



REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)

STRONGER CONNECTIONS GRANT

<p>DEADLINE: 4:00 p.m. (ET) May 15, 2023 <i>(Applications received after 4 p.m. (ET) will NOT be reviewed)</i></p>	<p>ISSUED BY: Kentucky Department of Education Division of Student Success Office of Continuous Improvement and Support</p>
<p>ADDRESS QUESTIONS TO: Kentucky Department of Education Procurement Branch KDERFP@education.ky.gov <i>(Questions will only be accepted via email)</i> March 24, 2023, at 4 p.m. (ET)</p>	<p>SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO: KDERFP@education.ky.gov <i>Only electronic applications accepted</i></p>

Specific Instructions:

Failure to follow these specific instructions will deem an applicant non-responsive and the application will not be scored.

- Eligibility is limited to Kentucky public school districts and state schools.
- A district may submit one application on behalf of one or more targeted schools or as a district-wide initiative. Districts are limited to a single application.
- Awards are limited to districts who meet the definition of a “high-need LEA” as defined in this RFA.
- The applicant (local education agency) must be registered in the [System for Awards Management](#), maintain an active registration and have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and CAGE Code number.
- Applicants are responsible for monitoring [KDE’s Competitive Grants webpage](#) for amendments and updates to the posted RFA and supporting materials.
- KDE reserves the right to waive minor technical deficiencies.

Page 2: Language edited.

Page 3: Clarification on private non-public eligibility.

Page 4: Edits to chart

Pages 6/7: Clarification on allowable/unallowable expenses.

Page 8: Addition of Private/Non-Public school budget to list of application components.

Page 8: Addition of school hardening materials to list of unallowable items.

Page 10: Greater specification in High-Need LEA criteria

Page 13: Additions to budget rubric.

Page 15: Clarification on counting private/non-public participation.

Page 28: New private non-public budget form added.

Application Timeline

Date	Event	Location	Participation
March 2023	RFA released	Online	N/A
March 22, 2023 9 a.m. - Noon ET	Technical assistance webinar	Online	Attending live, or watching the recorded TA session, is strongly recommended
March 24, 2023 By 4 p.m. ET	Questions deadline	Email	N/A
On or around March 28, 2023	FAQ Posts	Online	Strongly Recommended
May 15, 2023 By 4 p.m. ET	Proposal deadline	Emailed to KDE	Required
June 12-16, 2023	Peer review	Online	N/A
On or around August 1, 2023	Awardees posted to KDE website	Online	N/A
August/September 2023	MOA process (KDE & LEA)	N/A	Districts
On or around October 1, 2023	Funding available to LEA	N/A	Districts

Background and Purpose

The Stronger Connections Grant (SCG) Program is intended to **promote LEA plans to create safe, healthy, and supportive schools that reflect a comprehensive set of evidence-based components**. Safe and welcoming 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 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).

KDE has established an **absolute priority** to ensure high-need LEAs are served. As defined by this KDE program, a high-need LEA is an LEA where at least forty percent (40%) of the LEA's

student population qualifies for free/reduced lunch (F/RL; National School Lunch Program), **and** the LEA must meet at least one of the following characteristics:

- Has a demonstrated increase in the chronic absenteeism rate, exclusionary discipline (out-of-school suspensions and expulsions) rate, referral to the juvenile justice system or Family Accountability, Intervention and Response (FAIR) Team rate, bullying/harassment rate, school violence rate, or school substance use rate since the 2018/2019 school year;
- Has experienced a natural disaster significant enough to qualify the county in which the LEA is located for individual or public assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) since January 2021; or,
- Has experienced a school shooting, suicide cluster, terrorism, school bus accident, student homicides (off campus), or hate crimes committed against students, faculty members, and/or staff since January 2018.

To be clear, eligible applicants must meet both factors of the absolute priority (F/RL and at least one characteristic). **Private Non-Public (PNP) schools that choose to participate in the LEA's application do not need to meet the 40% F/RL requirement but must meet at least one of the characteristics listed noted above.**

KDE will further prioritize applications that include [evidence-based](#) practices that meet either the strong or moderate evidence definitions found in 34 C.F.R. 77.1 and included within this RFA (pp. 19-21). Additionally, applications that address mental health supports and/or training for staff and/or students as well as those that include funding for emergency management planning supported by external vendors will receive priority.

Applicants will in their proposals describe how they have engaged with families, educators, and the local community in determining how these funds will be used. LEAs will be required to describe, in detail, how they solicited feedback on their application, which groups were included in the solicitation, a summary of the feedback received, a discussion as to how solicitations are documented for later review, and a discussion as to how feedback informed their decision-making process.

Funding

The Strong Connections Grant is a one-time competitive grant for an award period of up to three years, funded through the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) of 2022 to help LEAs and schools establish safe, healthy, and supportive learning opportunities and environments. Grants will be sub-awarded by KDE through Title IV, Part A funding of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The competitive application process will ensure high-need LEAs receive federal funds to establish safer and healthier learning environments, and to prevent and respond to acts of bullying, violence, and hate that impact school communities at individual and systemic levels, among other programs and activities.

The KDE has approximately \$14 million available for this grant competition and will make one-time awards to be used over a period of three years for targeted school(s); all schools; or the implementation of a district-wide model. Project activities may begin when MOAs between KDE and the district are in place, likely October 1, 2023. Grant funds must be expended or encumbered by September 30, 2026.

Funds are available to support activities in PreK-12 schools and alternative education programs. Districts can submit one application. While applicants may propose work supporting students in multiple schools, proposals should be focused enough to have the potential for significant impact on targeted schools or student groups. Specifically, the proposal should describe whether the district will apply for funding through at least one of the following three models:

- **Whole district.** The project will be implemented holistically to support the district’s overall work to create safe, healthy, and supportive schools. An example of whole-district support might include (but not be limited to) whole district professional learning for teachers/staff/leaders or the development of a district-wide emergency response plan.
- **Targeted schools.** The project will target specific schools as described in the applicant’s proposal. Districts are free to choose individual schools or sets of schools and will justify that choice in the proposal. An example of a targeted school approach might include significant professional learning in a high school(s) with documented incidents of violence or a school recovering from a traumatic event (e.g., suicide, teacher death, tornado).
- **All schools.** The project will provide materials and support to all schools in the district, including district-wide programming/curricula, professional learning, calming spaces, etc.

Proposals that target schools **must include** the signatures of each principal of the targeted school(s) on the Principal Signature Form (attached). Whole district projects do not need to include the principal signature form.

