, or assemble proposal materials.

Unless requested by the MDE, no other amendments, revisions, or alterations to proposals shall be accepted after the proposal due date.

Any submitted proposal shall remain a valid proposal for one hundred eighty (180) calendar days from the proposal due date.

5.11 Disposition of Proposals

All proposals become the property of the state of Mississippi.

b. Appeals Federal Process

In accordance with federal rules, MDE provides Subgrantees or Applicants with the opportunity for a hearing to appeal MDE's final action. (34 C.F.R. 76.401(a), 34 C.F.R. 76.783 and 20 U.S.C. 1231b-2) Specifically the Subgrantee or Applicant must allege that MDE took any of the following actions that violate Federal or State law, regulations, rules, or governing guidelines:

1. Failing to approve, or disapproving of, the proposal or project in whole or in part.
2. Failing to provide the amount of funds in accordance with requirements of the statutes and regulations.
3. No other grounds for appeal will be accepted or considered.
4. To request a hearing, the Subgrantee or Applicant must file a full and complete written appeal, including the issue(s) in dispute, the legal authority or other basis for the appeal position, and the remedy sought within 30 days of the MDE's action (e.g., notification of any action under 1 and 2 above). The request must have an original signature of the authorized agent who signed the proposal. If that individual is not available, the request must have the original signature of another individual who is authorized to sign official documents.
5. An original and two copies of the request for a hearing must be submitted by one of the following methods:

Certified mail with a return receipt required (within 30 days based on the postmark) to:

State Superintendent of Education

The Mississippi Department of Education

APPEAL NOTICE (Name of grant)

359 North West Street

Jackson, Mississippi 39201

Within 30 days of receiving the hearing request, MDE will hold a hearing on the record to review its action. The Subgrantee or Applicant will receive notice of the hearing and will have the opportunity to participate and be represented by counsel. The hearing will be conducted by an impartial hearing officer. During the hearing, the parties will have the opportunity to present and challenge evidence in an orderly fashion before an impartial decision maker. No later than 10 days after the hearing, the hearing officer, as the impartial decision maker, will issue a written ruling on behalf of MDE including findings of fact and reasons or the ruling. The parties may waive these deadlines by mutual consent in writing.

MDE will rescind its action if it determines the action conflicts with Federal or State laws and

regulations governing the grant program. If after review, MDE does not rescind its action, the Subgrantee or Applicant may appeal to the Secretary of the US Department of Education within 20 days of being notified as a result.

MDE will make all records pertaining to any review or appeal of the Subgrantee or Applicant available at reasonable times and places to the Subgrantee or Applicant. This includes records of other Subgrantees and Applicants.

5.12 Requests for Information

Written questions concerning the solicitation should be **emailed** to: federalprograms2@mdek12.org.

The deadline for submitting written questions by email is **Friday, July 21, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Times (CST)**. The answers to the questions will be provided to the general public on **Wednesday, July 26, 2023**, on the MDE's website www.mdek12.org under the *Public Notices Section/Request for Applications, Qualifications, and Proposal*. **No individual replies will be granted.**

A copy of this solicitation, including all attachments and any subsequent amendments, including the Question-and-Answer amendment, if issued, will be posted on MDE's website. It is the sole responsibility of all interested Applicants to monitor the website for updates regarding this procurement.

SECTION 6. PROPOSAL FORMS & ATTACHMENTS

Each of the forms below must be included in the proposal. Please follow the instructions on the individual forms to ensure each form is complete and signed, if applicable. **Any questions regarding the forms below should be submitted to the identified contact person via email during the time specified in the Request for Information section above.**

Form 1
Cover Page
Bipartisan Safer Communities Act – Stronger Connections Grant
Mississippi Department of Education

District Name, District Code and UEI #		
Project Director Name / Email		
Federal Programs Director Name / Email		
Superintendent Name / Email		
District Address		
Contact Number		
Projected Allocation		Final Allocation (MDE use only)
\$100,000		
<p>By signing below, I am verifying that I have read and agree to comply with the US Department of Education Grant and Other Federal Assurances and Mississippi Department of Education Standard Terms and Conditions. I certify that the contents of this proposal, if funded, will be followed in the implementation of the school district's Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program described herein.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>All signatures are required.</i></p> <p>Project Director _____</p> <p>Federal Programs Director _____</p> <p>Business Manager _____</p> <p>Superintendent _____</p>		

For MDE program office use only: Mississippi Department of Education Approval

Program Director Coordinator _____

Office/Division Director _____

Grants Management Director _____

Executive Director _____

Approval Date: _____

Form 2
ASSURANCES
(Please read carefully before signing)

The Applicant hereby assures that as a Subgrantee, in accordance with the statute, the Applicant submitting this proposal shall comply with the following:

Certain terms and conditions are required for receiving grants from the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE); therefore, the Subgrantee will agree to the items that follow.

