Project Summary

The Texas Education Agency is committed to improving low-performing schools and supporting LEAs in school improvement efforts. Evidence suggests that restarting a low-performing school as a charter or with a charter school operating partner can generate results for students. Under this initiative, LEAs would commit to authorizing the low-performing campus as a campus charter to offer the campus with operational flexibility need to implement improvement activities and partner with a school redesign/design partner to engage in a comprehensive redesign of the school. School redesign/design partners offer holistic support on all aspects of school design/re-design, have demonstrable results dramatically improving student and school performance or deploy evidence-based strategies, and are selected using a rigorous process. Over a period of one to three years, the LEA and school redesign/design partner would authorize the campus charter and implement a new school model.

LEA Financial Commitment (estimated start-up and annual costs)

Start-Up Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel salaries, wages, benefits</td>
<td>$150,000–350,000</td>
<td>Consulting services</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General supplies and materials</td>
<td>$0–$100,000</td>
<td>Miscellaneous operating expenses</td>
<td>$0–$200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>$0–$100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual, Ongoing Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel salaries, wages, benefits</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>Consulting services</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General supplies and materials</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>Miscellaneous operating expenses</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When possible, TEA staff has estimated costs by major expenditure categories used in the ESSA Consolidated Application and the Expenditure Reporting (ER) System. Costs, such as locally-determined salaries, benefits, and wages, could not be estimated.

Project Description

LEAs should consider taking dramatic action to ensure students in persistently struggling schools have access to better opportunities. LEAs should also consider how they can use operational flexibility in to staffing, curriculum, and general operations given by state charter laws to catalyze school turnaround efforts. To maximize the autonomies offered by state law, a LEA would convert the original campus to a campus charter (TEC Title 2, Subtitle C, Chapter 12) with a performance management contract with an independent governing board outlining the identified autonomies. The new campus charter may be operated through independent restart, replication with an “Innovation Management Organization”, or alternative management through a contract with an existing CMO/EMO.
Goals and Student Achievement Objectives

The goal of this recommended initiative is to enhance restart efforts and improve campus performance by increasing campus-level autonomy through state charter laws. Operational flexibilities around staffing, curriculum, and general operations will offer campus leadership with the flexibility necessary for a full and effective implementation of improvement strategies. Research shows that LEAs committed to supporting campus-level operational flexibility will experience increased performance at both the campus and student level.

Expected Outcomes

The list below offers a sample of expected outcomes from successful School Improvement Partnerships formatted as SMART goals (the percentage of_____ will increase from X% to Y% by Z (target date) or the number of_____ will increase from X to Y by Z):

- The percentage of students working at or above grade level on a specific STAAR content area assessment will increase from X% to Y% by Z.
- The percentage of students graduating college or career reading will increase from X% to Y% by Z.
- The percentage of parents that say they are satisfied with school climate or academic instruction, as documented in parent surveys, will increase from X% to Y% by Z.
- The number of highly effective teachers assigned to the specific school in need of comprehensive or targeted support will increase from X to Y by Z.
- The number of students attending schools in need of comprehensive support will decrease to X from Y by Z.
- The number of students attending schools in need of targeted support will decrease from X to Y by Z.
- The percentage of students enrolled in Improvement Required schools (Texas accountability system) will decrease from X% to Y% by Z.

How Will Success Be Measured and Data Sources Available

The success of a redesign restarting a campus as a campus charter is ultimately measured by the performance of the new campus charter. Subsequently, new campus charters using autonomies to improve student outcomes will decrease the number and percentage of students in persistently struggling schools and increase the number and percentage of students in highly rated schools. The new campus charter(s), prior campus(es), and LEA will receive A-F* report cards providing data for assessing the quality of the initiative. LEAs should also track student-level data from the state assessment year-to-year to monitor the campus charter performance and develop a value-add measure for student performance. LEA and school-level data is also available in Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR), available online. Resources for the new A-F accountability system are available on the TEA web site.

Training or Support TEA Offers

The Division of System Support and Innovation (DSSI) will offer support, resources, and training related to campus charter and alternative management performance contracts. These services are expected to be available to LEAs in 2018. DSSI also offers competitive grant opportunities for LEAs with strong redesign plans focused on restarting schools as charter.

In addition, the twenty regional educational service centers (ESCs) offer training and other resources for IR schools, and schools in need of comprehensive or targeted support, previously known as Priority and Focus schools. TEA collaborates with the Texas Center for District and School Support to provide TAIS training and guidance publications.

Required Activities or Components

The authorizing authority for federal funds is Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [As Amended by ESSA
Through P.L. 114–95, Enacted December 10, 2015]. Per ESSA, LEAs are required to meet the following statutory requirements:

- Give a description of LEAs required School Support and Improvement Activities.
- Align other Federal, State, and local resources to carry out the activities supported with these funds.
- Modify practices and policies to provide operational flexibility for effective implementation of campus improvement activities.
- Use a rigorous review process to recruit, screen, select, and evaluate any external partners with whom the local educational agency will partner.
- An assurance that each school the local educational agency proposes to serve will receive all of the State and local funds it would have received in the absence of these funds.

Program Duration, Timeline, Significant Milestones

The program duration varies for each LEA depending on local context and campus charter authorizing policies. LEAs should use a full planning year prior to authorizing a campus charter and implementing the restart. Significant milestones related to transformation include the following:

- Identifying whether the new campus charter operation structure: an independent campus charter, replication of an existing campus charter, or alternative management with an existing CMO.
- Reviewing LEA authorization policies and authorizing the campus charter.
- Developing and implementing a performance contract outlining the necessary autonomies and related accountability.

Staffing Requirements for LEAs

There are no specific staffing requirements associated with restarting as a campus charter. However, the LEA should consider budgeting for campus charter authorizing support, legal services, and possible pre-implementation year costs.

Additional General Information, LEA, Charter, or Other Organizations Need

This project description is specific to LEAs classified as traditional public school districts.

Resources

- CREDO. "Charter School Growth and Replication"
- School Autonomy and Its Implications for the Future of Boston’s Public Schools.

TEA Contact Information

Joe Siedlecki, Director of System Support
Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress
Austin, TX 78701
Email: joe.siedlecki@tea.texas.gov

* TEA is offering the following information or link for reference purposes only, and TEA’s provision of the information or link does not in any way constitute an endorsement by TEA.