The award amount will be based upon the student population being served by the grant based on the table below and the LEA’s 2022 Enrollment. Applicants will enter the number of **students being served** on the cover page for Whole District applicants or will tally the number from the completed Principal Signature Page and then record that number on the Application Cover Sheet. **Funding is based on the number of students to be served. However, students may not be double counted.**

School/District Population to Be Served	Total Award Amount
2,500 or fewer students	\$300,000.00
2,501 – 4,999 students	\$450,000.00
5,000 – 7,499 students	\$600,000.00
7,500 – 9,999 students	\$750,000.00

10,000 – 24,999 students	\$900,000.00
25,000 – 49,999 students	\$1,500,000.00
50,000+ students	\$3,000,000.00
<p>Note: Enrollment is based on Kentucky’s Enrollment for 2022 as posted on the Student Report Card and found here: https://brightbytes-public.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/kde/2022/student_membership_2022.csv</p>	

Key Terms and Definitions

Supplement/Supplant: Funds must be used to supplement not supplant. Grantees must never use funds to pay for existing levels of service funded through any source. That is, if something is currently funded from another source, the grantee cannot replace that funding with SCG dollars. Therefore, SCG funds may be used for:

- New activities, strategies, materials, plan development, etc.
- Extension of an existing, effective program or set of strategies to serve more students, grades, or schools.

For this program, we will allow the extension of an existing, effective program or set of strategies previously funded by temporary funds, e.g., pandemic-related dollars, that will end by September 30, 2023. The applicant must demonstrate in its application the effectiveness of the existing program/strategy **and** the funding source and gap.

Requirements for Funding

The Stronger Connections Grant Program includes an **absolute priority** related to the needs of LEAs based on free/reduced lunch rates ([Qualifying Data](#)). This includes a minimum of 40% of students qualifying for F/R lunch as well as one of three noted categories of need: increases in non-cognitive data, including chronic absenteeism, disciplinary events, violence, etc.; a natural disaster; and other traumatic events, including school shooting(s), student/teacher death(s), terrorism, hate crime(s), school bus accident(s), etc.

A strong SCG proposal will address these stated needs in ways that create a clear plan for student, family, and school/district support—helping school environments become safe, welcoming, and engaging. The evaluation criteria will further help applicants design their proposals and should be addressed clearly and in the order presented. Criteria include:

Part 1: High-Need LEA Data. Applicants should present the required data briefly; a narrative description for this is not necessary. Part 1 prioritizes districts with higher levels of socio-economic need.

Part 2: Project Need Description. Applicants will describe the need of the district and/or schools based on, among other needs, the required non-cognitive indicators, and the impacts on students (e.g., chronic absenteeism, disciplines, disasters, bus accidents, shootings). Applicants may use whatever data are needed to make their case for the project; however, this

section should detail required elements to achieve full points.

Part 3: Current and Historic Services. Applicants should describe their current and historical safe and healthy schools' initiatives, their effectiveness, and their shortcomings then link past efforts to the strategies and programs you will propose for this project.

Part 4: District Design/Plan. Applicants should describe the district's design or plan for creating a healthy, supportive environment for students across the district or in targeted schools. The project's design or plan should align to the stated need and grow from current or past services or activities to create safe and welcoming school environments. Applicants will submit the evidence form to illustrate at least one project component meets the evidence-base as defined on pages 21-22. In addition, the KDE will prioritize applications addressing mental health supports and/or training for staff and/or students as well as those that include funding for emergency management planning supported by external vendors will receive priority.

Part 5: Implementation. Proposals should include a description of the people/organizations important to the implementation of the project, including the roles they will play in the project. This may include key district and/or school staff members and their roles, key partners and/or contractors, professional learning providers, and community and family members.

Part 6: Evaluation. Proposals should include performance measures to guide the project and measure success. Each applicant should set its own goal(s), objectives, and/or outcomes that are realistic given the up to three-year funding period. Applicants are, for example, free to include a process-based measurement system rather than attempting to measure levels of change common to many grant projects. Key components in Part 6 will include statements of what will be measured and when, the data that will be collected, how activities and data will be monitored, and how the applicant will work with stakeholders to establish and use a continuous feedback loop for the project.

Part 7: Budget. Proposals must include a completed Budget Form with sufficient line-item detail to see the relevance and purpose of expended funds. The Budget Form is limited to 5 pages. In addition, proposals must address the evaluation criteria regarding sustainability, the district's administrative capacity regarding grants and grant management/implementation, alignment of expenses to the project's design, how expenditures will be monitored over the course of the grant project, and how applicants will supplement (not supplant) their current efforts through this work. These responses are included within the 25-page narrative.

Allowable use of funds

The SCG should 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. **These guidelines apply to both public and private/non-public schools utilizing these funds.**

The KDE has determined a comprehensive list of allowable activities for districts and their schools to implement through these funds, ranging from emergency response plans to mentoring and physical fitness. The outline below includes the types of activities.

- Implementing high-quality, trauma-informed, comprehensive emergency operating plans and emergency drills
- Supporting safety and violence prevention programs
- Creating and implementing anti-bullying and harassment plans and integrated practices (e.g., PBIS, mental health supports, anti-hate programs) to promote inclusion and to prevent or respond to bullying and harassment, including identity-based hate and harassment
- Expanding access to integrated social, emotional, and mental health supports for students
- Providing comprehensive systems for monitoring and supporting student well-being
- Reducing exclusionary disciplinary practices through the implementation of trauma-informed, culturally responsive discipline, including restorative practices and fair and inclusive dress codes or grooming policies
- Engaging communities and families, including those targeted by identity-based harassment, on an ongoing basis to assess and revise policies or practices with a connection to bullying or harassment, such as strict dress codes and grooming policies
- Implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support to support and respond to student needs
- Meeting the social and emotional needs of students
- Meeting the mental health needs of students
- Supporting strategies that meet the needs of students with disabilities.
- Supporting preschool students
- Supporting students in alternative education programs
- Increasing student connections and a sense of belonging at school
- Promoting student physical fitness
- Preventing or responding to identity-based hate and harassment
- Providing related professional development to educators, including principals and other leaders, to support strategy implementation such as trauma-informed practices.
- Developing early detection, screening, or warning systems to identify students who may be at risk or those in need of additional supports
- Providing integrated support services for students
- Hiring mental health professionals and other critical student support staff such as mentors, integrated student support coordinators, post-secondary education transition coaches and student success coaches
- Implementing threat assessment systems or teams
- Indirect costs are allowed at the restricted indirect cost rate. Indirect cost rate are available at [Indirect Costs 2022-2023](#).

Unallowable use of funds

The SCG is funded through Title IV-Part A and includes the limitations therein. In addition to those limitations, unallowable costs for the Kentucky SCG program include the following: **These guidelines apply to both public and private/ non-public schools utilizing these funds.**

- School resource officer salaries or related expenses
- Drug testing
- Security services
- Software and laptop purchases greater than 15% of total funding
- Technology related repairs and maintenance
- Capital assets including land
- Costs of rental, including rental of land, building, equipment, vehicle, computers, copier, portable classrooms, storage containers, machinery, or other rentals
- **School hardening materials (security glass, new doors, new locks, etc.)**
- **Gym or other memberships for students.**
- **Fitness and/or sports equipment that is used/maintained/stored at a private home.**

In addition, LEAs are prohibited from using SCG funds for the purposes of safety related building upgrades that require construction or renovation, or funding safety projects or construction projects that were not completed by September 30, 2022.