- A. The Subgrantee shall be an equal opportunity employer and shall perform to all other applicable requirements; accordingly, the Subgrantee shall neither discriminate nor permit discrimination in its operation or employment practices against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or sex in any manner prohibited by law. Further, the Subgrantee agrees to comply with the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.
- B. The Subgrantee agrees that the MDE, or any of its duly authorized representatives, at any time during the term of this agreement, shall have access to, and the right to audit examine any pertinent books, documents, papers, and records of Subgrantee related to Subgrantee charges and performance under this agreement. The Subgrantee shall keep such records for a period of five years after final payment under this agreement, unless the MDE authorizes their earlier disposition. Subgrantee agrees to refund to the MDE any overpayments disclosed by any such audit. However, if any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit, or other action involving the records has been started before the expiration of the five-year period, the records shall be retained until completion of the action and resolution of all issues that arise from it.
- C. The Subgrantee assures that it possesses legal authority to apply for and to receive funds under this agreement.
- D. The Subgrantee certifies they have not been barred from contracting or otherwise doing business with the State or Federal Governments.
- E. This agreement shall not be modified, altered, or changed except by mutual agreement by representative(s) of each party to this agreement, and must be confirmed in writing through MDE grant modification procedures.
- F. The Subgrantee shall perform all services as an independent grantee and shall discharge all of its liabilities as such. No act performed or representation made, whether oral or written, by the Subgrantee with respect to third parties shall be binding on the MDE.
- G. The MDE, by written notice, may terminate the grant, in whole or in part, if funds supporting the grant are reduced or withdrawn. To the extent that the grant is for services, and if so terminated, the MDE shall be liable only for payment in accordance with payment provisions of the grant for services rendered prior to the effective date of termination. The MDE, by written notice, may terminate the proposal for nonperformance of the applicant at any time during the term of the program. The Subgrantee agrees that work, data, etc. created under the auspices of the program shall be turned over to the MDE upon such termination. The MDE, in whole or in part, may terminate the program for cause by written notification. Furthermore, the MDE and the Subgrantee may terminate the agreement, in whole or in part, upon mutual agreement. Either

the Mississippi Department of Education or the awardee may terminate this agreement at any time by giving written notice to the other party of such termination and specifying the effective date thereof. The Subgrantee shall be paid an amount which bears the same ratio to the total compensation as the services actually performed bear to the total services of the contractor covered by the agreement, less payments of compensation previously made.

- H. This agreement, and all matters or issues collateral to it, shall be governed by, and constructed in accordance with, the laws of the State of Mississippi.
- I. Subgrantee shall not assign or sub-grant in whole or in part, its rights or obligations under this agreement without prior written consent of MDE. Any attempted assignments without said consent shall be void and of no effect.
- J. The Subgrantee adheres to the applicable provisions of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR): 34 CFR Subtitle A, Parts 1-99.
- K. The Subgrantee adheres to the applicable regulations of the Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education: 34 CFR Subtitle B, Parts 100-199.
- L. The Subgrantee adheres to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 2 CFR Part 200 (The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards).
- M. The Subgrantee assures that salary and wage charges will be supported by proper time reporting documentation that meets the requirements of 2 CFR Part 200.

By signing this statement, the Subgrantee hereby certifies and assures that the school district/entity submitting this document shall comply with MDE Assurances and Certifications in accordance with state and federal regulations requirements, and MDE policy and requirements pertaining to this program. The Subgrantee certifies further that the information submitted on this is true and correct.

Superintendent/Executive Director/Fiscal Agent Signature

Date

Form 3
PROGRAM SPECIFIC ASSURANCES
(Please read carefully before signing)

The Applicant hereby assures that as a Subgrantee, in accordance with the statute, the Applicant submitting this proposal shall comply with the following:

1. The grantee will use BSCA funds for activities allowable under section 4108 of the ESEA.
2. The grantee will track the BSCA funds separately from its regular allocation under Title IV, Part A of the ESEA.
3. The grantee will follow the supplement, not supplant requirements in section 4110 of the ESEA.
4. The grantee will not use funds for the provision to any person of a dangerous weapon or training in the use of a dangerous weapon as prohibited under Section 13401 of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which amends section 8526 of the ESEA.
5. The grantee will provide equitable services to students and teachers in non-public schools as required under section 8501 of the ESEA.
6. The grantee will ensure that a public agency maintains control of funds for the services and assistance provided to a non-public school with BSCA funds.
7. The grantee will ensure that a public agency has title to materials, equipment, and property purchased.
8. The grantee will ensure that services to a non-public school with BSCA funds are provided by a public agency directly, or through contract with, another public or private entity.
9. The grantee will ensure that equitable services provided with BSCA funds are secular, neutral, and non-ideological.
10. The grantee will not discriminate against anyone regarding race, gender, national origin, color, disability, or age.
11. The grantee will maintain appropriate fiscal and program records for funded activities and fiscal audits of this program will be conducted by the grantees as a part of their regular audits.
12. The grantee will maintain sole responsibility for the project even though subcontractors may be used to perform certain services.
13. The grantee will work with and provide data for the Stronger Connections Grant to MDE and/or the United States Department of Education when requested and within the time frames specified.
14. Participate in any Department evaluation of the grant program and will cooperate with any audit, monitoring or examination of records.
15. If any findings of misuse of these funds are discovered, project funds will be returned to MDE.

The Mississippi Department of Education may terminate a grant award upon thirty days' notice if it is deemed by MDE that the applicant is not fulfilling the requirements of the funded program as specified in the approved project application, or if the program is generating less than satisfactory results.

By signing this statement, the Subgrantee hereby certifies and assures that the school district/entity submitting this document shall comply with MDE Assurances and Certifications in accordance with state and federal regulations requirements, and MDE policy and requirements pertaining to this program. The Subgrantee certifies further that the information submitted on this is true and correct.

Superintendent/Executive Director/Fiscal Agent Signature

Date

Form 4

STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Certain terms and conditions are required for contracting. Therefore, the Applicant shall assure agreement and compliance with the following standard terms and conditions.

1. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligation of MDE to proceed under this agreement is conditioned upon the congressional appropriation of funds and the receipt of federal funds. If the funds anticipated for the continuing fulfillment of the agreement are, at any time, not forthcoming or insufficient, either through the failure of the federal government to provide funds to appropriate funds or the discontinuance or material alteration of the program under which funds were provided or if funds are not otherwise available to MDE, MDE shall have the right upon ten (10) working days written notice to the Subgrantee, to reduce the amount of funds payable to the Subgrantee or to terminate this agreement without damage, penalty, cost or expenses to MDE of any kind whatsoever. The effective date of reduction or termination shall be as specified in the notice of reduction or termination.

2. CHANGES

This agreement shall not be modified, altered, or changed, except by mutual agreement by an authorized representative(s) of each party to this agreement, and must be confirmed in writing through MDE grant modification procedures.

3. INDEPENDENT SUBGRANTEE

The Subgrantee shall perform all services as an independent Subgrantee and shall discharge all of its liabilities as such. No act performed or representation made, whether oral or written, by Subgrantee with respect to third parties shall be binding on the MDE.

4. TERMINATION

The MDE, by written notice, may terminate this grant, in whole or in part, if funds supporting this grant are reduced or withdrawn. To the extent that this grant is for services, and if so terminated, the MDE shall be liable only for payment in accordance with payment provisions of this grant for services rendered prior to the effective date of termination.

The MDE, in whole or in part, may terminate this grant for cause by written notification. Furthermore, the MDE and the Subgrantee may terminate this grant, in whole or in part, upon mutual agreement.

Either the MDE or the Subgrantee may terminate this agreement at any time by giving 30 days written notice to the other party of such termination and specifying the effective date thereof. The Subgrantee shall be paid an amount which bears the same ratio to the total compensation as the services actually performed to the total services of the Subgrantee covered by the agreement, less payments of compensation previously made.

5. ACCESS TO RECORDS

The Subgrantee agrees that the MDE, or any of its duly authorized representatives, at any time during the term of this agreement, shall have access to, and the right to audit and examine any pertinent books, documents, papers, and records of Subgrantee related to Subgrantee's charges and performance under this agreement. Such records shall be kept by Subgrantee for a period of five (5) years after final payment under this agreement, unless the MDE authorized their earlier disposition. Subgrantee agrees to refund to the MDE any overpayments disclosed by any such

audit. However, if any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit, or other action involving the records has been started before the expiration of the 5-year period, the records shall be retained until completion of the action and resolution of all issues which arise from it.