Allocation of funds

Funding will be provided on a quarterly reimbursement basis only. Project activities may begin upon receipt of a fully executed contract approved by the Finance and Administration Cabinet. Grant funds must be expended or encumbered by September 30, 2026. **Funds cannot be encumbered for activities or services after September 30, 2026.**

NOTE: No funds may be expended prior to the effective date of the approved contract.

Application components

The application must contain the following items listed below. The application should be assembled in the order listed below. No additional documents or attachments will be reviewed.

1. Application Cover Page (attachment)
2. SCG Program Assurances form (attachment)
3. Principal(s) Signature page (for applications targeting select schools)
4. Table of Contents (designed by the applicant, no more than 1 page)
5. Proposal narrative that responds to the evaluation criteria detailed on pages 10-13
6. Reference page (designed by the applicant, no more than 1 page)
7. Evidence Form (attachment)
8. Budget Form (attachment, limited to 5 pages)
9. Private/Non-public School Consultation Form (attachment) **and Private/Non-public school budget form (if needed)**
10. Certifications regarding lobbying, department, suspension, and other responsibility matters; and drug-free workplace requirements. (attachment)

Formatting requirements

The proposal **must** use the following format:

- Double-spaced

- Letter-size (8 ½ x 11)
- Calibri 12-point font (no compressed, narrow, or light fonts allowed)
- Margins for the narrative portion should be 1-inch on all sides
- 25-page maximum for the narrative. Additional pages exceeding this limit will not be reviewed
- Pages should be numbered consecutively starting with the first page of the narrative
- Texts within charts, graphs, and tables may be in Calibri 10-point font and single-spaced
- Bulleted lists should be **single-spaced** and must be in Calibri 12-point font
- Charts, graphs, bulleted lists, and tables may not comprise more than 20% of the total narrative (5 pages)

In addition to the proposal’s 25-page maximum, applicants should add a reference page. The reference page may be single-spaced, Calibri 10-point font and should follow APA format. The single reference page is not included in the 25-page limit for the proposal narrative.

Submission of application

1. Scan or save the completed application in its entirety, including all signatures, to PDF format. Save the original application as **SCG24 District Name**. (For example: Lovely County Schools would save the original application as *SCG24 Lovely*.)
2. Scan or save a blinded/redacted copy of the application in its entirety to PDF format. Save the redacted application as **SCG24 District B**. (For example: Lovely County Schools would save the redacted application as *SCG24 Lovely B*.) The blind copy PDF should be less than 5,000 KB in size.
3. Email the application to KDERFP@education.ky.gov
 - On the subject line of the email, type **SCG24 District Name**.
 - If at all possible, **send both attachments in the same email**. If necessary, the application may be sent in parts. **ALL PARTS MUST BE RECEIVED-DATE/TIME STAMPED BY THE DEADLINE of May 15, 2023, at 4 p.m. ET.**
 - Keep in mind that email coming into the KDE is routed for security purposes through multiple networks and servers. Allow ample time for this and the possibility that email is not always received on the first try.
 - Applications received after the deadline will not be reviewed or considered for award.
 - Applicants can request confirmation of receipt in their submission email. KDE will confirm the receipt of the email and attachments (if any). Please note the KDE does not open attachments to check for accuracy.
 - Do not CC others on application submissions.
 - Do not send Google docs or documents from Google drives.

Redacting Instructions

Blinding or redacting is the removal of identifying information from an application. Identifying information includes four things:

- District name
- School name
- County name
- City name

Names of individuals and signatures should **NOT** be blinded/redacted. That is, names and signatures on forms **must be legible** in the blinded copy to help reviewers confirm all requirements are met. For example, “Superintendent Barb Brown of Lovely County Elementary School in Gorgeous, KY” should appear in the proposal as:

Superintendent Barb Brown of [REDACTED] County Elementary School in [REDACTED], KY

Blind copies should be completely redacted electronically using black highlighting or X’d out. In addition, blind copies **will be scored as received**. That is, KDE will not correct or repair incorrectly blinded proposals. Because peer reviewers will receive the proposals as they are submitted, errors in blinding may directly impact scores.

Award Notification

Districts will receive preliminary notice of awards on or around **August 1, 2023**.

Evaluation of Applications

Independent reviewers will be trained for this specific competition. They will evaluate applications using the RFA and the scoring rubric established in this RFA. Recommendations will be based on independent reviewer scores. Reviewers will be selected based upon grant writing or reviewing experience, Title IV-A funding requirements, and/or expertise in safe/healthy school initiatives and strategies. A Call for Reviewers, including a reviewer application, is available on the [KDE Competitive Grants webpage](#).

Criteria	Maximum Points
<p>Part 1: High-Need LEA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SCG program prioritizes high-need districts based on the percentage of students who qualify for free/reduced lunch based on the 2022 Qualifying Data. Applicants need only to list their rates in this section; no description is required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – District with 40% to 59.99% F/R lunch rate (eligibility met): 0 points. – District with greater than 60% to 74.99% F/R lunch rate: 3 points – District with greater than 75% to 89.99% F/R lunch rate: 7 points – District with 90% or greater F/R lunch rate: 10 points <p>All applicants must meet the absolute priority as defined in this RFA (pages 2-3). No application with less than a 40% F/R lunch rate district wide will be scored.</p>	<p>10 points</p>

Criteria	Maximum Points
<p>Part 2: Need Applicants will describe the need of the district and/or schools based on, among other needs, the required non-cognitive indicators, and the impacts on students (e.g., chronic absenteeism, disciplines, disasters, bus accidents, shootings).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure eligibility and the depth of need, describe the non-cognitive, socio-economic, and other relevant student needs related to a safe, healthy, welcoming district and, as appropriate, the targeted school(s). Provide and describe additional appropriate data related to the district/school(s) to provide context for the proposal. Data may include, for example, the numbers and demographics of students to be served, impacts of COVID-19 on the district/school(s), etc. 	<p>8 points</p>
<p>Part 3: Current and Historic Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the current and historical safe and healthy schools' initiatives in the district/school(s), their effectiveness, and their shortcomings. Link past efforts to the strategies and programs you will propose for this project. 	<p>10 points</p>
<p>Part 4A: District Design/Plan (30 points) Applicants should describe the district's design or plan for creating a healthy, supportive environment for students across the district or in targeted schools. The project's design or plan should align to the stated need and grow from current or past services or activities to create safe and welcoming school environments. The project design should describe how it meets the tiered evidence levels as outlined in the What Works Clearinghouse and noted in the attached definitions. Identify the Evidence-Based Practice(s) (EBPs), evidence-informed, and/or culturally promising practices that will be used. Discuss how each intervention chosen is appropriate for the target student population of children you are proposing to serve and any subpopulations of students and the outcomes you want to achieve. Describe any modifications (e.g., culture, race, language, sexuality, gender, gender identity, etc.) that will be made to the EBP(s) and the reason the modifications are necessary. If you are not proposing any modifications, indicate so in your response. Describe how you will monitor and ensure fidelity of EBPs, evidence-informed and/or promising practices that will be implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application clearly presents the project model to be used (targeting specific schools, targeting all schools, or district-wide improvement model) Describe the district's design or plan for creating a healthy, supportive environment for students across the district or in targeted schools. The project's design or plan should align to the stated need and grow from current or past services or activities to create safe and welcoming school environments. The district plan describes how students' social, emotional, physical, and mental well-being needs are being addressed. <p>Part 4B: Evidence Level (10 points) The project design meets evidence levels as outlined in the What Works Clearinghouse</p>	<p>45 points</p>

Criteria	Maximum Points
<p>and noted in the attached definitions based upon the completed evidence form. The project design meets “evidence-based,” when used with respect to an SEA, LEA, or school activity, means an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on the four tiers of evidence listed below. Applicants will only receive points for the highest tier addressed, not a combination of strategies that meet one or more tiers.</p> <p>Tier 1 - District provides Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study. 10 points will be awarded.</p> <p>Tier 2 -District provides Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study. 7 points will be awarded.</p> <p>Tier 3 - District provides Promising evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias. 5 points will be awarded.</p> <p>Tier 4 -District demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention. 3 points will be awarded.</p> <p>Part 4C: Training and/or Planning (5 points) Applications that address either mental health supports and/or training for staff and/or students or those that include funding for emergency management planning supported by external vendors will receive priority. Up to 5 points will be awarded.</p>	
<p>Part 5: Implementation. Proposals should include a description of the people/organizations important to the implementation of the project, including the roles they will play in the project. This may include key district and/or school staff members and their roles, key partners and/or contractors, professional learning providers, and community and family members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the people/organizations important to the implementation of the project, including the roles they will play in the project. • Provide a whole-project timeline (up to three years) of activities that includes the parties responsible for each. • Describe how the district engaged with families, educators, and the local community in determining how these funds will be used. Describe, in detail: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — How the district solicited feedback on the application and which groups were included in the solicitation — A summary of the feedback received and how solicitations were documented for later review — A description as to how feedback informed the district’s decision-making process • Describe how the district will engage and solicit feedback from families, educators, 	30 points

Criteria	Maximum Points
<p>and the local community over the course of the up to three-year project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the plan to professionally develop teachers, leaders, and/or staff, as appropriate, including the intensity of the professional development. Describe the plan to inform and/or train students, families, and community members, as appropriate. 	
<p>Part 6: Evaluation. Each applicant should set its own goal(s), objectives, and/or outcomes that are realistic given the three-year funding period. Applicants are, for example, free to include a process-based measurement system rather than attempting to measure levels of change common to many grant projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List and describe performance measures that will guide the project and measure success. These objectives and/or outcomes should be realistic given the three-year project period. Include a timeline of the measures and the data collection process, including the person(s) responsible for that work. Describe the district’s plan to monitor and continuously improve implementation of the project and its activities (i.e., continuous feedback and improvement loop). Describe how the district will engage students, families, staff, and community leaders in the review of data and progress toward goal achievement. 	12 points
<p>Part 7: Budget. Proposals should include a completed Budget Form with sufficient line-item detail to see the relevance and purpose of expended funds. If a private non-public school(s) choose to participate with the LEA the SCG Private Non-Public Budget Form must be completed. In addition, proposals should address the criteria included in the evaluation section regarding sustainability, the district’s administrative capacity regarding grants and grant management/implementation, alignment of expenses to the project’s design, how expenditures will be monitored over the course of the grant project, and how applicants will supplement (not supplant) their current efforts through this work within the 25-page narrative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal includes a completed Budget Form with sufficient line-item detail to see the relevance and purpose of expended funds. (10 points) <p><u>Within the narrative section the applicant:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes the district’s capacity regarding grant management and implementation. Describes how the outlined expenditures are relevant to the district’s Need and the Project Design/Plan. Describes the district’s plan to monitor grant expenditures and ensure funds supplement (not supplant) other district funding. Describes how/whether partners may be providing services at limited or no costs—thereby supplementing your project plan. 	20 points

Criteria	Maximum Points
Total points available:	135

Appendix of forms

- Application Cover Page
- Principal(s) Signature page
- SCG Project Budget Form
- Certifications regarding lobbying, debarment, suspension, and other responsibility matters; and drug-free workplace requirements.
- Definitions of evidence base as seen at 34 C.F.R. 77.1.
- Evidence Form Directions
- Evidence Form
- SCG Program Assurances
- Private Non-Public School Consultation Form
- **SCG Private Non-Public School Budget Form (if needed)**

Resources

- [Non-Regulatory Guidance Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants](#)
- [Resources for Selecting Evidence-Based Practices for the Stronger Connections Grant](#)

Stronger Connections Grant Application Cover Page

DISTRICT NAME			
DISTRICT ADDRESS			
SUPERINTENDENT NAME		Phone: _____	Email: _____
GRANT CONTACT/WRITER		Phone: _____	Email: _____
Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) #		Fiscal Agent SAM CAGE code #	
IMPLEMENTATION MODEL (Choose at least one, as defined in the RFA) <small>No district will receive more funding than for its total enrollment.</small> <small>*Please reference the SCG Scenario Examples for more information about completing this section, if needed.</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> Whole district <small>*Student Enrollment plus number from participating Private Non-Public Consultation form (if applicable):</small> _____ (Principal Signature page not required)	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted School(s) # Of schools _____ <small>*Student Enrollment total from Principal Signature page(s) and participating Private Non-Public Consultation form (if applicable):</small> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> All schools in the district # Of schools _____ <small>*Student Enrollment total from Principal Signature page(s) and participating Private Non-Public Consultation form (if applicable):</small> _____
	ABSOLUTE PRIORITY CHARACTERISTIC (Check all that apply) ABSOLUTE PRIORITY DISTRICT F/R %: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Has a demonstrated increase in chronic absenteeism rate, exclusionary discipline (out-of-school suspensions and expulsions) rate, referral to the juvenile justice system or Family Accountability, Intervention and Response (FAIR) Team rate, bullying/harassment rate, school violence rate, or school substance use rate since the 2018/2019 school year; <input type="checkbox"/> Has experienced a natural disaster significant enough to qualify the county in which the LEA is located for individual or public assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) since January 2021; or, <input type="checkbox"/> Has experienced a school shooting, suicide cluster, terrorism, school bus accident, student homicides (off campus), or hate crimes committed against students, faculty members, and/or staff since January 2018.	

I assure the attached application contains accurate information. I understand grant applications with incorrect or falsified information will not be considered for review or will be revoked once awarded. I assure the application has been reviewed and approved for implementation by all shareholders and the district and school will comply with all requirements, both technical and programmatic, pertaining to the grant. Failure to continuously meet compliance requirements and deadlines could result in partial or complete loss of funding of grant and may impact future funding.

Superintendent

Date

Notary

Date

Notary commission expiration date

Principal Signature Page

Applicants who propose to target individual schools—including some or all schools in the district—with school level materials and support as described above **must include** the signatures of each principal of the targeted school(s) on the Principal Signature Form (attached). **Whole district projects do not need to include the principal signature form.** Electronic signatures are acceptable.

Districts may add rows to the form as needed to include all selected schools. Please use each line on the form before creating additional pages.