6. LAWS

This agreement, and all matters or issues collateral to it, shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of Mississippi.

7. LEGAL AUTHORITY

The Subgrantee assures that it possesses legal authority to apply for and receive funds under this agreement.

8. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The Subgrantee shall be an equal opportunity employer and shall perform to applicable requirements; accordingly, Subgrantee shall neither discriminate nor permit discrimination in its operations or employment practices against any person or group of persons on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or sex in any manner prohibited by law.

9. COPYRIGHTS

The Subgrantee: (i) agrees that the MDE shall determine the disposition to title to and the rights under any copyright by Subgrantee or employees on copyrightable material first produced or composed under this agreement; and, (ii) hereby grants to the MDE a royalty free, nonexclusive, irrevocable license to reproduce, translate, publish, use and dispose of, to authorize others to do so, all copyrighted or copyrightable work not first produced or composed by Subgrantee in the performance of this agreement, but which is incorporated in the material furnished under the agreement, provided that such license shall be only to the extent Subgrantee now has, or prior to the completion or full final settlements of agreement may acquire, the right to grant such license without becoming liable to pay compensation to other solely because of such grant.

Subgrantee further agrees that all material produced and/or delivered under this grant will not, to the best of the Subgrantee's knowledge, infringe upon the copyright or any other proprietary rights of any third party. Should any aspect of the materials become, or in the Subgrantee's opinion be likely to become, the subject of an infringement claim or suite, the Subgrantee shall procure the rights to such material or replace or modify the material to make it non-infringing.

10. PERSONNEL

Subgrantee agrees that, at all times, the employees of Subgrantee furnishing or performing any of the services specified under this agreement shall do so in a proper, workmanlike and dignified manner.

11. SURRENDER OF EQUIPMENT

Subgrantee and MDE shall jointly conduct a closing inventory and Subgrantee shall replace or repair all equipment lost, damaged, or destroyed to make up any deficiency between the opening and closing inventories. Subgrantee shall transfer all equipment per MDE's guidance and written instructions.

12. ASSIGNMENT

Subgrantee shall not assign or subgrant in whole or in part, its rights or obligations under this agreement without prior written consent of the MDE. Any attempted assignment without said consent shall be void and of no effect.

13. MISSISSIPPI ETHICS

It is the responsibility of the Subgrantee to ensure that subcontractors comply with the Mississippi Ethics Law in regard to any conflict of interest. A statement attesting to said compliance shall be on file by the Subgrantee.

I have **read** and **agree** to comply with the Standard Terms and Conditions. I certify that the contents of this proposal, if funded, will be followed for the implementation of the grant award described herein. *Signatures of the Superintendent, Executive Director, Agency Head, and/or Fiscal Agent on this page must match the signatures on the cover page. A representative from each partnering agency must sign the assurances. Failure to sign the above assurances will result in the rejection of the proposal.*

Superintendent/Executive Director/Agency Head/Fiscal Agent

Date

Form 5 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM

Mississippi Department of Education

Each Applicant must disclose any personal, business, or volunteer affiliations that may give rise to a real or apparent conflict of interest. The purpose of this form is to help MDE identify the actual or potential conflict and ensure the avoidance where necessary. Please complete and sign the form below as it relates to a conflict of interest within the program activities.

I have no conflict of interest to report.

I have the following conflict of interest(s) to report. Please describe any relationships, transactions, positions you hold (volunteer or otherwise), or circumstances that you believe could contribute to a conflict of interest:

I certify that the information set forth above is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I agree that if I become aware of any information that might indicate that this disclosure is inaccurate, I will notify MDE immediately.

Superintendent/Executive Director/Fiscal Agent

Date

Title of Authorized Person

Form 6 PRIVATE SCHOOL CONSULTATION

An SEA, LEA, or any other education service agency (or consortium of such agencies) receiving financial assistance under an applicable program must provide eligible private school children and their teachers or other educational personnel with equitable services or other benefits under these programs. Before an agency or consortium makes any decision that affects the opportunity of eligible private school children, teachers, and other educational personnel to participate, the agency or consortium must engage in timely and meaningful consultation with private school officials.

Please complete and sign the form below related to the involvement of eligible private schools in BSCA Stronger Connections Grant activities.

Private schools that have been contacted and were consulted by the applicant and are electing to **RECEIVE** services

Private School Name	School Official Contacted Name	School Official Contacted Title	Date(s) and Method(s) of Consultation	Estimated Number Students Served	Describe Level/Type of Participation

Private schools that have been contacted and were consulted and are electing to **DECLINE** services or have failed to reply by the deadline

Private School Name	School Official Contacted Name	School Official Contacted Title	Date(s) and Method(s) of Consultation	Reason(s) for declining to participate	No Response by Deadline (Y/N)?