To that end: I/We confirm by the signature(s) below that the attached proposal was reviewed and approved for implementation by the school principal. I/We agree to the requirements listed in the Stronger Connections Grant Program (CSG) and will comply with the assurances applicable to this grant.

School	Enrollment	Principal Signature	Date
TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION TO BE SERVED BY GRANT			

SCG Project Budget Form

Instructions: Use this form to provide a detailed, itemized explanation of expenditures for each MUNIS Code. Successful approval of budget is pending further review by the KDE. The budget should be for the entire amount regardless of the number of years you are proposing for implementation. **The SCG Project Budget Form is limited to 5 pages.**

MUNIS Object Code	MUNIS Object Code Title	Explanation of Expenditures	Amount
Total			

CERTIFICATIONS REGARDING LOBBYING; DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS; AND DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE REQUIREMENTS

Applicants should refer to the regulations cited below to determine the certification to which they are required to attest. Applicants should also review the instructions for certification included in the regulations before completing this form. Signature of the form provides for compliance with certification requirements under 34 CFR Part 82, "New Restrictions on Lobbying," and 34 CFR Part 85, "Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)." The certifications shall be treated as a material representation of fact upon which reliance will be placed when the Department of Education determines to award the covered transaction, grant, or cooperative agreement.

1. LOBBYING

As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 82, for persons entering into a grant or cooperative agreement over \$100,000, as defined at 34 CFR Part 82, Sections 82.105 and 82.110, the applicant certifies that:

(a) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any Federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal grant or cooperative agreement;

(b) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form–LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;

(c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants, contracts under grants and cooperative agreements, and subcontracts) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

2. DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS

As required by Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 85, for prospective participants in primary covered transactions as defined at 34 CFR Part 85, Sections 85.105 and 85.110:

A. The applicant certifies that it and its principals:

(a) Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any Federal department or agency;

(b) Have not within a three-year period preceding this application been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;

(c) Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State, or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (2)(b) of this certification; and

(d) Have not within a three-year period preceding this application had one or more public transaction (Federal, State, or local) terminated for cause or default; and

B. Where the applicant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, he or she shall attach an explanation to this application.

**3. DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE
(GRANTEES OTHER THAN INDIVIDUALS)**

As required by the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 85, Subpart F, for grantees, as defined at 34 CFR Part 85, Section 85.605 and 85.610:

A. The applicant certifies that it will or will continue to provide a drug-free workplace by:

(a) Publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the grantee's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibition;

(b) Establishing an on-going drug-free awareness program to inform employees about:

(1) The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;

(2) The grantee's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace;

(3) Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and

(4) The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace;

(c) Making it a requirement that each employee to be engaged in the performance of the grant be given a copy of the statement required by paragraph (a);

(d) Notifying the employee in the statement required by paragraph (a) that as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will:

(1) Abide by the terms of the statement; and

(2) Notify the employer in writing of his or her conviction for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction;

(e) Notifying the agency, in writing, within 10 calendar days after receiving notice under subparagraph (d)(2) from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction. Employers of convicted employees must provide notice, including position title, to: Director, Grants Policy and Oversight Staff, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W. (Room 3652, GSA Regional Office Building No. 3), Washington, DC 20202-4248. Notice shall include the identification number(s) of each affected grant:

(f) Taking one of the following actions, within 30 calendar days of receiving notice under subparagraph (d)(2), with respect to any employee who is so convicted:

(1) Taking appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; or

(2) Requiring such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a Federal, State, or local health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency:

(g) Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f).

B. The grantee may insert in the space provided below the site(s) for the performance of work done in connection with the specific grant:

Place of Performance (Street address, city, county, state, zip code)

Check [] if there are workplaces on file that are not identified here.

**DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE
(GRANTEES WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS)**

As required by the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 85, Subpart F, for grantees, as defined at 34 CFR Part 85, Sections 85.605 and 85.610:

A. As a condition of the grant, I certify that I will not engage in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance in conduction any activity with the grant; and

B. If convicted of a criminal drug offense resulting from a violation occurring during the conduct of any grant activity, I will report the conviction, in writing, within 10 calendar days of the conviction, to: Director, Grants Policy and Oversight Staff, Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W. (Room 3652, GSA Regional Office Building No. 3), Washington, DC 20202-4248. Notice shall include the identification number(s) of each affected grant.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certifications.

NAME OF APPLICANT	
PR/AWARD NUMBER AND / OR PROJECT NAME	
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
SIGNATURE	DATE

Definitions of evidence-base as seen at 34 C.F.R. 77.1.

Evidence-based means the proposed project component is supported by one or more of strong evidence, moderate evidence, promising evidence, or evidence that demonstrates a rationale.

Demonstrates a rationale (Tier 4) means a key project component included in the project's logic model is informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes.

Moderate evidence (Tier 2) means that there is evidence of effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome for a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to receive that component, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

- (i) A practice guide prepared by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks reporting a "strong evidence base" or "moderate evidence base" for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;
- (ii) An intervention report prepared by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks reporting a "positive effect" or "potentially positive effect" on a relevant outcome based on a "medium to large" extent of evidence, with no reporting of a "negative effect" or "potentially negative effect" on a relevant outcome; or,
- (iii) A single experimental study or quasi-experimental design study reviewed and reported by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks, or otherwise assessed by the Department using version 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks, as appropriate, and that—
 - (A) Meets WWC standards with or without reservations;
 - (B) Includes at least one statistically significant and positive (*i.e.*, favorable) effect on a relevant outcome;
 - (C) Includes no overriding statistically significant and negative effects on relevant outcomes reported in the study or in a corresponding WWC intervention report prepared under version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks; and,
 - (D) Is based on a sample from more than one site (*e.g.*, State, county, city, school district, or postsecondary campus) and includes at least 350 students or other individuals across sites. Multiple studies of the same project component that each meet requirements in paragraphs (iii)(A), (B), and (C) of this definition may together satisfy the requirement in this paragraph (iii)(D).

Promising evidence (Tier 3) means that there is evidence of the effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

- (i) A practice guide prepared by WWC reporting a "strong evidence base" or "moderate evidence base" for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;

(ii) An intervention report prepared by the WWC reporting a “positive effect” or “potentially positive effect” on a relevant outcome with no reporting of a “negative effect” or “potentially negative effect” on a relevant outcome; or

(iii) A single study assessed by the Department, as appropriate, that -

(A) Is an experimental study, a quasi-experimental design study, or a well-designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias (*e.g.*, a study using regression methods to account for differences between a treatment group and a comparison group); and

(B) Includes at least one statistically significant and positive (*i.e.*, favorable) effect on a relevant outcome.