Superintendent/Executive Director/Agency Head/ Fiscal Agent

Date

Form 7

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AMENDMENTS

The Question-and-Answer amendment shall be signed, if issued. The Question-and-Answer amendment will be posted on the MDE [website](#) under “Public Notice” Request for Applications, Qualifications, and Proposals section. It is the sole responsibility of all interested applicants to monitor the MDE website for updates regarding any amendments to the solicitations.

Form 8 UEI VERIFICATION

Verification of the registration of the active Unique Entity ID (UEI) must be submitted with the proposal (e.g., www.sam.gov correspondence indicating the status and expiration date, UEI letter, etc.)

Program Plan and Narrative

BSCA Stronger Connections Grant Program

Program narrative is limited 10 pages.

Eligibility (10 Total Points)

1. Describe how the LEA meets the requirement for 40% or more of students living in poverty for school year 2022-2023.
2. Describe how the LEA meets the requirement of having a chronic absenteeism rate of 20% or more in school year 2021-2022.

Abstract (10 Total Points)

1. In 400 words or less, the abstract should describe the overall plan including: how the proposed project will enhance the LEAs current efforts in creating safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments that are associated with improved academic achievement and emotional well-being of students, who will benefit, and how the LEA will know if the intervention was successful.

Demonstration of Need (10 Total Points)

1. Describe the greatest challenges/needs related to the health and safety of students that will be address through the Stronger Connections Grant.
2. Describe how the use of Stronger Connections Grant funds will supplement activities currently being carried out with Title IV, Part A funds, if applicable.

Stakeholder Engagement (15 Points)

1. Provide a description of how the LEA meaningfully consulted with students, parents and families, teachers, principals, and other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, community-based organizations, local government representatives (which may include a local law enforcement agency, local juvenile court, local child welfare agency, or local public housing agency), and other organizations or partners with relevant and demonstrated expertise in the programs and activities within the grant application.
2. Describe how the LEA will coordinate the implementation of the proposed activities with other programs, strategies, and activities being conducted in the community.
3. Provide a description of how the LEA will use ongoing consultation with stakeholders to evaluate and improve, if needed, the implementation of the proposed activities.

Program Goals, Evaluation, and Timeline (25 Points)

1. Outline a comprehensive plan that will meet the identified social, emotional, physical, mental, or overall well-being needs of students through integrated student services and/or reduce chronic absenteeism, if applicable. The plan should include evidence-based strategies and activities.

Note: Proposed activities and plans should align with, and address needs related to the reasons for eligibility for this grant.

2. Describe clear, detailed, and attainable goals (desired outcomes) for the proposed activities that will have a direct impact on students and are aligned to ESEA Section 4108, Safe and Healthy Students.

Note: The LEA may identify a target population (e.g., schools, grade levels, student demographic). LEAs are encouraged to consider including a logic model, which might be helpful in demonstrating the connection between planned activities and desired outcomes.

3. Describe the steps being taken to identify and overcome barriers that exist within the LEA related to gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age, including how the LEA plans to address those barriers that are applicable to the proposed activities within the grant application. (GEPA)

As part of the program plan, the Applicant should continue with a complete plan that utilizes specific goals, strategies and action steps that outline objectives, activities, and a timeframe. This section provides complete details to address these requirements:

Action Steps: Program action steps should be realistic and directly aligned with the goals of the specification.

Activities & Timeframe: Activities are even more specific than action steps. They explain who will do what, when, where, and for how long. Applicants must include specific activities that will clearly allow the program to progress towards the previous stated goals objectives.

Sample Table:

Goals/Actions Steps, Activities, and Timeframe

Goals	Strategies	Action Steps	Activities	Timeframe

Evaluation and Sustainability Plan (10 Points)

1. Provide a clear timeline and evaluation plan, including what data will be collected to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the proposed activities.
2. Provide a clear and detailed description for how the proposed programs and/or activities will be continued beyond the life of the grant.

Budget (20 Points)

- **Budget Form A: Budget Overview**
- **Budget Form B: Budget Summary**
- **Budget Form C: Budget Narrative**

Budget Forms

Budget Overview, Narrative, and Summary

All Applicants must submit a *Budget Overview*, *Budget*, and a *Budget Summary*.

When determining the amount to be requested for school districts, please consider the need and the number of students to be served.