Strong evidence (Tier 1) means that there is evidence of the effectiveness of a key project component in improving a relevant outcome for a sample that overlaps with the populations and settings proposed to receive that component, based on a relevant finding from one of the following:

(i) A practice guide prepared by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks reporting a “strong evidence base” for the corresponding practice guide recommendation;

(ii) An intervention report prepared by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks reporting a “positive effect” on a relevant outcome based on a “medium to large” extent of evidence, with no reporting of a “negative effect” or “potentially negative effect” on a relevant outcome; or

(iii) A single experimental study reviewed and reported by the WWC using version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks, or otherwise assessed by the Department using version 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks, as appropriate, and that—

(A) Meets WWC standards without reservations;

(B) Includes at least one statistically significant and positive (*i.e.*, favorable) effect on a relevant outcome;

(C) Includes no overriding statistically significant and negative effects on relevant outcomes reported in the study or in a corresponding WWC intervention report prepared under version 2.1, 3.0, 4.0, or 4.1 of the WWC Handbooks; and

(D) Is based on a sample from more than one site (*e.g.*, State, county, city, school district, or postsecondary campus) and includes at least 350 students or other individuals across sites. Multiple studies of the same project component that each meet requirements in paragraphs (iii)(A), (B), and (C) of this definition may together satisfy the requirement in this paragraph (iii)(D).

###

Evidence Form Directions

KDE's Stronger Connections Grant awards are intended to fund services or practices that have a demonstrated evidence base and that are appropriate for the population(s) of focus. Therefore, LEAs are strongly encouraged to invest Stronger Connections funds on evidence-based interventions that have been shown to significantly improve student safety and health as well as academic outcomes. An evidence-based practice (EBP) refers to approaches to prevention, treatment, or recovery that are validated by documented research evidence.

Applicants are encouraged to visit the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Services [What Works Clearinghouse](#) (WWC), SAMHSA's [Evidence-Based Practice Resource Center](#) (EBPRC), and SAMHSA's [National Network to Eliminate Disparities in behavioral health](#) (NNED) to identify evidence-informed and culturally appropriate mental health and substance use prevention and treatment practices that can be implemented in your project. Both researchers and practitioners recognize that EBPs are essential to improving the effectiveness of treatment and prevention services.

While KDE realizes that EBPs have not been developed for all populations and/or service settings, application reviewers will closely examine proposed interventions for evidence base and appropriateness for the population of focus. If an EBP(s) exists for the population(s) of focus and types of problems or disorders being addressed, **the expectation is that EBP(s) will be utilized**. If one does not exist but there are evidence-informed and/or culturally promising practices that are appropriate or can be adapted, these interventions may be implemented in the delivery of services.

In your Project Narrative (Part 4), identify the evidence-based practice(s) and/or interventions that are appropriate or can be adapted to meet the needs of your specific population(s) of focus. Your proposal should also discuss the population(s) for which the practice(s) has (have) been shown to be effective and document that it is (they are) appropriate for your population(s) of focus. You must also address how these interventions will improve outcomes and address how you will monitor and ensure fidelity of EBPs and other appropriate interventions. In situations where an EBP is appropriate but requires additional culturally informed engagement practices, this should be discussed in the application.

Evidence Form

Name of Strategy	Level of Evidence <i>Tier 1 - strong evidence</i> <i>Tier 2 - moderate evidence</i> <i>Tier 3 - promising evidence</i> <i>Tier 4 - evidence that demonstrates a rationale/evidence-informed</i>	Link to Citation and Population or Setting included in the Cited Study <i>(WWC, EBPRC, or NNED)</i>

Stronger Connections Grant (SCG) Program Assurances

By receiving the funds awarded under this grant opportunity, the LEA assures the following:

1. The LEAs use SCG funds for activities allowable under section 4108 of the ESEA.
2. The LEA 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.
3. The LEA will provide equitable services to students and teachers in non-public schools as required under section 8501 of the ESEA.
 - The LEA will maintain control of funds for the services and assistance provided to a non-public school with SCG funds.
 - The LEA will have title to materials, equipment, and property purchased with SCG funds.
 - The LEA will ensure that services to a non-public school with SCG funds are provided by the LEA directly, or through contract with, another public or private entity.
 - The LEA will ensure that equitable services provided with SCG funds are secular, neutral, and nonideological.
4. The LEA follow the supplement not supplant requirements in section 4110 of the ESEA.
5. The LEA will track the SCG funds separately from its regular allocation under Title IV, Part A of the ESEA.
6. The LEA will participate, as requested, in any Department evaluation of the SCG program and will cooperate with any audit or examination of records with respect to such funds.

As the official authorized representative of the district, I certify that I have read this application and all assurances. By signing below, I approve this application, will adhere to all assurances, and pledge my support.

Superintendent

Date

PRIVATE/NONPUBLIC SCHOOL CONSULTATION FORM
Stronger Connections Grant (SCG)

An LEA receiving financial assistance under the Stronger Connections Grant 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 makes any decision that affects the opportunity of eligible private school children, teachers, and other educational personnel to participate, the applicant must engage in timely and meaningful consultation with private school officials.

The LEA is responsible for consulting with private and home schools. Only the LEA completes the form. No signatures are required on the document. Please maintain documentation of consultations.

LEA Name:	
------------------	--

Please check the appropriate boxes below for private and home schools, then complete the table below related to the involvement of eligible private schools in the SCG grant application and subsequent activities. Only private schools that have official non-profit status are eligible to receive services under this program. *Note: Any private school wishing to participate must have filed Articles of Incorporation with the office of the Kentucky Secretary of State as a non-profit corporation under KRS 273 or have received a letter from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) granting them 501(c)(3) status as a non-profit corporation. Home schools are considered non-profit by nature, so long as they do not charge tuition for educational services provided to children outside the home.*

Private Schools

- There are no private schools located within the attendance zone of the targeted school(s) for the SCG program (If there are no private schools in your attendance zone, no further information is required).
- There are private schools located within the attendance zone of the targeted school(s) for the SCG program and these schools (listed below) were consulted for the SCG grant application and none (0) chose to participate.
- There are private schools located within the attendance zone that chose to participate with the Stronger Connections Grant. The LEA must reserve an equitable share of funds for Private Non-Public schools within the LEA boundary based upon the total enrollment of the Private Non-Public school and the LEA enrollment. The Per Pupil Amount (PPA) is calculated by the LEA allocation amount minus any Administrative Costs divided by the total enrollment of the LEA and the Private Non-Public School enrollment. This amount will provide the PPA.

Home Schools

- There are no home schools located within the attendance zone of the targeted school(s) for the SCG program. (If there are no home schools in the attendance zone, no further information is required.)
- There are home schools located within the attendance zone of the targeted school(s) for the SCG program and these schools (listed below) were consulted for the SCG grant application and none (0) chose to participate.
- There are home schools located within the attendance zone that chose to participate with the Stronger Connections Grant. The LEA must reserve an equitable share of funds for Private Non-Public schools within the LEA boundary based upon the total enrollment of the Private Non-Public school and the LEA enrollment. The Per Pupil Amount (PPA) is calculated by the LEA allocation amount minus any Administrative Costs divided by the total enrollment of the LEA and the Private Non-Public School enrollment. This amount will provide the PPA.