Allowable Expenses

Project funds must be used for activities that directly support the accomplishment of the project purpose, priorities, and expected outcomes. All expenditures must be consistent with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, and guidance.

Applicants must list all budgetary costs based upon the narrative components and program design and ensure that the budget includes a line-item description for every allowable cost necessary to carry out the goals and objectives of the proposed program. It is advisable to consult with the financial office of the applying agency prior to submitting the proposal.

Successful Subgrantees may use grant funds for allowable costs only during the grant award period. Any costs occurring outside the grant award period are solely the responsibility of the Subgrantee and will not be reimbursed by the MDE.

Instructions for Budget Forms:

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Budget Overview Form A (REQUIRED)

All Applicants must complete Form A and provide an overview to support the budget that is presented as part of this solicitation. This overview must address all components listed, if applicable.

BUDGET SUMMARY

Budget Summary Form B (REQUIRED)

Applicant must complete Form B and provide a breakdown by the applicable budget categories shown.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Budget Narrative Form C for Year One Only (REQUIRED)

Please pay attention to applicable program specific instructions and allowable expenditures.

1. Provide an itemized budget breakdown for each applicable budget category listed in the budget summary pages.
2. Provide the rate and base on which fringe benefits are calculated.
3. Provide other explanations or comments you deem necessary.
4. Administrative and indirect cost rates for non-profits are to be handled according to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance: Cost Principles, Audit, and

Administrative Requirements for Federal Awards and in accordance with the governing authority of that specific non-profit.

5. There is a 2% cap on administrative costs.
6. Enter the indirect cost rate that will be in effect during the FY24 funding period. Use the restricted rate. In addition, enter the estimated amount of the base to which the rate is applied, and the total indirect expense.

Form A

Budget Overview

Provide a brief and concise narrative on the following:

- a. How the items within the budget support the goals of the program;**

- b. How the requested funds will be allocated for accomplishing tasks and activities described in the proposal;**

- c. How the major costs indicated on the Budget Summary will be reasonable and necessary in relation to the number of participants to be served, to the scope of the project, and its anticipated outcomes;**

- d. How grant funds will supplement and not supplant other federal, state, and local funds, and other non-federal funds; and**

- e. How the positions and salaries will be reasonable and necessary, consistent with the demographic area, and adhere to the Applicant organization's policies and procedures on salary determination.**

FORM B
Mississippi Department of Education

BUDGET SUMMARY PAGE
Bipartisan Safer Communities Act – Stronger Connections Grant

FY24

Projected Budget Summaries

Fund Number: #

Name of Institution/Applicant:

Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns, if applicable. Please read all instructions before completing form

BUDGET SUMMARY – FORM B

Budget Categories	Project Year
1. Personnel (Non-Administrative)	
2. Administration (Not more than # of allocation)	
3. Fringe Benefits	
4. Travel	
5. Equipment	
6. Supplies	
7. Contractual	
8. Other (Specify)	
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	
10. Indirect Costs	
11. Total Cost (lines 9-10)	

FORM C

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Use the Budget Narrative form to provide a complete budget narrative **for the project**. On this page, please provide a **brief** but **detailed** budget narrative that explains the following, if applicable: (1) the basis for estimating the costs of professional personnel salaries, administrative costs, benefits, project staff travel, materials and supplies, consultants, indirect costs, and any projected expenditures and (2) how the major cost items relate to the proposed activities and how these activities will help students achieve higher standards. This information should include a **detailed** description of the costs included, sufficient to document the **necessity and reasonableness** of **all** costs, and **clear and concise description** of the computations used to arrive at the total amounts indicated. This page may be reproduced as needed.

Applicant Name _____

<i>CATEGORY/ACTIVITY</i>	AMOUNT	GENERAL DESCRIPTION
1. Personnel (Non-Administrative)		
2. Administration		
3. Fringe Benefits		
4. Travel		

5. Equipment		
6. Supplies		
7. Contractual		
8. Other (Specify)		
9. Indirect Costs		
Subtotal for Each Page		

GRANT TOTAL		
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Applicant Signature: _____ Page ____ of ____

Resources

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): SEC. 4108. [20 U.S.C. 7118] Activities to Support Safe and Healthy Students.

Subject to section 4106(f), each local educational agency, or consortium of such agencies, that receives an allocation under section 4105(a) shall use a portion of such funds to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive programs and activities that—

- (1) are coordinated with other schools and community based services and programs;
- (2) foster safe, healthy, supportive, and drug-free environments that support student academic achievement;
- (3) promote the involvement of parents in the activity or program;
- (4) may be conducted in partnership with an institution of higher education, business, nonprofit organization, community-based organization, or other public or private entity with a demonstrated record of success in implementing activities described in this section; and
- (5) may include, among other programs and activities—
 - (A) drug and violence prevention activities and programs that are evidence-based (to the extent the State, in consultation with local educational agencies in the State, determines that such evidence is reasonably available) including—
 - (i) programs to educate students against the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, smokeless tobacco products, and electronic cigarettes; and
 - (ii) professional development and training for school and specialized instructional support personnel and interested community members in prevention, education, early identification, intervention mentoring, recovery support services and, where appropriate, rehabilitation referral, as related to drug and violence prevention;
 - (B) in accordance with sections 4001 and 4111—
 - (i) school-based mental health services, including early identification of mental health symptoms, drug use, and violence, and appropriate referrals to direct individual or group counseling services, which may be provided by school-based mental health services providers; and
 - (ii) school-based mental health services partnership programs that—
 - (I) are conducted in partnership with a public or private mental health entity or health care entity; and
 - (II) provide comprehensive school-based mental health services and supports and staff development for school and community personnel working in the school that are—
 - (aa) based on trauma-informed practices that are evidence-based (to the extent the State, in consultation with local educational agencies in the State, determines that such evidence is reasonably

available);

(bb) coordinated (where appropriate) with early intervening services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.); and

(cc) provided by qualified mental and behavioral health professionals who are certified or licensed by the State involved and practicing within their area of expertise;

(C) programs or activities that—

(i) integrate health and safety practices into school or athletic programs;

(ii) support a healthy, active lifestyle, including nutritional education and regular, structured physical education activities and programs, that may address chronic disease management with instruction led by school nurses, nurse practitioners, or other appropriate specialists or professionals to help maintain the well-being of students;

(iii) help prevent bullying and harassment;

(iv) improve instructional practices for developing relationship-building skills, such as effective communication, and improve safety through the recognition and prevention of coercion, violence, or abuse, including teen and dating violence, stalking, domestic abuse, and sexual violence and harassment;

(v) provide mentoring and school counseling to all students, including children who are at risk of academic failure, dropping out of school, involvement in criminal or delinquent activities, or drug use and abuse;

(vi) establish or improve school dropout and reentry programs; or

(vii) establish learning environments and enhance students' effective learning skills that are essential for school readiness and academic success, such as by providing integrated systems of student and family supports;

(D) high-quality training for school personnel, including specialized instructional support personnel, related to—

(i) suicide prevention;

(ii) effective and trauma-informed practices in classroom management;

(iii) crisis management and conflict resolution techniques;

(iv) human trafficking (defined, for purposes of this subparagraph, as an act or practice described in paragraph (9) or (10) of section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102));

(v) school-based violence prevention strategies;

(vi) drug abuse prevention, including educating children facing substance abuse at home; and

(vii) bullying and harassment prevention;

(E) in accordance with sections 4001 and 4111, child sexual abuse awareness and prevention programs or activities, such as programs or activities designed to provide—

- (i) age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate instruction for students in child sexual abuse awareness and prevention, including how to recognize child sexual abuse and how to safely report child sexual abuse; and
 - (ii) information to parents and guardians of students about child sexual abuse awareness and prevention, including how to recognize child sexual abuse and how to discuss child sexual abuse with a child;
- (F) designing and implementing a locally-tailored plan to reduce exclusionary discipline practices in elementary and secondary schools that—
 - (i) is consistent with best practices;
 - (ii) includes strategies that are evidence-based (to the extent the State, in consultation with local educational agencies in the State, determines that such evidence is reasonably available); and
 - (iii) is aligned with the long-term goal of prison reduction through opportunities, mentoring, intervention, support, and other education services, referred to as a “youth PROMISE plan”; or
- (G) implementation of schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports, including through coordination with similar activities carried out under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), in order to improve academic outcomes and school conditions for student learning;
- (H) designating a site resource coordinator at a school or local educational agency to provide a variety of services, such as—
 - (i) establishing partnerships within the community to provide resources and support for schools;
 - (ii) ensuring that all service and community partners are aligned with the academic expectations of a community school in order to improve student success; and
 - (iii) strengthening relationships between schools and communities; or
- (I) pay for success initiatives aligned with the purposes of this section.