Private/Home School Name	Private/Home School Official	Title	Contact Method	Date of Contact	Participation Yes/No or No Response	# of Students to be Served

**Click TAB in the last cell to add additional rows.*

SCG Private Non-Public Budget Form

Instructions: Briefly, in one line item, explain expenditures for each private/non-public school participating in the Stronger Connections Grant. Successful approval of budget is pending further review by the KDE. The budget should be for the entire amount regardless of the number of years you are proposing for implementation. **The SCG Private Non-public Budget Form is limited to 1 page for applicants serving under 24,999 students. The SCG Private Non-public Budget form is limited to 3 pages for applicants serving over 25,000 students.**

MUNIS Object Code	Name of Private Non-Public School	Explanation of Expenditures	Amount
Total			

Stronger Connections Grant (SCG) Scenario Examples

The scenario examples are designed to assist districts in completing the implementation model section of the cover page. Below are the student details for the example school district.

- **Lovely County School District has 9,000 enrolled students. (3,000 High School; 2,000 middle school; 4,000 elementary)**
- **St. Mary's Christian Academy is a private/non-public school with 1,000 enrolled students.**
- **Lovelyville Day School is a private/non-public school with 275 students.**
- **Lovely County has 100 homeschool students.**

Scenario 1

No private/non-public schools in the Lovely County School district want to participate in SCG. The district determines it will implement a whole district model to develop a district-level emergency management response plan. The district will apply for \$750,000, mark "whole district" on the cover page, and enter 9,000 students for enrollment.

Scenario 2

St. Mary's Christian Academy and 1 home school choose to receive services from the district through the SCG. The district will implement a whole district model to develop a district-level emergency management response plan. St. Mary's Christian Academy requests professional learning opportunities for staff on integrating social emotional learning. The home school chose to have the district provide one or two counseling sessions for their one student to deal with the impact of a natural disaster.

The district will apply for \$900,000 in funding, mark "whole district" and "targeted" on the cover page and enter 10,001 students to be served on the cover page: 9,000 under whole district and 1,001 students under targeted.

Scenario 3

Lovely County will target high school students with a dropout prevention program. The private/non-public schools choose **not** to participate in the grant. Lovely County selects "targeted schools" on the cover page and records 3,000 students on the cover page. The district will apply for \$450,000 in funding.

Scenario 4

Lovely County plans to implement a whole district model to develop a district-level emergency management response plan for the entire district. They also plan to implement a dropout prevention program within the high schools. Lovelyville Day School, a private/non-public school, wants to add counseling services one day per week to address the recent death of a student.

Therefore, the district will select "whole district" and "targeted schools" on the cover page, but **only** record 9,000 in the whole district count for their student count. Entering the 3,000 high school students who will be receiving dropout prevention programming would be double counting the high school students. However, the district **will enter the 275 students** from Lovelyville Day School on the targeted line. For a total student population served by the grant at 9,275 students. The district will apply for \$750,000.00 in funds.

Directions for determining the per pupil allocation for scenarios #2 and #4 can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document, Question 29.

Stronger Connections Grant FAQ

1	<p>May a consortium of districts, in conjunction with the regional cooperative, apply together?</p> <p>KDE has sent this question to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to determine if a consortium of districts can apply for the Stronger Connections Grant (SCG). Once KDE received a determination from ED, the FAQ document will be updated to reflect their response. Please check the KDE Competitive Grants webpage for updates to the FAQ document as needed.</p>
2	<p>Can wellness support for staff go beyond training (wellness spaces in schools, physical items, staff wellness events, etc.?)</p> <p>Wellness support may go beyond staff training for wellness spaces, physical items, and staff wellness events if the expenses are reasonable, necessary, and part of an evidence-based model. The district must ensure expenses are not for gifts, gift cards, trips, food, entertainment (2 CFR 200.438) or other personal items for staff (2 CFR 200.445).</p>
3	<p>Can safety projects include equipment to help monitor weapons, vapes, and/or other safety concerns?</p> <p>Safety projects may include devices to help monitor weapons, vapes, and/or other safety concerns if the devices are part of a comprehensive, evidence-based plan. For the purposes of the Kentucky SCG project, smaller devices including, for example, hand-held metal detectors are allowable but larger, standalone detectors and other similar pieces of equipment are unallowable.</p>
4	<p>May a regional cooperative apply and use the funds to work specifically with multiple districts/schools in the region that meet the application criteria?</p> <p>No, a regional cooperative is not an eligible applicant.</p>
5	<p>Can you please share this presentation?</p> <p>The presentation will be shared on the KDE competitive grants page.</p>
6	<p>Are security cameras allowable for schools?</p> <p>Yes, if the security cameras are part of a comprehensive, evidence-based plan. Small devices may be purchased through the KY SCG program.</p>
7	<p>Are noise and vape sensors and allowable cost?</p> <p>See Q6.</p>
8	<p>May the annual budgets allocate different amounts for each year of the project if it is necessary for the program the district/school is proposing? For example, may a \$300,000 award be allocated as \$50,000 for Year 1, \$50,000 for Year 2, and \$200,000 for Year 3?</p> <p>Yes, if it aligns with the activities described in the project plan.</p>

9	<p>If Chronic absenteeism is a whole district need but reducing suspension and expulsion is a need for middle and high schools, do we approach this as a whole district or targeted school application?</p> <p>This would need to be determined by the district as to how to address the need, but proposals should be focused enough to have the potential for significant impact on the targeted schools (e.g., middle, and high schools) or student groups (e.g., chronically absent students). The applicant's comprehensive plan may encompass both whole district and targeted needs. A district may not receive more money than that which is allotted for whole school enrollment as noted on the table on RFA pages 4 and 5. Students may not be double counted.</p>
10	<p>May grant funds be used to support the salary/fringe of additional, new, mental health professionals to serve the district?</p> <p>Yes, if the positions are part of a comprehensive, evidence-based plan; if these are new positions; and if the costs would not be supplanting other federal or state dollars.</p>
11	<p>If we have an intervention program after school, can we pay for students' transportation?</p> <p>If transportation is needed for students to participate in a program that is outside of the normal school hours, then transportation costs may be included as part of the budget.</p>
12	<p>What are the reporting requirements for the grant (data reporting, info. sharing, etc.)?</p> <p>At this time, the information available from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) indicates the SEA (KDE) may have to report how LEAs (districts) are using SCG funds. The SEA must also ensure that any LEAs that receive SCG funds will participate, as requested, in any ED evaluation of the SCG program and will cooperate with any audit or examination of records with respect to such funds.</p>
13	<p>On the application cover page, if the district qualifies for all the absolute priorities-do we check all the characteristics or only those that we are targeting for the application?</p> <p>If a district meets all absolute priorities, they are certainly free to mark all three. However, the KDE would prefer districts to mark only the priority or priorities that will be targeted by the project(s).</p>
14	<p>Can you focus on drop-out prevention through the grant as well?</p> <p>Yes. See Table 2 on page 27 of ED's Non-Regulatory Guidance: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants.</p>
15	<p>Clarifying question: font in forms, 10pt?</p> <p>Applicants should use the font that exists within the provided documents.</p>
16	<p>Would therapy dogs be an allowable use of funds if they are part of a larger evidence-based program to support mental and emotional well-being?</p> <p>Therapy dogs are allowable if they are part of a comprehensive, evidence-based program and the district has identified a need that may be met by having a therapy dog to support</p>

	<p>students and staff. The district will need to consider costs in supporting this program once grant funds expire.</p>
17.	<p>Just to be clear, we must meet Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) % and at least one of the non-academic measures such as chronic absenteeism or do you need to meet more than one of the non-academic measures? Meeting the FRL and one or more of the non-academic measures is required.</p>
18	<p>Do we number pages/forms beyond the narrative, evidence, & budget (i.e., the last couple of forms that are pre-made forms for signature)? We recommend numbering all pages in the proposal beginning with the narrative (page 1) to help the reviewers discuss specific points within the overall proposal.</p>
19	<p>If our current enrollment is higher than the number reflected in Kentucky's Enrollment for 2022 document, can we use our current enrollment number? Our current enrollment moves us to a higher award amount.</p> <p>The Kentucky SCG program has established the 2022 enrollment number for determining specific levels of funding. Therefore, applicants are not allowed to use current enrollment numbers. However, an applicant may increase the number of total students served – and thereby the funds it is eligible to receive – by serving students in private/non-public (PNP) schools as outlined in the RFA. By providing services to those students, your enrollment may lift you to the next level of funding.</p>
20	<p>Can you provide an example of how a homeschool would be included in the grant and how we would calculate their budget? A homeschool would be included based upon the individual need that may be supported under the SCG program. The homeschool must meet one of the three criteria listed in the Equitable Services Letter and any services provided must meet the need the homeschool has identified. Some examples may include training for the person overseeing the student's education on internet and social media safety, counseling services provided by the district for the student addressing the identified need, sources to support the development of social skills and competencies, etc.</p> <p>Funds cannot be used for athletic or sports equipment, gym memberships, technology items or other similar types of items. Funds must be focused on providing services to the student to address needs that may be supported under the grant. Any resources that are purchased are property of the school district and must be utilized as part of a service plan for the private or home school.</p>
21	<p>Clarifying, do we have to include the home school and private school in the application process? Even before grants have been awarded. Yes. The applicant district must notify home schools and private schools within the district boundary of the grant opportunity. The notification must include an opportunity</p>

	<p>to respond if they would like to participate and a time in which to consult on services that would meet the identified need of the private or home school. The consultation would occur prior to grant funds being awarded. The district will want to inform the private or home school that this is a competitive grant and that services can only be provided if the district is awarded funding. Criteria in the RFA also help prioritize this notification; that is, points are awarded through the application process related to notification and consultation.</p>
22	<p>Are Adobe Sign electronic signatures acceptable on this application? Yes, the KDE continues to accept electronic signatures.</p>
23	<p>If you only focus on secondary schools for the grant, then would you only be in contact with homeschool students in same grade level? No, the district must consult with and offer services to all Private Non-Public (PNP) schools within the district boundary with services provided based on the PNP identified needs, regardless of grade. All PNP resources and services must also meet the allowability requirements noted in the RFA.</p>
24	<p>If you are sending the letters to the home schools and private schools offering to provide services through the grant, such as mental health services do you go ahead and include them in your numbers or only the ones that participate? Only the PNP schools who choose to participate will be included in the numbers. See pages 26-27 of the RFA.</p>
25	<p>Do private/home schools also have to be 40% FRL and/or have at least one absolute priority characteristic? The private/home schools do not have to meet the 40% FRL. However, they must have at least one of the following characteristics as noted in the RFA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a demonstrated increase in the chronic absenteeism rate, exclusionary discipline (out-of-school suspensions and expulsions) rate, referral to the juvenile justice system or Family Accountability, Intervention and Response (FAIR) Team rate, bullying/harassment rate, school violence rate, or school substance use rate since the 2018/2019 school year; • Has experienced a natural disaster significant enough to qualify the county in which the LEA is located for individual or public assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) since January 2021; or, • Has experienced a school shooting, suicide cluster, terrorism, school bus accident, student homicides (off campus), or hate crimes committed against students, faculty members, and/or staff since January 2018.
26	<p>Private/homeschool teachers are they allowed to participate in staff trainings if that is in the grant plan? Yes, if this is a need that is identified by the private/homeschool, then these teachers are allowed to participate in staff trainings that are part of the grant plan.</p>

27.	<p>Clarifying home schools must meet one of the three characteristics for high-risk LEA? How would you verify that?</p> <p>Yes, home schools and private/non-public schools that choose to participate in the grant must meet one of the three characteristics for high-risk LEA. The district should request a written verification from the private/non-public or home school, which may be kept on file as documentation of compliance for both the SCG applicant and the private/non-profit/home school. All schools within the SCG project must meet the criteria outlined in the grant prior to receiving evidence-based services allowable under the grant program.</p>																						
28.	<p>Does the letter to contact private/non-public schools need to be mailed as a certified letter?</p> <p>A record of contact is required. A certified letter would be recommended; however, it's not required. Districts could email the letter as well, to have record of contact.</p>																						
29	<p>Can you provide a sample per pupil calculation in the FAQ for Homeschool and/or Private/Non-Public Schools?</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="277 856 1430 1549"> <tr> <td colspan="2">EXAMPLE: FORMULA TO DETERMINE AMOUNT FOR SCG EQUITABLE EXPENDITURES</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">A. Number of Students</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A1: District # of students to be served from cover page</td> <td>900</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A2: Participating Private/Non-Public Schools # of students to be served</td> <td>100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A3: Total # of students served = A1 + A2</td> <td>1,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">B. SCG Allocation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B1: Total District Allocation</td> <td>\$300,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">C. Per Pupil Rate</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C1: B1 divided by A3</td> <td>\$300</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">D. Equitable Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amount District must reserve for equitable services for private school teachers and other educational personnel = A2 x C1</td> <td>\$30,000</td> </tr> </table>	EXAMPLE: FORMULA TO DETERMINE AMOUNT FOR SCG EQUITABLE EXPENDITURES		A. Number of Students		A1: District # of students to be served from cover page	900	A2: Participating Private/Non-Public Schools # of students to be served	100	A3: Total # of students served = A1 + A2	1,000	B. SCG Allocation		B1: Total District Allocation	\$300,000	C. Per Pupil Rate		C1: B1 divided by A3	\$300	D. Equitable Services		Amount District must reserve for equitable services for private school teachers and other educational personnel = A2 x C1	\$30,000
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30	<p>For the homeschools, do we list each one on a line and indicate whether they choose to participate?</p> <p>Yes, list each homeschool that meets the eligibility criteria on the lines provided on the Private/Nonpublic School Consultation Form.</p>																						

31

We have an AWARE grant currently. We expanded to 13 mental health professionals with that grant. The grant ends in April 2024. We lose 8 of the 13. Can we use this money to continue those services?

SCG funds could be used to sustain these services beyond April 2024 but not before. This would need to be made clear in both the project narrative and the budget. As previously noted, however, the continuation of such services would need to be part of a comprehensive, evidence-based approach.