Safe and Healthy Students Allowable Uses Planning Tool

Activity Category	Category Description
Prevention (A) Drug and violence prevention activities and programs that are evidence-based (to the extent the State, in consultation with local educational agencies in the State, determines that such evidence is reasonably available), including—	(i) programs to educate students against the use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, smokeless tobacco products, and electronic cigarettes; and (ii) professional development and training for school and specialized instructional support personnel and interested community members in prevention, education, early identification, intervention mentoring, recovery support services and, where appropriate, rehabilitation referral, as related to drug and violence prevention;
Mental Health (B) In accordance with sections 4001 and 4111—	(i) school-based mental health services, including early identification of mental health symptoms, drug use, and violence, and appropriate referrals to direct individual or group counseling services, which may be provided by school-based mental health services providers; and (ii) school-based mental health services partnership programs that— (I) are conducted in partnership with a public or private mental health entity or health care entity; and (II) provide comprehensive school-based mental health services and supports and staff development for school and community personnel working in the school that are — (aa) based on trauma-informed practices that are evidence-based (to the extent the State, in consultation with local educational agencies in the State, determines that such evidence is reasonably available); (bb) coordinated (where appropriate) with early intervening services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C 1400 et seq.); and (cc) provided by qualified mental and behavioral health professionals who are certified or licensed by the State involved and practicing within their area of expertise.
Health & Safety (C) Programs or activities that—	(i) integrate health and safety practices into school or athletic programs; (ii) support a healthy, active lifestyle, including nutritional education and regular, structured physical education activities and programs, that may address chronic disease management with instruction led by school nurses, nurse practitioners, or other appropriate specialists or professionals to help maintain the well-being of students; (iii) help prevent bullying and harassment; (iv) improve instructional practices for developing relationship-building skills, such as effective communication, and improve safety through the recognition and prevention of coercion, violence, or abuse, including teen and dating violence, stalking, domestic abuse, and sexual violence and harassment; (v) provide mentoring and school counseling to all students, including children who are at risk of academic failure, dropping out of school, involvement in criminal or delinquent activities, or drug use and abuse; (vi) establish or improve school dropout and re-entry programs; or (vii) establish learning environments and enhance students’ effective learning skills that are essential for school readiness and academic success, such as by providing integrated systems of student and family

Activity Category	Category Description
	supports;
<p style="text-align: center;">Training</p> <p>(D) High-quality training for school personnel, including specialized instructional support personnel, related to—</p>	<p>(i) suicide prevention;</p> <p>(ii) effective and trauma-informed practices in classroom management;</p> <p>(iii) crisis management and conflict resolution techniques;</p> <p>(iv) human trafficking (defined, for the purposes of this subparagraph, as an act or practice described in paragraph (9) or (10) of section 103 or the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102));</p> <p>(v) school-based violence prevention strategies;</p> <p>(vi) drug abuse prevention, including educating children facing substance abuse at home; and</p> <p>(vii) bullying and harassment prevention;</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Child Sexual Abuse</p> <p>(E) in accordance with sections 4001 and 4111, child sexual abuse awareness and prevention programs or activities designed to provide—</p>	<p>(i) age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate instruction for students in child sexual abuse awareness and prevention including how to recognize sexual abuse and how to safely report child sexual abuse; and</p> <p>(ii) information to parents and guardians of students about child sexual abuse awareness and prevention, including how to recognize child sexual abuse and how to discuss child sexual abuse with a child;</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Discipline</p> <p>(F) designing and implementing a locally-tailored plan to reduce exclusionary discipline practices in elementary and secondary schools that—</p>	<p>(i) is consistent with best practices;</p> <p>(ii) includes strategies that are evidence-based (to the extent the State, in consultation with local educational agencies in the State, determines that such evidence is reasonably available); and</p> <p>(iii) is aligned with the long-term goal of prison reduction through opportunities, mentoring, intervention, support, and other education services, referred to as a “youth PROMISE plan”; or</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">PBIS</p>	<p>(G) Implementation of schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports, including through coordination with similar activities carried out under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), in order to improve academic outcomes and school conditions for student learning;</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Resource Coordinator</p> <p>(H) designating a site resource coordinator at a school or local educational agency to provide a variety of services such as—</p>	<p>(i) establishing partnerships within the community to provide resources and support for schools;</p> <p>(ii) ensuring that all service and community partners are aligned with the academic expectations of a community school in order to improve student success; and</p> <p>(iii) strengthening relationships between schools and communities; or</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Other (requires approved description)</p>	<p>(J) Other activities and programs to support safe and healthy students.</p>

END OF DOCUMENT